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"Taps My Phone": Rahul Gandhi's Big Charge Against PM Modi, Then Debate Dare

New Delhi . (Agency).

Leader of Opposition Rahul Gandhi on Friday accused Prime Minister Narendra Modi of tapping his phone. During an online interactive session, Gandhi held up his phone and said he has all the proof against the Prime Minister in his phone, while reiterating his challenge for a one-on-one debate on a host of issues."The proof is in this phone, and the PM knows it since he taps my phone,' he said holding up his phone.The Leader of the Opposition, however, did not present any verifiable technical evidence during the session to substantiate the allegation of phone tapping.He made the allegation during an interactive 'Ask Me' session on Instagram, where he responded to questions from supporters and reiterated his demand for a direct public debate with the Prime Minister.Rahul Gandhi has in past also alleged phone tapping claiming that he and many other politicians had their phones bugged with Pegasus to enable Central agencies to tap them. "I myself had Pegasus on my phone. Large number of politicians have Pegasus on their phones. I've been called by Intelligence officers who say please be careful of what you say on your phone as we are recording the stuff," Gandhi had alleged in 2023.

RSS chief Mohan Bhagwat's defence of firecrackers: 'Once purified atmosphere'

New Delhi(Agency).

Rashtriya Swayamsevak Sangh (RSS) chief Mohan Bhagwat said on Tuesday, November 10, that earlier variants of firecrackers were made without chemical substances that helped kill insects and pests, and purify the environment, as he explained the 'scientific rationale' behind several practices during festivals, including lighting diyas.Mohan Bhagwat's remarks have come as several cities, including Mumbai and Delhi, bear the brunt of the aftereffects of firecrackers post-Diwali.Speaking at a 'Deepawali Milan' programme in Nagpur, Mohan Bhagwat said there was a scientific rationale behind several traditional practices associated with festivals. He said that in the past, firecrackers were used since there were no alternative means available to achieve the same purpose."The firecrackers of earlier times were not made using chemical substances as they are today. Their smoke helped kill insects and pests, particularly around the harvest season, and in a way, purified the atmosphere," he said.Explaining the purpose of lighting ghee and oil diyas on Diwali, Mohan Bhagwat said, "When lamps fuelled by ghee or oil were lit, they created a particular kind of air in the environment. There is science behind these practices as well."Urging people to understand the significance of such traditional practices and observe festivals in their proper spirit, Bhagwat said it would benefit both humans and the environment. He also asserted that festivals and celebrations have been an integral part of society and would continue despite opposition.

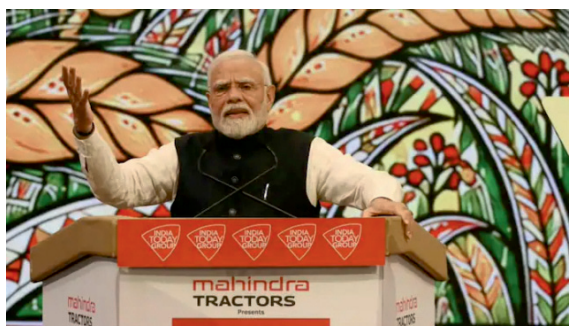
Every farm to get solar power: PM Modi urges makers to develop solar farm equipment

Prime Minister Narendra Modi urged manufacturers, startups and MSMEs to develop solar-powered farm machinery. He said solar energy and AI-led tools could raise productivity, reduce costs and boost farmers' incomes.

New Delhi (Agency).

Prime Minister Narendra Modi on Thursday urged agricultural equipment manufacturers, startups and small-scale industries to develop solar-powered machinery, saying the government was working to ensure that every farm in the country had access to solar energy.

Addressing the India Today Group's Kisan Tak Bharat Agriculture Conference 2026 at Bharat Mandapam in New Delhi, PM Modi said solar power could trigger another major revolution in Indian agriculture, much like electric vehicles were transforming the automobile sector."I urge those in the manufacturing sector, particularly companies making equipment for farmers, and startups to ensure that whatever equipment they develop runs on solar power because we are going to bring solar power to every farm," he said."I am in favour of making every type of equipment used in agriculture run on solar power. I am making considerable efforts in this direction," the Prime Minister added.Appealing to micro, small and medium enterprises (MSMEs), PM Modi said they should focus on developing solar-powered



agricultural machinery, describing it as a sector with the potential to drive a major revolution.

PM-KUSUM SCHEME HAS PROVIDED 12 LAKH SOLAR PUMPS

Highlighting the government's push towards solar energy in agriculture, PM Modi said the solar power revolution had transformed farmers from food providers into energy providers.Under the PM-KUSUM scheme, around 12 lakh solar pumps had been provided so far, he said. These pumps were helping farmers reduce their electricity bills, while solar installations on agricultural land were enabling them to generate electricity and earn additional income.The Prime Minister said the government's focus was not limited to increasing agricultural production but also extended to improving productivity and boosting farmers' incomes.

AI-POWERED EQUIPMENT TO HELP FARMERS REDUCE COSTS

PM Modi also highlighted the growing role of engineering, artificial intelligence and sensor-based technology in agriculture.He said agricultural scientists, engineers and young entrepreneurs were developing equipment and machinery that could reduce cultivation costs and make sowing and harvesting easier.

Fake Nirmala Sitharaman video offers high returns, Keralam woman loses Rs 49.2 lakh

A Kozhikode woman approached police after losing Rs 49.2 lakh in an online trading fraud. The case underscores the growing misuse of AI-generated ministerial videos for financial scams.

Kozhikode.(Agency)

A 45-year-old woman allegedly lost Rs 49.2 lakh in an online trading fraud after being lured by a fake Facebook video featuring Union Finance Minister Nirmala Sitharaman, police said.The Kozhikode Rural Cyber Crime Police registered a case on Wednesday after the woman complained that the fraudsters had neither returned her investment nor paid the promised profits.The complainant, a resident of Maikkavu in Thamarassery, came across the fake video on Facebook. It purportedly showed Sitharaman claiming that online trading could generate high returns, police told news agency PTI.Believing the claims, the woman clicked



on a link accompanying the video and began investing as instructed by the fraudsters. Between July 15 and September 22 this year, she transferred a total of Rs 49.2 lakh from her accounts with the State Bank of India and Puthuppadi Service Cooperative Bank to various bank accounts provided by the accused, police said.After the accused failed to return the money or pay the promised profits, the woman approached the police.

A case was registered under various sections of the Bharatiya Nyaya Sanhita and the Information Technology Act.Police said they were tracking the bank accounts to which the money had been transferred and were trying to freeze them.They said AI-generated videos featuring Union ministers and purportedly promoting investment schemes had been circulating on social media platforms. Advisories have repeatedly warned people against falling prey to such cyber frauds.

'It will be too late by the time guns fall silent': Farooq Abdullah calls for dialogue between India, Pakistan

Jammu(Agency).

Making a strong pitch for dialogue between India and Pakistan, National Conference (NC) president and former J&K chief minister Farooq Abdullah on Thursday said that the recent terrorist attacks in Kulgam and Kishtwar indicate that threats continue to persist and concrete measures are needed to eliminate them."I have already said that such incidents are still happening," he told media persons here, adding that "one never knows where the next attack might take place".Expressing concern over Delhi's claims that terrorism has ended in J&K, Abdullah said that bullets and military confrontation cannot resolve political disputes and called on India and Pakistan to start a meaningful engagement."Ab aap intezaar karenge, jab tak aap sabki goliyan band ho jayengi, tab tak raat ho jayegi (If you keep waiting for everyone to stop firing, it will be too late by the time the guns fall silent)," he said.

"Nothing can be achieved through terrorism. The process of dialogue must begin because a way forward can only be found through talks," he said.Reacting to the recent twin terror attacks in Kulgam and Kishtwar districts, which resulted in the killing of two Special Police Officers (SPOs) and the injuring of three CRPF personnel, Abdullah said that those harboring ambitions of snatching Kashmir must abandon such notions.

"Kashmir is, was, and will remain an integral part of India," he said, adding that terrorism would never succeed in its nefarious designs.The NC leader also called for the revival of SAARC, saying that countries in the South Asian region must come together, citing the European Union as an example of former adversaries building a common future through cooperation."We must revive SAARC so that all of us can sit together, resolve our disputes, and work towards progress and development," Abdullah said.

Andhra Pradesh plans to enact law for investment protection

VISAKHAPATNAM(Agency).

Andhra Pradesh is planning to enact an Investment Protection Act to safeguard investments and ensure continuity of policy commitments across successive governments.Minister for IT, Electronics and Real-Time Governance Nara Lokesh announced the proposal at the 31st CII Partnership Summit in Visakhapatnam on Thursday, stating that the bill would be tabled in the upcoming Assembly session."Many investors have asked me about this. We are the State actively considering it, and we will enact it," Lokesh said, urging Union Minister for Commerce and Industry Piyush Goyal to facilitate the necessary policy clearances, and explore the implementation of a similar legislation at



the national level.The proposed legislation seeks to address investor concerns over political uncertainty, policy changes, the State's fiscal position, and the fulfilment of investment commitments, particularly industrial incentives.The government is also working on an escrow mechanism to ensure timely payment of incentives to industries. Under the proposed arrangement, a portion of the State's tax collections equivalent to the incentives due would be transferred to an escrow account for disbursement.Lokesh maintained that the mechanism would ensure that approved incentives reached industries without administrative delays or government interference. The IT Minister termed it a key measure to improve investor confidence.

Karnataka Investors Meet on April 20-22: Govt unveils Aerospace and Defence Policy

BENGALURU(Agency).

The Global Investors Meet 2027 will be held from April 20 to 22 at Palace Grounds in Bengaluru. At a curtain-raiser of the meet, themed 'Powering what's Next', here on Thursday, the Karnataka government launched the new Aerospace and Defence Policy (2026–31) and the KIADB Digital Industrial Land Bank.



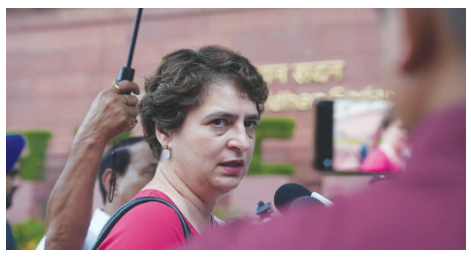
Unveiling the curtain raiser for the Global Investors Meet (GIM) – Invest Karnataka 2027, Chief Minister D K Shivakumar announced that Karnataka aims to attract investments worth Rs 7.5 lakh crore and generate 20 lakh jobs by 2030.Inviting investors from India and across the world to partner with Karnataka's growth story, the CM said the state was positioning itself as a leading destination for investments in emerging and future-oriented sectors, including semiconductors, aerospace, space technology, artificial intelligence, clean energy, life sciences and electric mobility."This is not just an investment summit. It is an opportunity to shape Karnataka's future. Bring your ideas. Bring your investments.

We will build the future together," he said.Stressing the need to make doing business easier, he said nodal officers would guide investors through approvals and clearances, with the government committed to reducing delays and expediting decisions. "Investors should build factories, not chase files. The entire government must stand with an investor, not just one department," he said.

'No information on special Parliament session on delimitation': Priyanka says Opposition not consulted

New Delhi(Agency).

Congress MP Priyanka Gandhi Vadra on Friday said Opposition parties had not been informed of any government move to convene a special sitting of Parliament to take up the proposed delimitation legislation, amid growing speculation over the Centre's plans to revive the bills."They have not intimated the rest of us. So, if they are planning it, I don't know. As of now, I have no information," she told reporters during a four-day visit to her constituency, which began on Wednesday.The government is reportedly considering an early special sitting to secure the passage of a Constitution amendment bill linked to the implementation of 33 per cent reservation for women in Parliament and state Assemblies. However, no dates or duration have been officially announced.Neither the Lok Sabha nor the Rajya Sabha has met since the Monsoon Session was adjourned sine die on August 13. The session, however, has not been formally prorogued by President Droupadi Murmu. As of Friday, it had



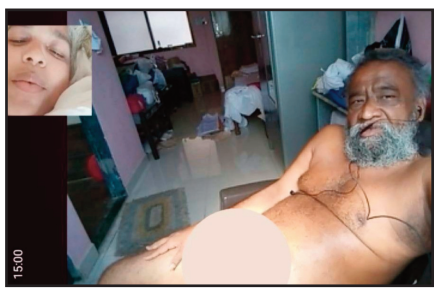
remained unprorogued for 91 days, surpassing the previous record of 87 days set in 2008.Keeping the session open allows the government to reconvene Parliament at shorter notice. An extended sitting within the existing session requires a minimum notice of two days, compared with at least 14 days for a fresh session. The government has also not announced the dates for the Winter Session.The proposed legislation follows the defeat of the Constitution (131st Amendment) Bill in the Lok Sabha on April 17. The bill, introduced alongside the Delimitation Bill and the Union Territories Laws (Amendment) Bill, sought to enable the implementation of women's reservation by increasing the strength of the Lok Sabha from 543 to a maximum of 850 seats through delimitation.

The amendment failed to secure the required two-thirds majority, with 298 members voting in favour and 230 against. The Centre is now seeking to revive the proposals, with government sources expressing confidence that it can secure the numbers needed for passage.The proposed delimitation exercise has drawn opposition from several parties, particularly over concerns that a population-based redistribution of seats could affect the representation of southern states.

Controversy From Mandsaur to Palitana Raises Serious Questions About Religious Trusts

Mahanagar Metro Desk
Mandsaur/Palitana/Ahmedabad:
The Jain community, known for its rich spiritual traditions and the timeless teachings of Lord Mahavira—non-violence, non-possessiveness, self-discipline and renunciation—is facing a wave of controversy following allegations circulating on social media. Alleged WhatsApp chats, disputed audio recordings and photographs linked to the controversy surrounding Sagar Chandra Sagar have triggered widespread discussion and concern across religious circles.What initially appeared to be a personal controversy has now raised broader questions about the conduct of religious figures, the functioning of religious institutions and the transparency of donations worth crores of rupees collected in the name of faith.Allegations Against a Religious Figure: Viral Chats and Audio Recordings Spark DebateThe life of a Jain monk is traditionally associated with strict discipline, spiritual devotion, renunciation and freedom from worldly attachments. Therefore, serious allegations involving a religious figure have naturally raised concerns among devotees.Certain alleged digital conversations circulating on social media have raised questions about purported relationships involving women and nuns. However, the authenticity of these materials and the allegations themselves have not been independently established.The central question remains: Do these viral materials con<







tain any truth, or are they part of a deliberate attempt to damage someone's reputation through fabricated digital content?If the allegations are baseless, the concerned parties should come forward with a clear explanation.

Greater Noida college prof falls to her death from 10th floor, had lost job month ago

Gurgaon.(Agency)

An associate professor who was recently dismissed from a private college in Greater Noida allegedly fell to her death from the balcony of her 10th-floor flat at Kendriya Vihar Society in the Beta 2 area on Wednesday.
Police said the woman was upset after she had lost her job about a month ago.
According to police, the woman was an associate professor at IIMT College's Knowledge Park campus. Around a month ago, she was dismissed from service. Her husband, a businessman, claimed she was stressed following her dismissal. He said family members had counselled her over the past few days and suggested that she should apply for another job.
Earlier in the day, the woman had called her sister and told her that she could not get the dismissal out of her head. Police said the woman had also sent a text message to her sister just before the incident, saying that she was "leaving".
She allegedly jumped off their balcony around 5.30 pm when her husband and their five-year-old son were inside the house. She sustained severe injuries and died on the spot. The body has been sent for autopsy.

Aravalis set to become outdoor classroom for students

Gurgaon.(Agency)

What if a classroom had no walls, its ceiling was the sky and lessons came from identifying a bird's call, spotting animal footprints or recognising a native tree? Haryana is looking to take govt schoolchildren beyond textbooks and into forests, wildlife habitats and nature trails through a proposed environmental education programme.
Under the initiative, 'Haritima: Hariyali Ka Rang, Haryana Ke Sang', students of Classes VI to X will be taken on educational visits and one-day nature camps during the 2026-27 financial year. The programme aims to give children practical exposure to forests, wildlife, biodiversity and environmental conservation.
Aravalis, with their rocky hills, scrub forests, seasonal water channels and rich biodiversity, could provide a particularly meaningful outdoor classroom. For children growing up amid the expanding urban landscape of the NCR, the hills offer an opportunity to learn about ecosystems that are often dificult to understand through textbooks alone.
s and their natural drainage systems play an important role in the region's ecoarning activities.

DTCP seals four buildings in DLF-2, resumes crackdown on illegal commercial use

Ghaziabad.(Agency)

Department of Town and Country Planning (DTCP) on Thursday resumed its sealing drive against unauthorised commercial activities in residential properties in DLF Phase 2, sealing four buildings, including three guest houses and an office operating from the basement of a residential building.The enforcement team, led by district town planner (enforcement) Amit Madholia, sealed the basement of a building at L-2/11, where a commercial office was operating in violation of residential land-use norms.
At K-9/7, the team found a 16-room guest house operating from a residential property and sealed the premises. Another guest house in K-9 was also sealed. The fourth property, at 30 Akashneem Marg, was also sealed, as it was being used as a 17-room guest house.

Ghaziabad man kills friend with broken liquor bottle for talking to his sister, arrested

Ghaziabad.(Ajency)

A 22-year-old man from Modinagar was arrested for allegedly murdering his friend with a broken liquor bottle for talking to his sister. The body was found near a tubewell in the fields along Kalchhina-Sikri Road.
The man was identified as Shivam, a resident of Vishwakarma Basti, Modinagar. Police said the victim, Vicky (21), had gone out with his neighbourhood friends Shivam and Vikas (22) on Friday but never returned home. They were labourers. The family tried to contact him but his phone was switched off. The next morning, his



body was found in the fields of Manki village. There were cuts on his neck and chest.Vicky's father filed a complaint against Shivam and Vikas and accused them of murdering his son. A murder case was registered against them at Modinagar police station under BNS Section 103(1) on Nov 8.Shivam was arrested on Nov 11. Police also found the broken glass bottle that was allegedly used in the murder. They said Vicky and Shivam were friends and Vicky had started speaking to the latter's 19-year-old sister. Shivam, however, did not like them coming closer and plotted to kill him.Police said Shivam told them that he and Vikas took Vicky to an isolated location near a tubewell on Kalchhina-Sikri Road, where they made him consume alcohol and smoke marijuana. Once Vicky was intoxicated, the men allegedly broke the liquor bottle they had been drinking out of and repeatedly attacked his neck and chest, inflicting fatal injuries.

Metro nod finally here, but there's something Greater Noida West needs urgently: Buses

Noida.(Ajency)

In a city of more than 10 lakh people, living mostly in condominiums, Greater Noida West's struggle with traffic and the lack of public transport and civic infrastructure began the moment residents started moving in. Handover of flats began as late as 2010, yet the snarls arrived almost at once and have grown with every new tower.
Planned in the early 2000s and spread across around 3,635 hectares from Noida's Sector 121, Greater Noida West has fast transformed from a stretch of farmland and villages into a bustling urban hub with over 100 highrises and malls. Despite connectivity to NH-9, Yamuna Expressway and FNG Expressway, heavy daily trafic overwhelms key junctions, including Gaur Chowk, Ek Murti Chowk, Hanuman Mandir and Shahberi, particularly during peak hours.
Nowhere is this clearer than Gaur Chowk, also called Char Murti roundabout, where vehicles crawl every day as trafic from Delhi-Meerut Expressway, Crossings Republik, Noida and Surajpur intersects. A newly built underpass along Taj Highway is expected to ease the bottleneck on the DME to Surajpur corridor, but its impact remains to be tested.The underpass opened for trials on Nov 5, just ahead of Diwali, when traffic had dipped as many office-goers took leave and schools were on holiday."The Chaar Murti Chowk underpass has provided considerable relief to residents and commuters. However, some finishing work, particularly the uneven road surface, still needs attention," said Bhawna Gaur of Leisure Park.Encroachment of roads and footpaths by vendors adds to the obstruction. "Gaur City area is full of encroachment as street vendors and shops spill onto the roadsides, leading to daily trafic snarls," Abhishek Kumar, president of New Era Flat Owners Welfare Association (NEFOWA), said.

Man arrested for killing 9-month-old son, burying his body at cremation ground in Ghaziabad

Ghaziabad.(Agency))

Three days after a 26-year-old strangled his nine-month-old child and buried his body over suspicions of his wife's infidelity in Bayana village, he was arrested near a cremation ground T-point on the road connecting Bayana and Dasna.
Police said the incident occurred on Nov 9. The man, Abhishek, had been entrusted by his wife Priyanka to look after their baby Madhav when she went out for work on Monday. Priyanka, who works as a domestic help, returned home around 10.30am and was told the baby was asleep in a different room.
When she tried to wake the child, she found it was unresponsive and raised an alarm. The baby had strangulation marks on its body. The couple rushed the child to a local hospital, but the doctors declared it dead on arrival. Then they returned home with the baby's body, and after being pressured by her in-laws, they buried the body at the village cremation ground.
However, Priyanka's parents advised her to contact the police emergency helpline, 112. Then, a team from Wave City police station exhumed the infant's body and sent it for a post-mortem examination.On Wednesday, Priyanka filed a complaint accusing Abhishek of murdering their son. A case was registered under Section 103(1) of BNS. Police teams were formed to trace Abhishek, who was arrested on Thursday based on local intelligence.Police said Abhishek told them during interrogation that he suspected his wife of having an extramarital affair and believed the child was not biologically his. The couple allegedly argued often over his suspicions.
Abhishek also admitted that he had thrown the infant onto the floor during an argument earlier and injured the child. However, his wife had intervened and saved it.
On Monday, when his wife left for work, the infant was playing on the bed and crying occasionally. Abhishek allegedly became angry and strangled him. He then placed the child's body on the bed, where it was found when his wife returned.

BLOs to go out door to door in Ghaziabad again, this time to identify left-out voters

Ghaziabad.(Agency)

The district administration has launched an extensive door-to-door campaign, akin to the first phase of special intensive revision (SIR), this time to identify and bring left-out voters back into the rolls. Under the drive, booth-level officers (BLOs) will be dispatched, with each of the 3,073 being assigned 350 households. RWAs have been urged to identify eligible residents for enrolment.
The move follows CM Yogi Adityanath himself questioning the absence of more than a crore voters who were on the roll in the panchayat poll but were omitted from the final roll published earlier this year after SIR in UP.Addressing a media event in Ayodhya on Nov 7, the CM alleged that nearly 1.3 crore voters have been left out of the state's electoral rolls. Of these, 66 lakh voters were allegedly enrolled in the state's panchayat electoral rolls but not in the assembly voter list. The CM claimed 55 lakh voters, who were beneficiaries of govt welfare schemes, had also been left out.The Opposition too has been accusing the NDA of "vote theft" over large-scale deletion of names and seeking the resignation of chief election commissioner Gyanesh Kumar.On Thursday, district magistrate and district election oficer Ravindra Kumar Mandar said during the exercise, BLOs will verify existing voter registrations, identify eligible residents whose names are missing from the electoral roll and assist them in filling out Form 6. Those seeking to shift their voter registration from another constituency or state to Ghaziabad would be guided to submit Form 8.The district administration has deployed five electoral registration officers (EROs), 26 assistant electoral registration officers (AEROs) and 865 supervisors to oversee the exercise.
Ghaziabad saw the second-highest deletions in the final electoral rolls published on April 10 after the SIR exercise in the state in percentage terms after capital Lucknow (22.9%). While 5.7 lakh names (20.2%) were removed from Ghaziabad's list, Lucknow saw 9.1 lakh deletions. UP's electorate was itself downsized by a little over 2 crore voters, a shade less than the population of Sri Lanka.Sahibabad, the state's largest constituency by population, saw 30.4% deletions that shaved off 3.2 lakh names, the highest for an assembly segment in the state. Of the four other constituencies, Ghaziabad saw 16.5% deletions, with nearly 80,000 struck off. In Loni, 15% of names (nearly 90,000) were removed from the pre-SIR list of 4.5 lakh. Muradnagar's electorate was downsized by 14.6% as 70,000 names were struck of, and Modinagar by 7.8% as it saw 30,000 deletions.Mandar urged resident welfare associations (RWAs) and apartment owners associations (AOA) of housing societies to identify residents who have been left out during the SIR exercise so that they can be covered during the ongoing Special Summary Revision of electoral rolls."RWAs have an important role in ensuring that every eligible resident in their respective societies is included in the electoral rolls.

Pools, ghats, rose water and drones: Noida all set to celebrate Chhath for four days

Gurgaon.(Agency)

With ghats adorned and the digging up of makeshift pools in different parts complete, the city is all set to celebrate the four-day Chhath festival beginning Friday.The festival sees devotees offer prayers to the sun god Surya and goddess Chhathi Maiya for longevity and prosperity while standing in water. It draws large crowds at the ghats, requiring preparation and a robust security arrangement for crowd management.
Expecting some of the highest numbers of devotees is Pravasi Mahasangh Chhath Puja, which will be held at Noida Stadium in Sector 21A.A spokesperson for the group said, "This is the 18th year of Chhath Puja organised by Pravasi Mahasangh. We are expecting a footfall of 40,000 daily but the number may rise to a lakh during the last two days. A 120 ft x 60 ft Chhath ghat has been made for the devotees where they can bathe and ofer prayers."He added that 20 CCTV cameras and five drones will monitor the crowd. Gautam Buddh Nagar MP Mahesh Sharma, Noida MLA Pankaj Singh, BJP president of west UP Nawab Singh Nagar and former president of Uttar Pradesh state commission for women Vimla Batham are expected to attend the festivities.
Another notable celebration, organised by Sector 137 Purvanchal Cultural Samiti, is happening at Biodiversity Park in Sector 91. Around 5,000 people participated in the celebrations last year and a makeshift ghat has been created by Noida Authority for the festival. "This



annual event has grown significantly since its inception in 2019. This year, we are focusing on creating a welcoming atmosphere for the devotees, so the entire park will be illuminated with decorative lights and arrangements for clean water and hygiene will be prioritised," said Ravi Shrivastava, a resident of Logix Blossoms in Sector 137, who has been associated with the puja since 2020.
In Sector 75, Shri Suryadev Puja Samiti has prepared a Chhath ghat in Central Park. Devotees from over two dozen sectors, including 7X sectors, are expected to attend the celebrations.

1,500 autorickshaws stripped of rear covers as part of safety drive in Andhra's NTR district

VIJAYAWADA.(Agency)

With a focus on strengthening women's safety and ensuring public safety, in a first of its kind, the NTR police commissionerate has launched a special enforcement drive against autorickshaws fitted with closed covers at the rear.As part of the initiative, traffic police have so far removed unauthorised closed covers from around 1,500 autorickshaws operating within the commissionerate limits.Speaking to , the NTR district commissioner SV Rajashekhara Babu said the drive is aimed at making autorickshaw travel safer, particularly for women, children and other vulnerable passengers, while also preventing road accidents and addressing potential security concerns.Police officials believe that completely covered passenger compartments can restrict visibility from outside, making it difficult for others to notice suspicious activities or respond quickly when passengers face an emergency. "The initiative also seeks to ensure that passengers can easily identify the vehicle and seek assistance whenever necessary. As part of this measure, autorickshaw drivers have been instructed to prominently display the vehicle registration number and emergency helpline number 112 behind the driver's seat," he explained.Traffic police have issued a series of safety guidelines to autorickshaw drivers and warned against violations. Drivers have been directed not to install closed covers.

Telangana HC seeks report on drought situations; hearing on December 9

HYDERABAD.(Agency)

The Telangana High Court has directed the state authorities to file a detailed report on the drought-like conditions prevailing in the state and the measures being taken to address the situation. The bench posted the matter to December 9, 2026.A bench of Acting Chief Justice P Sam Koshy and Justice Suddala Chalapathi Rao issued the directions in a pending Public Interest Litigation (PIL) filed by Dr Cheruku Sudhakar, who recently moved an interlocutory application seeking comprehensive intervention by the authorities to tackle the situation.The petitioner sought a time-bound, scientific and district-wise assessment of drought conditions, covering drinking water availability and the impact of drought on agriculture, livestock, wildlife, public health and vulnerable sections of society.He also sought directions to place on record the state and district disaster management plans, drought contingency plans, standard operating procedures and action-taken reports relating to disaster preparedness and relief measures under the Disaster Management Act, 2005.

Cyberabad corporation plans GIS mapping of graveyards, crematoriums

HYDERABAD.(Agency)

The Cyberabad Municipal Corporation (CMC) has proposed a comprehensive GIS-enabled mapping of all graveyards, burial grounds and cremation facilities within its jurisdiction, in what officials describe as a first-of-its-kind initiative in Telangana.It is aimed at creating a centralised digital inventory of these facilities, irrespective of religion, community or mode of last rites. It will cover traditional graveyards, burial grounds, cemeteries, conventional and electric crematoriums, combined burial-and-cremation complexes and other recognised community-specific facilities.Following the merger of surrounding municipal corporations and municipalities earlier this year, the expanded CMC does not have a consolidated record of such facilities. The proposed survey will document their location, extent, ownership, infrastructure and existing condition.The civic body plans to engage specialised agencies to conduct the GIS-based survey, prepare an asset inventory and develop a dedicated web-GIS platform. The system will allow officials to access, update and monitor facility-wise information through a centralised database.The selected agency will collect existing records from the CMC, revenue, waqf and endowments authorities and other departments.

Mumbai civic body's Rs 45 crore corporation house to blend politics with shopping, fitness

In a first in its 133-year history, the Mumbai civic body is set to get a corporation hall, featuring shopping areas, a badminton court and a gym, adding new facilities to its civic infrastructure.

Mumbai(Agency)

Paving the way for its first new corporation hall in 133 years, the Brihanmumbai Municipal Corporation's (BMC) Standing Committee on Thursday cleared a proposal to construct a six-storey building with a 350-seater hall across the civic headquarters in Fort. The project, estimated to cost Rs 44.87 crore, is expected to take two years to complete, after which civic proceedings will shift to the new venue.

On Thursday, the BMC's Chief Architect Department presented the conceptual designs for the new town hall. The building will house shopping areas, parking spaces, a badminton court, a gymnasium, offices for the Mayor, Deputy Mayor, Leader of the House and Leader of the Opposition, alongside the new corporation hall.The new structure will replace the existing civic gymkhana, which has remained defunct for the past few years because of its dilapidated condition. The BMC had previously floated tenders to redevelop the old gymkhana into a "town hall gymkhana", primarily catering to tourists visiting the area. However, the plan was redesigned to incorporate a corporation hall after concerns over the space crunch in the existing heritage hall came to the fore earlier this year.Ganesh Khankar, Leader of the House in the BMC, said, "At present, the seating space in the corporation hall is very congested, creating problems for corporators after a few hours. The new house will have the capacity to hold up to 350 corporators to ensure that the space will suffice even when the strength of corporators increases in future. The seating area will be planned on elevations, giving it the feel of the Vidhan Sabha, and allowing all corporators to be visible clearly."



Inside the building: What the BMC has planned

Spread over 5,000 square metres, the building will be restricted to a height of 31.9 metres to ensure that it aligns with the heritage structures surrounding it, including Chhatrapati Shivaji Maharaj Terminus (CSMT) and the BMC headquarters.The basement will have parking space for 70 vehicles, along with car lifts and a driveway.The ground floor will feature a fountain, entrance lobbies, a gallery hall and shops. The two podium levels will have parking spaces and a badminton court with high ceilings. The third floor will house a gymnasium and an indoor sports section.The BMC has earmarked the upper floors for official use. The fourth floor will have offices for the Mayor, Deputy Mayor, Leader of the Opposition and Leader of the House, along with a pantry and cafeteria. The fifth and sixth floors will house the corporation hall, with seating for up to 350 corporators, a podium with chairs for the Mayor and Deputy Mayor, a press box and a VIP seating area.

Qatar Airways, Air Arabia, others warn of diplomatic escalation over Adani's Mumbai airport push

The standoff follows proposal to shift flights on 14 international routes to Navi Mumbai airport; Gulf airlines, including Qatar Airways, demand their historical Summer slots

Mumbai.(Agency)

Gulf carriers affected by the proposed relocation of international flights from Mumbai's Chhatrapati Shivaji Maharaj International Airport (CSMIA) to the Adani Group-run Navi Mumbai International Airport (NMIA) have threatened to escalate the matter diplomatically if their historical slots for the Summer Schedule 2027 are not restored.In a communication to Mumbai International Airport Limited (MIAL), which operates CSMIA, several affected airlines, including Qatar Airways, Riyadh Air, Air Arabia, Oman Air, Flynas and Saudi Arabian Airlines, have strongly objected to the denial of their established historical slots at CSMIA's Terminal 2 (T2). Seeking restoration of these slots, the airlines have argued that any decision to reduce airport capacity cannot be taken unilaterally and must comply with the Ministry of Civil Aviation's 2013 Slot Allocation Guidelines.The carriers have warned that they may approach aviation regulators and government authorities in their respective countries, raising the possibility of reciprocal action.The dispute follows MIAL's October 30 proposal to the Civil Aviation Ministry seeking approval for a destination-based relocation plan. Under the proposal, all airlines operating on 14 international routes, including routes on which Indian carriers have announced plans to shift some flights, would operate from a single airport, NMIA.



The affected routes include Jeddah, Dhaka, Kathmandu, Bahrain, Kuwait, Madinah, Riyadh, Muscat and Sharjah, among others. The proposal would require airlines operating these routes to shift their services to the new airport.MIAL's proposal stems from its requirement to reduce CSMIA's annual passenger-handling capacity by five million to accommodate displaced passenger traffic during the redevelopment of Terminal 1B. The redevelopment, originally scheduled to begin in January 2027, was pushed to the end of March following discussions between MIAL and the Airline Operators Committee Mumbai. Adani Airport Holdings Ltd (AAHL), which holds a controlling majority stake in MIAL, had previously maintained that the 60-year-old terminal required redevelopment over structural safety concerns.

The standoff between the airlines and the airport operator has also drawn political intervention. Maharashtra Chief Minister Devendra Fadnavis has opposed the proposed relocation of international flights.In a letter to Union Civil Aviation Minister Ram Mohan Naidu, Fadnavis proposed an alternative. "I have written to the Ministry to develop Terminal 1B, shift operations from 1A to 1B and then demolish the existing 1A," he said.

Closed brake valve may have caused Kolkata-Sairang Express to overshoot signal and derail in Assam

Assam.(Agency)

A preliminary investigation into the derailment of the Kolkata-Sairang Express at Digaru railway station in Assam on November 11 has pointed to a possible failure of the train's main braking system, with a closed brake pipe angle cock suspected to have prevented the brakes from functioning, PTI reported.According to a six-member probe team's preliminary findings cited by PTI, the BP angle cock, a component that controls the flow of compressed air required to apply brakes across the coaches, was found in an isolated condition in the locomotive.A joint note prepared by the team on the day of the accident said this could have been the reason for the derailment, as the brakes might not have been applied while the locomotive's FP/BP angle cock remained isolated.The note also recorded that the train crew had applied the brakes, but they might not have worked because the angle cock was already in the closed position.The preliminary findings do not establish who rendered the braking system dysfunctional or whether the crew failed to check its functioning before operating the train.

The loco pilot, assistant loco pilot and guard, in their statements, said the braking system was working properly when they took charge of the train at Guwahati at around 5.30 am on November 11, according to the report cited by PTI.The train had earlier been stopped at Panbari station at 6.16 am after the wheels of one coach overheated due to jammed brake pads. The crew attended to the problem, and the train remained at the station for around 30 minutes.It resumed its journey at 6.46 am. As it approached Digaru station, the station master directed it to enter the loop line and stop to allow another train to pass.However, when the crew attempted to brake, the system allegedly failed. The train overshot the red signal, struck a dead end and derailed.Safety experts cited in the report said the crew might have relied on the train's alternative regenerative braking system to regulate its speed during the journey. They may have attempted to use the main braking system while approaching the loop line, only to find it non-functional.

They came with rent, then shot him: 1 held in Bengaluru advocate murder case

Bengaluru.(Agency)

The Bengaluru police have arrested one of the two accused in the murder of a 43-year-old advocate in Pattandur Agrahara, following a 20-day manhunt across several states. The second accused is still absconding, the police said on Thursday.The arrested accused, Amit Kumar Dubey, 25, is from Bihar and was apprehended on November 12. The second accused, Pawan Kumar Dubey, is still on the run.Amit and Pawan are accused of murdering advocate B Manjunath over outstanding rent on October 18.

Argument over pending rent

According to the preliminary investigation, the two accused, who worked as food delivery agents in Bengaluru, had rented a premises in Pattandur Agrahara from Manjunath."The accused had not paid rent for three months, amounting to Rs 15,000. Following a dispute over the outstanding amount, Manjunath had seized their two-wheeler. This led the two men to plan his murder. They procured a country-made firearm and shot him at his residence on October 18," the police said.According to the police, the accused allegedly returned to Manjunath's residence at night, claiming to have brought the pending rent. One of them allegedly shot him at close range while he was counting the money, following which both fled.

From Telangana to Bihar

The initial investigation had revealed that after the murder, one accused allegedly travelled to Chennai by train, while the other fled to Hyderabad on his motorcycle. The police initially deployed special teams across Delhi, Kolkata, Bihar, Chennai and Hyderabad, with the Central Crime Branch providing technical assistance.The operation proved challenging as the accused received assistance from family members, who provided them shelter and repeatedly shifted them between locations to evade arrest, the police said.While Amit was arrested in Bihar, the police are continuing efforts to trace Pawan and recover the country-made firearm allegedly used in the murder. The police are also investigating how the accused procured the firearm and ascertaining whether anyone else was involved. The case has been registered under relevant provisions of the Bharatiya Nyaya Sanhita and the Arms Act.



OERC leadership vacuum threatens annual tariff exercise, investment

BHUBANESWAR.(Agency)

Dozens of regulatory orders and key investment proposals have been held up due to the prolonged delay in appointing a chairperson to the Odisha Electricity Regulatory Commission (OERC), affecting the functioning of the power sector regulator.The delay has also raised concerns over the commission's ability to discharge its statutory responsibilities, particularly with the annual tariff determination exercise approaching.

Retired IAS officer and former chief secretary Pradeep Kumar Jena resigned as OERC chairperson on May 25, barely 14 months after assuming charge. He was appointed to the post on March 28, 2025.

On July 9, the Energy department issued a notification inviting applications for the vacant post, initially fixing August 9 as the deadline. The last date was subsequently extended twice, first to August 17 and then to August 31. However, the selection committee is yet to meet to finalise the appointment.The three-member selection committee, headed by a judge of the Orissa High Court, comprises the chairperson of the Central Electricity Authority and the chief secretary as its other members. A meeting scheduled for last month was postponed.Under the established regulatory process, state power generators OPGC and OHPC, bulk power supplier GRIDCO, the four distribution companies, the State Load Despatch Centre and OPTCL are required to submit their annual revenue requirements and tariff proposals by November 30.Following scrutiny, the commission conducts public hearings involving stakeholders, including consumers and the state government, generally from the second week of February. Separate tariff orders are issued in the last week of March and come into effect from April 1 every financial year.The leadership vacuum has reportedly stalled the finalisation of 12 important regulatory orders. "Proposals involving investments of around `30,000 crore are also awaiting regulatory approval despite public hearings having been conducted," said senior power analyst Ananda Mohapatra.



The commission is also grappling with a severe manpower crunch, with only seven officers working against 22 sanctioned posts. Three advisory positions are vacant, while the secretary's post is being managed by an officiating incumbent. Four director-level posts have remained vacant for over a year. Of the three joint director posts, only one is occupied, by an officer on deputation from OPTCL.

New Gandhigiri needed to address ever-inventive evil

As I grow older, my world gets emptier and my memories get fuller. Deep down, I miss the very people I once took for granted. I miss the friends I could argue with. I miss the teachers I could learn more from. I want to talk of one in particular.Ramchandra Gandhi, a friend, philosopher and guide to me, was a professor of sociology at the University of Hyderabad. He gave me more lectures in the Delhi School of Economics canteen than he did to other students.Ramu had a profound academic interest in violence. He felt that the concept of non-violence had to be reworked again and again to handle the inventiveness of evil. He had a profound critique of the Emergency, which he saw as ritualised violence. He once accosted Indira Gandhi while she was standing at the Gandhi Samadhi and said, "Stop insulting my grandfather!"For Ramu, the Emergency was a profound insult to the non-violent tradition. He often articulated a whole series of alternatives. He felt violence was more inventive than science. One had to do something profound to philosophy in order to handle these issues.Once, Ramu told me that modern violence was quite different. It had to confront three 'technical problems'. The first was the Oppenheimer issue—about the scientist who felt that the atom bomb was a technical answer to a technical question. This idea of technicality and rationalisation is something we must confront because it turns violence into a technical question or an engineering problem when it is something more profound.The second issue is numeracy. Today, war is often dealt with in body counts alone. Ramu said numbers were an illiterate way of explaining much of reality. The third issue he emphasised was of language—something that had to be reinvented to mean more than was assumed.

he vocabulary of violence is extremely stunted. One needs new concepts to create a new kind of storytelling. Ramu gave three examples. First, he pointed out that esoteric concepts often become everyday issues. When triage, which began as a tradition in sorting coffee beans, moved to medicine, the question became more profound. Here is an example. Say, during a war, two groups of soldiers are afflicted—one because of their visit to the red-light district of a town, and the other for being stricken in an act of war. The question is, given a limited amount of penicillin, which lot should one cure? The rational answer was that the people stricken in red-light districts were more likely to recover faster and be ready to fight.

Triage, in that sense, is an attempt to eliminate people on grounds of rationality and economics. It is a deep economisation of war. The idea travelled into international relations with Henry Kissinger, who believed aid should be cut off from 'weaker nations'. For Ramu, the very idea of triage was a deep form of violence.The second idea he often talked about was of genocide. He said it's something we don't understand, though we make it a big issue. We talk of it in numbers, but a philosophy of genocide is missing. In this context, he discussed Hannah Arendt's book, Eichmann in Jerusalem. For Arendt, Eichmann was eventually understandable in terms of management theory. It was merely a profound extension of Taylorism, which analyses workflows to maximise efficiency.

Migrants and a maze of deletions

Built for a static electorate, Special Intensive Revision mistakenly treats mobility as absence

The Special Intensive Revision (SIR) of electoral rolls, rolled out by the Election Commission of India (ECI) last year, is riddled with glaring anomalies. The nub of the problem lies in its intrinsic failure to map and enfranchise millions of internal migrants who leave their home and hearth in search of a better life within IndiaThe story of these invisible people, for whom the Aadhaar programme was conceptualised in 2009-10, does not find even a cursory mention in the polarised and corrosive political discourse on electoral rolls.Ostensibly, more than 13.3 crore names have been struck off the draft rolls since August 2025. For the record, only 16 countries in the world have a population of over 10 crore. The Chief Election Commissioner says that such an all-pervasive exercise has been undertaken so that "no eligible voter is left out" and "no ineligible voter is included". Critics claim that these are targeted deletions. Lost between the two is a more prosaic reading that the map of deletions bears an eerie resemblance to the map of India's internal migration.Buy MapsThe National Sample Survey Office's Multiple Indicator Survey (MIS) of 2020-21 found that about 26.8% of the people in rural areas and about 34.6% in urban areas had their current place of residence different from their usual one. Most of the people move within a state (87.2%). Women move after marriage (93.4% in rural areas and 71.5% in urban areas) and men do it for work — 38.7% (rural) and 56.1% (urban).Several large urban labour markets draw heavily on other states. Delhi draws 64.7% of its urban migrants and 64% of rural ones from states across the country. Over a quarter of urban migrants in Maharashtra, Haryana, Jharkhand and Gujarat belong to other states. Telangana has about 23 migrant workers per 100 urban men, Maharashtra 18 and Delhi 17. Conversely, they number just 5 in Bihar and fewer than 8 in Uttar Pradesh.Overlaying the SIR in various states and union territories, the steepest draft roll deletions are in Delhi (32.78%), Chandigarh (31.76%), Telangana (21.7%), Maharashtra (21.14%) and Karnataka (19.47%). Jharkhand (16.5%), Haryana (16.39%), Tamil Nadu (15.2%), Gujarat (14.5%) and Chhattisgarh (12.88%) occupy the middle rung.Buy Maps

Uttar Pradesh, a large labour-supplying state, is somewhat of an outlier in this regard. Its deletion rate is 13.21%, close to that of the destination states. Among the others, there are states such as Andhra Pradesh (10.8%), Kerala (8.6%) and Punjab (6.3%).The traditional labour-supplying states bring up the rear — Bihar (8.3%), Rajasthan (7.7%), West Bengal (7.6%), Madhya Pradesh (7.4%) and Odisha (6%). As many as 2.04 crore names were struck off in Uttar Pradesh and 2.06 crore in Maharashtra, the highest in terms of numbers. Karnataka accounted for 99.32 lakh deletions.The dead, it turns out, are spread fairly evenly. Where a category split exists, deaths account for 1.5-4.2% of each state's rolls, while electors marked "shifted" or "absent" range from 4.3% in West Bengal to 29.9% in Delhi.Buy MapsThe gap between states lies almost wholly in the categories that record mobility. Across all 18 sets of rolls, the deletion rate correlates with the MIS measure of urban work migration at 0.50, a moderate fit, and with Census-based net migration at 0.56. A cruder yardstick, the overall migration rate enhanced by marriage-related movement, shows almost no corresponding relationship.

For the migrant, home is often where the vote is. In Delhi, district officials say some electors with more than one voter card preferred to stay registered in their native places. Only 2.5 lakh fresh enrolment applications, nearly half from first-time voters, arrived after 47.6 lakh names were dropped in Delhi. The low count of "shifted" and "absent" people in Bihar (4.6% of the applicants whose forms were received have not been found at their address and 2.3% have permanently shifted), Rajasthan (5.4%) and West Bengal (4.26%) indicate that migrants cling to their village electoral rolls.Buy Maps



However, the pattern frays at the edges. UP, a large net sender of labour, still marked 14.06% of its residents as shifted or absent, suggesting that many migrants were struck off at home as well or preferred retaining their vote perhaps at their place of work. Odisha, despite a high MIS count of urban work migrants, recorded the lowest deletion rate of all.The pattern sharpens within states, where the city usually outstrips the hinterland. Greater Bengaluru dropped 45.1% of its electors under the ASDDO (absent, shifted, dead, duplicate, other) categories against the average of 19.54% for Karnataka. Hyderabad dropped 41%, Chennai 35% and Gurugram 29.3%.In UP, Lucknow and Ghaziaba topped the removals, while Bundelkhand districts recorded the fewest. Among them was Mahoba, whose young men started migrating for work to Delhi and Punjab nearly a decade ago. In Bihar, the heaviest district-wise deletions were in rural Gopalganj, Kishanganj and Purnia.

The migration reading, however tidy, must yield to harder questions. Out of sight is often out of mind. In Murshidabad, a district of nearly 11 lakh migrant labourers, the West Bengal Migrant Workers' Union estimates that nearly 66,000 migrant workers in Samserganj, around 55,000 in Lalgola and about 40,000 in Bhagwangola have had their names removed through the SIR process.Buy Maps

The Supreme Court was told that Bengal's tribunals ruled in favour of the voter on more than 75,000 of the roughly 83,000 appeals that were disposed of, out of about 38 lakh pending cases. The "shifted" and "absent" labels were applied so unevenly that Bengaluru's Hebbal recorded 1.14 lakh (87%) shifted electors and just 287 absent ones.Buy MapsDraft figures are also an unreliable guide to the final count. Bihar's draft rolls left out 65 lakh names and 3.66 lakh more were removed before the final rolls, but 21.53 lakh fresh additions cut the net reduction to about 47 lakh. UP's final rolls grew by a net 84 lakh over its draft, bringing the net loss down from 2.89 crore to 2.04 crore.The SIR's ledger of missing voters is thus a cracked mirror of India's internal migration, drawn to the metropolis yet stubbornly tethered to the village. It also shows how easily a roll built for a static electorate can mistake a moving citizen for a missing one. A stitch in time, through continuous and portable registration, would serve better than a periodic sweep that risks throwing the baby out with the bathwater.

There is also the larger question of how a country where nearly three in 10 people have left their usual home should register them to vote. The SIR process has no way of figuring out that a deleted vote in Chandigarh corresponds to a retained vote in Bihar or Uttarakhand. The ECI has no software that can do this end-to-end mapping.Buy Maps

All this makes a compelling case for scrapping the SIR and restoring the electoral rolls to their status as on June 4, 2024, when the results of the Lok Sabha elections were declared. This becomes even more urgent as the ECI readies itself for the last leg of the SIR, which would inevitably result in millions of internal migrants being disenfranchised.

Forced retirement can taint, verdict hands government too much power

While improving data collection is essential, it represents only one aspect of addressing the problem

On the face of it, the recent Supreme Court ruling that upheld compulsory retirement of two Chhattisgarh government employees for sub-par performance sounds fair. The state should have the power to weed out mediocrity and make public services efficient. But the devil is in the detail. The verdict throws up troubling questions on the principle of natural justice and scope of Executive authority.The two employees rose up the ranks to be clerks. Their services were regularised in 2015, indicating that, at least up till then, their record had been found adequate. But in 2017, a screening committee found that five employees, including the two petitioners, did not measure up to the expected standards on parameters such as capabilities and integrity. The evidence for such evaluation was not scrutinised afresh on the ground that the court is not an appropriate appellate authority in such matters and its role is confined to ensuring an objective assessment.The Supreme Court relied on Baikuntha Nath Das (1992) to conclude that not communicating adverse remarks on service records to the petitioners was acceptable because compulsory retirement is neither a punishment nor a stigma, but an exercise aimed at efficiency. For that reason, it held that the Constitution's Articles 14 (right to equality) and 311(2) (protection of civil servants from arbitrary removal) do not affect this case. It means that the right to be heard does not apply as a principle of natural justice. It clarified that the Constitution does not recognise the concept of negative equality. In other words, if a mistake is made in one employee's case, another cannot insist that the same course be applied to him. In the same breath, the court cited Nand Kumar Verma (2012) to insist that government action should be based on solid evidence. Since the same yardstick was used to assess all employees, it found the exercise unbiased.



In effect, the government's word was taken for granted. This gives authorities a scope to exercise individual prejudice. Besides, the premise that compulsory retirement is not a stigma falls flat in the real world. Denial of information on adverse service remarks and refusal to hear those acted against give too much power to governments. On balance, the verdict is not a good precedent for service law.

Revive a lifeline in drought year

Rural cooperatives have suffered because of slow deposit growth and a rise in defaults resulting from frequent crop failures. But in a drought year like this, their extensive networks and grassroots links must be revitalised to keep small farmers from usurious lenders

Rural credit cooperatives—some of which are over 120 years old—remained a crucial pillar of formal financial support to farmers for decades until India's banking network spread wider. Despite this, the Reserve Bank of India's Report on Currency and Finance 2023-24 shows that despite the progress in outreach of institutional finance in rural areas, roughly one-third of agricultural credit needs are still met through informal sources. This share tends to increase significantly during droughts. Addressing this gap is crucial in what is expected to be another drought year in many parts of the country.According to the India Meteorological Department, while the overall southwest monsoons deficit reported a slump of 13 percent this year, it varied extremely across regions with central India's share cut to half by September-end. The deficit exceeds half in certain sub-divisions and regions. According to India Drought Monitor, drought conditions are reported in over two-thirds of the country. In such a state, formal credit outreach from institutions with well-established community linkages like cooperatives can be more effective and efficient—especially to small and marginal farmers. Hence, there is an urgent need to strengthen and revitalise rural credit cooperatives with requisite measures addressing the existing challenges.

Despite an extensive presence in rural areas, the share of cooperative credit declined drastically due to various challenges. The share of cooperative credit collapsed from around 50 percent in the 1990s to around 9 percent in the 2020s. Considering the importance of primary agricultural cooperative-credit societies (PACs) with strong grassroots linkages, the government initiated various measures during the last five years or so to modernise and expand PACS into multi-level service centres. Nevertheless, the growth in agriculture credit from cooperatives remained muted due to persisting challenges. One of the major challenges of rural credit cooperatives is their deteriorating financial health. The significant slowdown in the growth of mobilisation of deposits has led to decline in internal funding and increased dependence on external funding and refinancing. In addition, the slow recovery of loans due to frequent crop failures also led to increased non-performing assets for rural credit societies. The increased dependence on external funding has, in turn, led to increased cost of funds and thereby affecting their profitability and long-term viability. As a result, the non-profitable rural credit cooperatives or PACS tend to lose the confidence of their members and depositors, as well as borrowers and external financiers or lenders.



Lack of effective governance is another important constraint for efficient functioning of rural credit cooperatives. Unlike commercial banks, the governance of rural credit societies is not by the financial professionals but by the elected members. As a result, the functioning of rural cooperatives is often subjected to influence and interference of local member interests and politics. In addition, overlapping and dual control of state and central governments is also an important issue in the management of rural credit cooperatives. Another major challenge is the operational inefficiencies and inadequacies in terms of digital technologies and capacity-building. The human resource capacity development is lagging in many rural credit cooperatives largely confining to short-term lending for crop loans. With limited financial profitability and resources, technological upgrade for computerisation and digitalisation is also a major challenge for rural credit societies. As a result of such lack of technological upgrade and human resource capacities, rural credit societies are lagging behind banks not only to raise deposit growth but also to diversify their lending portfolios. The last three years have witnessed considerable progress in digitisation with nearly 60 percent of PACs migrating to networked national software by March 2026. Such support and measures need to be further scaled up and accelerated to extend the digital transformation and modernisation to all PACS in the country.In addition, to compete with commercial banks and other financial institutions, there is an urgent need to strengthen human resource capacities of rural credit cooperatives in line with the changing dynamics of rural banking preferences and demand. Further, there is a need to ensure effective governance with measures like mandatory training of members especially in managerial positions.Upgrading PACS into multi-level service centres with diversified business activities may not only revitalise them with additional income but also help rural communities with added services and employment opportunities. But at the same, it is essential to ensure that the primary objective of efficient credit delivery to farmers remains a priority. With their extensive networks, grassroots linkages and wider accessibility to small farmers, rural cooperative credit societies can enhance the outreach of institutional credit, especially under drought conditions. With growing risks from climate change and increasing occurrence of localised weather incidences, there is an urgent need to strengthen and revitalise the rural credit cooperatives not only with technological upgrade and business diversification but also with effective governance and resource capabilities for enhanced credit delivery.

The best kept secrets of Manipur



In and around Imphal, borders keep shifting like quicksand. Hills and plains, Meitei and Naga, Burma and India — everyone has his own story of Manipur. This was a trip into India's last Great Unknown.

They called him El Diablo — The Devil — and he came with quite a bit of head. We stared at each other across the table, silently. Me, tired and very thirsty after a long day on the road. He, bubbling and frothing with sinister energy. I made the first move. In one blurry second, I reached out, picked him up and took a long swig. Hell, El Diablo was very good, no questions asked. I first saw a can of El Diablo — a 12% strong lager — as the sun set over Ningthoukhong, a sleepy town about 35 km out of Imphal, the Manipur capital. The day had been stretched out. My photographer and I had started early from Kolkata and had only reached Imphal late in the afternoon, after a two-and-a-half hour flight that stopped at Agartala and offered no tea or coffee. The airhostesses had saccharine smiles, but I missed my caffeine shot. There had been some redress though: just as the plane dipped into the Imphal valley, we spotted the world-famous Loktak Lake with its floating circles of vegetation. From above, it looked a bit like the Signs poster, but I didn't feel like Mel Gibson. Anyway.

Imphal was where we'd be for the next three days to attend the Bhagyachandra National Festival of Classical Dance. I'd done my homework well. The evenings would be kept for Manipuri, Odissi, Bharatanatyam and more at the historic Kangla Fort. During the day, I wanted to drive to the Burma border at Moreh, taste iromba, the white-hot dried fish delicacy, and check out the all-women Ima Market in the heart of Imphal. It would all fit in neatly. But I should have known better. The northeast is India's last Great Unknown and I had travelled here enough to know that the region had this wonderful habit of running your plans — even five-year ones — through the shredder for kicks. That's precisely what it felt like when we landed in Imphal on that early November afternoon. All I wanted was a hot shower, but the team that had come to pick us up was in a tizzy. We were late, it emerged, and we'd have to rush off to the Ningthoukhong Gopinath Temple, where the chief minister would inaugurate the festival. And as we all know in Bengal, CMs can't be kept waiting. So we drove with gale force and reached the temple — an enormous complex that was giving off waves of devotional energy like a room heater. Men dressed in crisp white were clanging cymbals, dancers were whirling, people were chanting. And then there were the kids. All of them rouged up and fitted out like Gopinath — identical little Krishnas churned out by an assembly line. It was all slightly trippy. I decided that I needed a break and strolled out. Just next to the temple gates was a stall selling tea and fritters. Salvation, finally, I thought. Then, just as I was taking my first bite of the gobhi pakoda, the young chap at the counter lowered his voice and asked, "Beer chahiye?" Had I heard him right? Beer? This part of Manipur was supposed to be dry by the rulebook, but I blinked and nodded. And out came El Diablo, for 200 bucks. It seems salvation didn't come so cheap, even sitting next to the temple walls. As I sipped on the beer and felt the mellow glow, I realized that it was a priceless moment — I, an Indian, was drinking an Indonesian beer with a Spanish name that had been smuggled in from Burma. It's then that I started falling in love with Manipur.



More about Moreh

For years I had heard about Moreh, the border town about 110 km south of Imphal. The tales depicted it as some sort of frontier El Dorado, where you got everything from shoes to clothes and gadgets at great prices. Its gates also opened into mysterious north Burma. A journalist friend in Kolkata had told me how he had crossed the Moreh border and had met a Burmese army officer who had taken him all the way to Mandalay — without a passport, visa or any other official papers! I wanted my own Moreh stories to tell. "So can we go to Moreh?" "No no!" Vigorous headshake. "But it's only a few hours by car. We'll be back by the evening." "No no no!" More vigorous headshake. "We'd love to see the Burma border!" "No no no no!" Even more vigorous headshake. Well, that's my Moreh story — I never went there! I had not taken into account the fact that since we were guests of the Manipur government, there would be checks and balances on our movement in the border state. The same government employee who was our gracious host and guide in Imphal would turn into an establishment watchdog at the hint of an indiscreet request. But Burma was all around us in Manipur. The state shared almost half of its border with the country. Imphal had a Moreh market, which sold all the cross-border deliverables at a good price.

There was Burma Travels, Burma Stores. Our neighbour ran deep in the consciousness here. Strolling around the bustling Paona Bazar, I walked into Burma Traders, a 'suitings and shirtings' establishment, where the Marwari owner recounted how his family had settled in pre-Independence Burma and had traded across the northeast. They still had shops in Guwahati and Imphal. The Rangoon branch had been sold years back.

Travelling in and around Imphal, I realized that borders — both within and outside — were a living, evolving reality here. The capital was at the centre of a sun-drenched valley with blue-green hill s standing like sentinels all around. These hills also served as boundaries of the mind. The mostly Hindu Meitei from the plains seemed to avoid the hill tribes — Nagas, Kukis and others — and it also worked the other way round. I knew that the exquisite Longpi pottery from the hilly Ukhrul district, the home of Tangkhul Nagas, was a prized buy. Naturally, I thought I would get the best of it in Imphal. But no luck there. Hardly anyone knew of it and after much searching, I found a few specimens in the boutique handicrafts store of the city's biggest hotel. And even there, the salesperson was clueless about the amazing craft. Long live Dakshinapan! Then there are other borders, shifting like quicksand and going far back in time. Manipur stood at the frontier of the Empire for decades and fought valiantly against the British in 1891 under the leadership of the general, Bir Tikendrajit, who was later arrested and executed. He is revered in Manipur as a great martyr, no less than Kshudiram or Bhagat Singh. "But how many people know of him outside the state?" asked theatreperson Ratan Thiyam during a chat with me on the sidelines of the festival. I didn't have any answers. The countryside around Imphal also saw some of the fiercest fighting in the Second World War and there are monuments to that all around. In the heart of town is the war cemetery, where the British troops are laid to rest. It's a tranquil place, filled with birdsong and a breeze that tugs at the falling leaves. The plaques are so old, yet so young... 27, 22, 29, 31 — most of them fell in the prime of youth. Across the ancient battle lines, the Japanese war memorial is located at the base of a small mound ominously called Red Hill, a few kilometres out of Imphal. The monument is stark, almost rigorous in its eastern sense of symmetry and simplicity — open concrete walls in a stone-paved courtyard. That's how far the imperial forces had come before they were beaten back in 1944.

Sangai-ed in Loktak

The best part about riding a motorbike in Imphal is that you can do without a helmet — no one's ever watching you — but you can never do without a mask. Almost every biker worth his vroom wears it. It's like they're all in some never-ending gangster flick. In reality though, it's the pollution. I hate to say it, but Imphal is among the dustiest, smokiest towns I've seen in the northeast. The place seems to be a work in progress — roads are being widened, buildings have been torn down, the asphalt has got stripped off. The dust, which fills your nose and feels like grit on your tongue, mixes with the exhaust fumes to form a fine, brown aerosol that just hangs in there. Some parts of Imphal would do rush-hour Shyambazar proud.

But then, if the town gets some bad press, the countryside more than makes up for it. Leaving Imphal behind, our journey to Loktak Lake was like driving straight into a picture postcard. The smog thinned out and then vanished, the sky turned azure and all around us were paddy fields ripe with a golden harvest. Farmhands worked with scythes, slicing the crop, piling it up in mounds under a benign sun. In the distance, smoke rose from haystacks. Love songs started playing in my head. If I were Keats, I thought, I'd plonk myself by the roadside and write To Autumn. My photographer went into a controlled frenzy with his camera, punctuating the job at hand with oohs and aahs. I understood. Poor fellow had lived all his life on congested Amherst Street.

After the above, the lake itself was a bit of an anti-climax. Websites variously described it as a natural wonder, the only floating lake in the world. This was due to the phumdis, the buoyant circles of vegetation unique to this lake. While they had looked enchanting from the flight, at ground level they were too big to be spotted. So we did the touristy thing and went on a boat ride. It's there that I heard that hydropower projects had changed the lake's character substantially. The dam had altered water levels and the phumdi were dwindling. The sangai deer — an endangered species that is also the state animal of Manipur — was facing severe habitat loss in the Keibul Lamjao National Park, which is part of Loktak's wetland ecosystem. There are just a few hundred of them left in the wild. But this is India, the land of miracle men. Maybe the Manipuri sangai will survive, just like the Bengal tiger. There are no problems of survival though at Imphal's biggest feminist rhapsody, the Ima Market. Spread over four cavernous blocks — veggies, fish, fruits and perishables on one side and garments and decorative items on the other — all the stalls are run by women, or Ima (mother). You could say the market is Manipur's indigenous answer to multi-brand retail. I visited it on a bustling Monday morning when trade was just picking up. The women — almost all of them dressed in the traditional wraparound phanek and sporting the mandatory tilak — were a happy, thriving community. I spotted two of them playing ludo on the side even as they aggressively courted customers. One of the older Imas was blissfully asleep while the younger ones watched over her pile of shawls. The threads of kinship ran deep and everyone knew everyone else here. Even the competition had a touch of banter and love that warmed your heart.



Supping with the devil

I like to think of it as the devil chilli, but it has many names, like The Ghost Who Walks — bhoot jolokia, Naga mirch, raja mirch. In Manipur, they call it u-morok. Seasoned northeast travellers all know this hottie and share whispered tales of their first encounter, which is inevitably unforgettable. I had first had it at a roadside eatery in downtown Shillong. It had been ground into a red paste and I mistook it for tomato sauce and put a big dollop in my mouth. I somehow survived to tell the tale. For perspective, please note that there's been a proposal to use the bhoot jolokia in hand grenades. The chilli is available across the northeast, but hardly anywhere is it as celebrated as in Manipur. They pile up mountains of u-morok and sell it by the bucket in the markets — fresh green, red and dried. They put it in curries, flavour their fish and chop it finely to have on the side with fritters. You can't visit Manipur and give u-morok the miss — and I didn't. The raw stuff was a first and I tried it with egg pakodas at the dance festival. I remember it was cold that evening and I was sneezing. Then, as the chilli flavour exploded like a bomb in my mouth, everything turned hyper-real. My sinuses cleared, I heard every note the musicians were playing and my head buzzed with energy. It felt like an epiphany without the hallelujahs.

But my best u-morok experience was altogether more visceral and it took place at a Chak Hotel. These are the traditional fish-and-rice eateries that dot the markets of Imphal. If you want to taste authentic Meitei food, this is where you go. Our driver took us to one in Paona Bazar, which was small and unpretentious but served food in squeaky clean plates and bowls. We ordered the all-course thali. So there was rice, two types of dal, various bhajis (one of them was spring onion stalks stir-fried with shrimp and galangal — surely a Burmese influence), a piece of fried fish, various other fish curries and surprisingly, a large chunk of boiled squash.

I tried it all, but the piece de resistance was the iromba. A thick mish-mash of boiled veggies, ngari — the dried local fish — and loads of u-morok, you'd need Bear Grylls's tastebuds to have this signature dish cooked without a drop of oil. It was very healthy and well, very smelly. One small spoonful, and I could feel the fish-chilli combination travelling all the way down my throat. Let's just say it was unforgettable. But that goes for all of Manipur.

A few weeks have passed since I returned, but the state and its people are like a jewel in my mind's treasure hoard. I made friends, shared stories and got to know India a bit more. When I flew there, my guardian angel went alone with me. I came back with two devils — a box full of u-morok and an empty can of El Diablo. I'm still sorting out if that qualifies as good karma. But the u-morok has got pickled at home and El Diablo sits at my desk. They keep calling me back to Manipur.

Planning the trip: Why go?

Because Manipur is like a picture postcard, with blue hills and a golden Imphal valley dotted with rice fields.

Because this is place for cross-border adventures. You can drive up to Moreh, the Burma border, and if you're lucky, maybe even take a walk in the neighbouring country!

Because you can visit the world's only floating sanctuary — the Keibul Lamjao National Park — and hope to see one of the rarest deer in India, the Sangai. And if you can't spot the animal, you can still take a boat ride on the Loktak Lake and check out the phumdi, the floating vegetation circles that are a natural wonder.

Because where else can you shop at a huge market run entirely by women? Don't miss the Ima Market in Imphal.

Because you love horses and must visit the polo ground in Imphal. The game was supposedly invented here!

Because you love tribal art and must pick up the exquisite Longpi pottery from Ukhrul.

When is a good time?

Manipur is open to tourists round the year. But for a rain-free, hassle-free trip, book your tickets between November and April.

How to reach?

Remember, Manipur has no rail connectivity. There are flights from Kolkata. You can also take a train to Silchar or Dimapur and drive on to Imphal.

Where to stay and what to eat?

There are hotels of all standards — from budget to super deluxe — in Imphal. Try eating at a Chak Hotel — the local fish-and-rice eatery — in Imphal. Don't miss the iromba, the signature dried fish Meitei delicacy. It will set fire to your taste buds, but is worth a try.

Famous Beaches in New Zealand

Being an island country, New Zealand is literally surrounded by long shorelines. Here you will find all kinds of beaches for swimming and surfing. New Zealand is literally surrounded by beautiful beaches. It has more than 9,000 miles of coast plus hundreds of pristine seashores. You can find all kinds of shoreline here—from jagged rocky shores to hidden black and white sands. With major cities located near the water, there are plenty of famous beaches in New Zealand to choose from. Whether you are looking for adventure or relaxation, you will surely find a stretch of coast to explore and enjoy.

So, if you love beaches and the lifestyle that comes with staying on a beach, then you will surely enjoy your visit to New Zealand during ICC Cricket World Cup 2015. Here you will find long sandy beaches, turquoise lagoon, ideal surfing spot and natural seaside hot springs. New Zealand offers a beach for every temperament.

If want to soak up the sun in New Zealand, here are the best stretches of coast found in the country.

Waui Beachin

This beach is near the city of Gisborne and surrounded by reserves and protected lands. The beach is huge and offers plenty of recreational activities from idyllic picnic spots, walking and jogging tracks to swimming and sunbathing.

Kaiteriteri Beach in Nelson

This beach has golden sand and receives the highest rate of sunshine hours in the country. Although not expansive, it is perfectly formed and has all the prerequisites for an idyllic seaside experience. The place has a busy vacation atmosphere with pack campgrounds and vacation homes. Do not forget to bring your camera as penguins, seals and dolphins are common seen here.

Piha Beach in West Auckland

This is the country's most famous surfing beach. It is found on the west coast and a half-hour drive from Auckland. Rugged cliffs frame the sea and the lush bush of the Waitakere Ranges provides opportunity for exploration, walks and picnics. This beach is definitely not for swimming and sunbathing but best for surfing.

Hot Water Beach

This gorgeous beach is located in Coromandel Peninsula. If you arrive 2 hours before or after low tide, you can experience a natural spa without paying a cent. Tourists came here with shovels to dig holes at the tide line then wait for the natural hot water to seep up through the sand. You can enjoy sea water that is full of healthy minerals such as calcium, magnesium and potassium. But beware of the notoriously strong rip tides near the outcrop.

Karikari Peninsula's Beach

This beach was made famous by the 1993 film, The Piano. It is vast and still-empty paradise with black sand and craggy cliffs with a 100-foot Karekare Falls tucked just inside the forest. It is famous for its annual beach race day every month of April with local ponies and horses race in order to raise money for a cause.



Mont Tremblant Canada

Located an hour north of Montreal in the Laurentian Mountains, Mont Tremblant attracts tourists from around the world. There is just enough adventure mixed in with the decadence of luxury hotels, fine wine and great food. Being a part of the Intrawest family, Mont Tremblant has all of the elements of Whistler in BC, Steamboat in Colorado and Panorama in Alberta. Intrawest has done an amazing job of transforming the base of each mountain into a world class village. Packed with wine bars and bistros as well as a satisfying mix of Asian, French and International cuisines, there is something here to satisfy any craving. It has coffee shops, pubs, cafeterias and places for fondues and raclettes.



Mont Tremblant, Canada

Re-named Whistler Mountain in 1965 (after the cry of the ubiquitous western hoary marmot, or Whistle Pig) the pleasantly car-free village centre was purpose-built, quite attractively, on the site of an old garbage tip, a favourite haunt of bears. It is now an attractive but sprawling village, dominated in the Upper Village by the imposing neo-gothic structure of the splendid Fairmont Chateau Whistler hotel, and some truly terrific skiing on Whistler and Blackcomb mountains which have the largest vertical drop in North America: both are about a mile high. Vancouver, the gateway city, is one of the most beautiful in the world. Then comes the two hour "Sea-to-Sky Highway" (99 North) drive, the early stages along the magnificent Strait of Georgia coastline, with misty views of Vancouver Island.

One of Whistler's few snags is its low elevation. At 675 metres (2,214 feet), close to the maritime influence of the Pacific seaboard, it tends to attract more than its fair share of rain. Although this nearly always results in fresh snowfalls higher up the mountain, the prospect of going out in the rain to start a day's skiing puts a



Edibnurgh in Pictures



The Edinburgh Castle is a proud symbol of the Scottish nation. Watching over the capital like an overprotective father, the castle is not only the country's most instantly-recognisable sights, but also its most significant. Built in the 12th century, this beautiful

National Portrait Gallery

Scotland's National Portrait Gallery is a strikingly-red Gothic revival building containing some of the country's most renowned works of art. The enormous entrance hall houses a mural depicting some of the most important Scots throughout

Calton Hill

The capital's most significant pile of earth, Calton Hill has played a pivotal role in the history of Edinburgh. The hill has served various functions—from being used as a place of execution, to hosting a vigil for Scottish devolution—and it continues to

Edinburgh Castle

Edinburgh Playhouse

The city's best known theatre venue—it is said that the theatre is haunted by the grey-suited ghost of Albert, an old stagehand who died in a freak accident here many decades ago—originally opened as a super-cinema in 1929, but is now the UK's largest

Holyrood Park

This beautiful Royal Park within spitting distance of the capital offers visitors a real taste of the Scottish Highlands. Sprawling across 650 acres of high hills, wide glens, steep cliffs, craggy ridges and deep lochs, it makes for a perfect excursion from the

Palace of Holyroodhouse

On a sunny summer's day in Edinburgh, there is nothing nicer than taking a leisurely stroll through the fragrant gardens at Holyrood Palace. Founded in 1128, the sublimely beautiful Holyrood Palace was once home to generations of Scottish Kings and

Shopping

From Princes Street in the heart of the New Town—the city's foremost shopping strip littered with high street giants like H&M and Topshop—to streets with a strong local flavour; Edinburgh has a good collection of atmospheric places to shop at.

Fish and chips

Whether it's the classic cod, chips and mushy peas or a battered sausage with gravy, you can't leave Edinburgh without sampling the famous chippies. You'll find eat-in and takeaway shops right across the city, but the best of the lot is The Tailend Fish Bar in Leith. The first of the posh chippies, it offers all the traditional dishes—cod and haddock, pies, chicken and sausages—but also has soups, salmon, prawns and more. If you can't make it to The Tailend, other great Edinburgh chippies include the award-winning L'Abla D'Oro which is also one of the city's must-eat spots.

Heart of Midlothian

As you're walking the Royal Mile, you should keep an eye out for the famous Heart of Midlothian. A beautifully decorative love-heart-shaped mosaic, built into the cobblestones beside St Giles Cathedral, it marks the original location of the now-demolished

Jenners

Jenners is more than just a shopper's paradise; unlike most British department stores, it also offers hair and beauty treatments, chiropody, manicures and more. An Edinburgh retail institution, this enormous department store has been a fixture on Princes

Cafes in Edinburgh

Spend an hour or two at one of the ambient, street-side cafes in the city. Amidst the multitude, Peter's Yard is said to have the best coffee, crispbread and cakes in Edinburgh. Add to that a lively atmosphere, a great location, friendly service and a sincere

St Giles' Cathedral

The religious centre of Scottish life for close to a millennium, St Giles' Cathedral is a pivotal part of the Edinburgh landscape. Also known as The Mother Church of Presbyterianism, the building is instantly recognizable by its architecture and famed crown

National Museum of Scotland

If you fancy a fascinating stroll through the country's long, rich history, then a trip to the Museum of Scotland should definitely feature on your itinerary. Scotland is famous for its creative influence—having invented the telephone, the bicycle, the steam

Royal Yacht Britannia

Once the official Royal Yacht of Queen Elizabeth II, the Britannia has since reinvented itself as Britain's finest exhibition ship. Permanently moored in Leith, the imposing vessel maintains its original design and function, so members of the public can

The Vaults

The Edinburgh Vaults are where history and the paranormal collide. Built in the late 18th century underneath the South Bridge, these vaults were forgotten about for over 150 years, but were opened to the public after excavations in the

The Water of Leith

This 12-mile stretch of walkway winds serenely through the Scottish capital from Balerno right to the port of Leith with plenty to amuse along the way. Keep your eyes open too for the knee-deep statues throughout the shallows and dotted on the banks. These

Bars and nightlife

There's no dearth of places in the city where you can have a tipple. From warm and friendly neighbourhood pubs, to more elegant bars, Edinburgh has plenty of venues which are great for some fun in the afterhours. The Bong Club is one of the most

Centre extends ban on Islamic preacher Zakir Naik's foundation for another 5 years

Delhi.(Agency)

The Ministry of Home Affairs (MHA) on Friday extended the ban on the Islamic Research Foundation (IRF), founded by Islamic preacher Dr Zakir Naik, for another five years under the Unlawful Activities (Prevention) Act (UAPA), 1967, declaring it an unlawful association.

In a notification issued on November 13, the Centre said the organisation's activities posed a threat to India's sovereignty, integrity and security. It cited the activities and statements by the organisation's founder as key reasons for extending the ban.According to the Home



Ministry, Naik's speeches and statements were objectionable and had the potential to create disharmony in society. The ministry said that his remarks promoted hatred and hostility among different religious communities.The Centre also expressed apprehension that the organisation could resume its activities if the ban was not extended. It maintained that continuing the restrictions was necessary to prevent such activities and safeguard national security.This marks the third extension of the ban on the IRF, which was first imposed in 2016.Founded in Mumbai in February 1991, the IRF is a non-profit organisation established by Naik.The organisation has faced several allegations, including radicalising young people, promoting activities detrimental to national security and involvement in money laundering.

Aadhaar made mandatory for claiming EV incentives for purchase, scrapping in Delhi

Delhi.(Agency)

Individuals seeking purchase or scrapping incentives under the Delhi Electric Vehicles (EV) Policy, 2026, will now have to mandatorily furnish their Aadhaar card numbers and undergo an OTP-based authentication to avail the benefits, according to a gazette notification issued by the transport department.The process will be integrated into the online application system through the EV Incentive Portal designated by the transport department.As per the notification, the applicants will have to authenticate their Aadhaar details electronically through a



One-Time Password (OTP) during the submission and processing of applications for purchase and scrapping incentives.The department has also clarified that the incentives will remain subject to the eligibility criteria, conditions, financial ceilings, timelines and other requirements specified under the EV Policy, 2026, and its operational guidelines, as amended from time to time under sections of the Aadhaar Act.

The notification stated that Aadhaar numbers and associated data collected during the application process must comply with the Aadhaar Act and its regulations. For individuals who do not possess an Aadhaar number or have not yet enrolled, the notification requires them to apply for Aadhaar enrolment before registering on the EV Incentive Portal.This provision will apply to those eligible to obtain Aadhaar under Section 3 of the Aadhaar Act. Such applicants will have to visit an authorised Aadhaar enrolment centre, with the list of centres available on the Unique Identification Authority of India (UIDAI) website.

Nearly 90% of legacy waste cleared from Delhi's Bhalswa landfill, civic body steps up disposal



Delhi.(Agency)

Nearly 90% of the legacy waste accumulated at the national capital's Bhalswa landfill has been cleared, an official said on Thursday. This came as Delhi Mayor Pravesh Wahi and Municipal Corporation of Delhi (MCD) Commissioner Sanjeev Khirwar reached the site to review ongoing bio-mining and waste disposal operations.Speaking on the occasion, Wahi said, "One crore and two lakh metric tonnes (MT) of legacy waste have already been cleared from the Bhalswa landfill site and the remaining 23 to 25 lakh MT will be disposed of within the stipulated time frame." He added,"A contract has been awarded to a new agency for waste disposal at the Bhalswa site, and officials have been instructed to accelerate the pace of the waste disposal process." Wahi added that the progress report on the waste disposal work will be reviewed on a daily basis.

Wahi mentioned that the process of disposal of fresh waste will also be accelerated. "The number of machines deployed for waste disposal will be increased and a state-of-the-art machine named 'Vajra' is being installed for this purpose," he stated, assuring the public that the mountain of waste at the landfill would be completely cleared soon.This comes just a few weeks after the MCD extended the deadline for clearing the waste at the site for the sixth time. Officials had attributed the reason for the extension to the change of the agency working in the clearance operations as the contract of the previous agency had expired.The civic body's Department of Environmental Management Services (DEMS) chairman, Sandeep Kapoor, said, "The deadline, earlier set for December 2026, had been extended by two months following a change in concessionaire and the replacement of old machinery. To expedite the process, the civic body has installed a new machine, Vajra 300, which has increased the waste-processing speed threefold."He further clarified that the larger estimates of 18–25 lakh MT of waste left at the site include material beyond the original legacy mound.

Continuous dumping of waste impedes operations

Between 2020 and 2021, clearance operations at the landfill began with a legacy waste mound of approximately 70 to 75 lakh metric tonnes. However, continuous dumping of fresh waste every year pushed the total volume past one crore metric tonnes, according to officials

Delhi consumer court orders bank to refund Rs 70,084 lost by woman in 2016 cyber fraud

Delhi.(Agency)

A consumer court in Delhi has ordered a private bank to refund Rs 70,084 to a woman who had lost the amount in an online fraud in July 2016.The court held that, as per Reserve Bank of India (RBI) guidelines, the customer bears no liability for a third-party breach once she has notified the bank within three working days.A bench of the District Consumer Disputes Redressal Commission (south district) comprising president Monika Aggarwal Srivastava and member Ritu Garodia also ordered



the bank to pay an additional compensation of Rs 25,000 and cover the litigation costs."The RBI circular is unequivocal in stating that in cases of third-party breaches, where neither the bank nor the customer is at fault, and if the customer provides intimation within three working days, the liability rests with the bank," the commission observed, adding,"In this case, the complainant had duly informed the bank on July 10, 2016, about the unauthorised transactions. The opposite party bank failed to reverse the transaction."The commission held that the bank failed to establish any negligence on the part of the complainant and did not reverse the fraudulent debits despite receiving timely notification.

Dead fish in Yamuna again: Government says filing FIR to investigate 'fake' info, 'role' of AAP workers

"The department is filing an FIR today. An investigation will be conducted to identify who these people are and whether they have any connection to AAP workers," he claimed.

Delhi.(Agency)

A day after hundreds of dead fish were spotted in the Yamuna near Sonia Vihar – the second such incident in less than a month – the Delhi Irrigation and Flood Control department approached the police on Thursday seeking an FIR over social media posts alleging that chemicals were being sprayed into the river ahead of Chhath Puja.

In its complaint, the department termed the allegations "fake information" circulated with "malafide intentions" to create panic and tarnish the government's image ahead of the festival on November 15 and 16.Delhi Water Minister Parvesh Sahib Singh alleged that some people were deliberately dumping dead fish. "As soon as ferry services started operating on the Yamuna, just a day later, officials from our department informed me that some people were dumping dead fish into Yamuna," he told mediapersons.

"The department is filing an FIR today. An investigation will be conducted to identify who these people are and whether they have any connection to AAP workers," he claimed.The latest fish deaths were reported on Wednesday, a day after the launch of the Namo Yamuna River Safari, an electric river cruise. On October 14, large numbers of dead fish were spotted along the Burari stretch, with industrial effluents entering through drains 2 and 8 suspected to be have contributed to the deaths.The latest incident coincided with a deterioration in the quality of raw water drawn from the Yamuna, with ammonia levels rising to around 1.3 mg/l. This had forced the Delhi Jal Board (DJB) to curtail production at its Sonia Vihar Water Treatment Plant for nearly five hours on Wednesday.A senior DJB official said that all water treatment plants had been functioning normally since Wednesday evening.The



problem of high ammonical nitrogen concentration in Yamuna during winter is not new. As the amount of water in the river drops due to lack of rain post-monsoon and during winter, the concentration of pollutants increases.DJB's plants can treat raw water containing up to 1 ppm of ammonia. Under such circumstances, raw water in Yamuna is either diluted with fresh water from Upper Ganga Canal or Munak Canal. However, the rise in ammonia levels on Wednesday coincided with the closure of the Upper Ganga Canal for annual maintenance, hence water was not available for dilution in Yamuna, affecting the plants' production capacity temporarily, officials said.Ammonia is a nitrogen-containing compound that can enter water bodies through untreated sewage, industrial effluents, agricultural runoff and the decomposition of organic matter. Studies have shown that elevated concentrations and high phosphate content can be harmful to aquatic life. Ammonia can also contribute to the depletion of dissolved oxygen in water, which can stress or kill fish.Dr Shiv Singh Rawat, a water expert and former Haryana Irrigation department engineer, said investigators should examine sewage and industrial discharges from drains 2 and 8, elevated ammonia levels, and the alleged use of polyaluminium chloride, a chemical used to reduce water discolouration, settle suspended particles and address .

Delhi's air quality turns hazardous as AQI touches 494

According to Central Pollution Control Board (CPCB) data, IIT Delhi recorded an AQI of 488, followed by ITO at 455, Anand Vihar at 419, Rohini at 413 and Rajokri Border at 402, all falling in the severe category.

Delhi.(Agency)

Delhi's air quality deteriorated to hazardous levels on Friday morning, with the overall Air Quality Index (AQI) touching 494 at 7.31 am. Dense fog and pollution enveloped the national capital, reducing visibility across several areas, while multiple monitoring stations recorded severe pollution levels.According to Central Pollution Control Board (CPCB) data, IIT Delhi recorded an AQI of 488, followed by ITO at 455, Anand Vihar at 419, Rohini at 413 and Rajokri Border at 402, all falling in the severe category.Other areas also reported very poor air quality, with R K Puram recording an AQI of 391, Mandir Marg 378, Dwarka Expressway 369, Uttam Nagar 363 and Lodhi Road 341.



The area around Dhaula Kuan recorded an AQI of 161, placing it in the moderate category.The Delhi government has been undertaking pollution-control measures, including deploying water sprinklers across the city, to minimise the impact of particulate matter.Meanwhile, AAP leader Saurabh Bharadwaj on Thursday accused the BJP government of misrepresenting Delhi's pollution levels and questioned the credibility of the CPCB's AQI readings. Citing a report by the Centre for Research on Energy and Clean Air (CREA), he alleged that actual pollution levels were 49 per cent higher than those displayed on official government websites.Speaking to ANI, Bharadwaj claimed that an AQI reading of 370 could have corresponded to an actual level of 560 or higher."CREA showed that the pollution shown for Delhi was 49% higher than what you were told—meaning it was almost one and a half times higher," he said.Bharadwaj also questioned the CPCB's explanation on the limits of its monitoring system, alleging that readings exceeding 999 were not displayed."The CPCB said that when our pollution level hits 999, we don't even consider that level, because we can't measure above 999 and we don't display 999. So it's just shown as zero," he told ANI.He alleged that the discrepancy amounted to a fraud against Delhi's two crore residents, saying it put the health of children and elderly people at risk.

Student groups protest Delhi's worsening air quality, demand action from Centre and state government

NSUI staged a demonstration on Raisina Road, while SFI raised concerns over missing pollution-monitoring data during peak pollution hours.

Delhi.(Agency)

Protests continued in the city amid a worsening air quality index. The National Students' Union of India (NSUI) staged a protest against the rising pollution levels in the national capital on Wednesday, demanding urgent measures to tackle deteriorating air quality and protect public health.The protest was held at the NSUI headquarters on Raisina Road and was led by its national president, Vinod Jakhar.The student organisation said that the demonstration highlights the growing pollution crisis and its adverse impact on the health and daily lives of ordinary citizens. NSUI members and students held oxygen masks to their noses and held up placards saying, "Students demand clean air for a healthy Delhi."The Student Federation of India (SFI), Delhi University, has also staged a protest at the Arts Faculty against the alarming deterioration of air quality in the capital. They raised concerns about deteriorating AQI and alleged a lack of transparency in pollution monitoring, citing reports of missing data during peak pollution hours.

In a statement, the student organisation held the Delhi and Union governments accountable for failing to address the recurring air pollution crisis in the city, arguing that it wasnot merely a seasonal or meteorological problem but the result of unregulated urbanisation, construction



activities, vehicular emissions, and industrial pollution.

Noida directs strict ban on construction activities

The Gautam Buddh Nagar administration directed officials to strictly enforce ban on construction and demolition activities under GRAP-3, warning of action against violators.

Why Ola Electric is closing stores and turning to dealer-led retail network

New Delhi. (Agency)

Ola Electric Mobility is set to shut most of its company-owned stores as part of a broader shift from the direct-to-consumer (D2C) model to a dealer-led business model aimed at lowering costs, improving working capital and strengthening its financial performance. In its Q2 FY27 shareholders' letter, the Bhavish Aggarwal-led company said it stopped accepting orders through its D2C stores from November 1. Most of these outlets are expected to close by December, with all new vehicle production now being routed through dealer partners. The move comes even as the company claims demand for its electric scooters is running ahead of supply. The development follows Ola Electric's announcement in August this year that it would open its sales and service network to dealer partners across the country. At the time, the Bengaluru-based company said the dealer-partner programme followed a month-long nationwide engagement with prospective dealers. Under the strategy, company-owned stores would increasingly focus on brand and product experience, while dealer partners would drive local sales, servicing and network expansion.

The company said it had appointed 255 dealer partners operating 319 stores as of November 8, barely two months after the first outlets became operational on September 4. It aims to expand the network to around 450 stores by December and 700 by March 2027.

Jindal Power secures $470 million loan for Botswana power project

New Delhi. (Agency)

The power arm of Jindal Group has signed an offshore loan of about $470 million to help fund a power project in Botswana, according to people familiar with the matter, as one of India's largest conglomerates boosts its footprint in the African nation. A group of three Indian lenders — Axis Bank Ltd., ICICI Bank Ltd. and Export-Import Bank of India — provided the nine-year door-to-door facility to Jindal Power Ltd., the people said, asking not to be identified because the information is private. The loan is being syndicated with some global institutional lenders expected to join, the people said. The financing highlights the growing overseas ambitions of Indian energy companies as they pursue opportunities in markets where rising electricity demand is driving investment in generation and transmission infrastructure. Jindal Power raised about $500 million in an earlier round of financing in February meant for its expansion abroad.

Jindal Power built a 700-megawatt coal power plant in Botswana that is scheduled for commissioning next month, according to its website. Mining operations in the Southern African nation are big electricity consumers and Botswana has been hoping to use its coal resources, estimated at more than 200 billion tonnes, to build a petroleum fuels industry to reduce its reliance on imports from South Africa and Namibia. Botswana owns 15% of the world's biggest diamond miner, De Beers.

TVS Motor opens first Brazil store, targets 130,000-unit capacity by 2027

New Delhi. (Agency)

TVS Motor Company on Friday announced the opening of its first flagship store in São Paulo, Brazil, as part of its broader strategy to expand production capacity, strengthen its retail network and build its after-sales service presence in the country. In an exchange filing, the company said it plans to increase its annual production capacity in Brazil to 130,000 units by 2027 from around 110,000 units in 2026.

TVS Motor, the world's third-largest two-wheeler manufacturer, also plans to open three new stores in Brazil during 2027 in partnership with local partner Mottu, initially focusing on the Southeast and Central-West regions. The companies also plan to renovate existing locations to expand the brand's retail presence. Through its partnership with Mottu, TVS Motor has access to a network of more than 500 points of sale and 168 service locations across Brazil. Locations authorised to service TVS models will have technical teams trained by the manufacturer, supported by local spare-parts availability.

Peyman Kargar, President, International Business, TVS Motor Company, said, "Brazil is a strategically important market for TVS Motor and a key pillar of our international growth ambitions. Through our partnership with Mottu, we are investing in our local capacity, expanding our retail footprint and strengthening the service ecosystem required to build a sustainable and enduring business for the years ahead." The new flagship store in São Paulo features a 149-square-metre showroom within a total area of approximately 250 square metres. It showcases the company's portfolio, including the TVS NTORQ 125, TVS Raider 125, TVS Apache 160 and TVS Apache 200.

TVS Motor operates in more than 90 countries and has served over 50 million customers globally, including across 18 Latin American markets, where it has had a presence for more than 15 years.

Whatever, I don't care: How Jensen Huang reacted in his final hours at Nvidia

After 33 years at Nvidia's helm, Jensen Huang's final hours were marked by a confession, a boardroom showdown and self-doubt, with the AI giant preparing for life without him.

New Delhi. (Agency)

For more than three decades, Jensen Huang had been the unquestioned authority at Nvidia, overseeing its transformation from a graphics chipmaker into one of the world's most powerful artificial intelligence companies. But in the final hours of his tenure as CEO, the man known for his relentless energy and attention to detail appeared to have run out of fight. After weeks of trying to hold on to his position amid allegations of infidelity, Huang finally gave in late Wednesday night. A detailed Bloomberg account of the events leading to his departure describes a leader whose confidence had given way to resignation.

People familiar with the situation told Bloomberg that Huang had increasingly responded to those around him with phrases such as "whatever" and "I don't care". He was also said to have become deeply critical of himself, describing himself as a "piece of sh--".The contrast was striking. Huang had built a reputation for keeping tabs on practically every aspect of Nvidia's operations, from chip architecture to the compensation of junior employees. Yet, as the board's discussions reached their conclusion, those present felt that the once-dominant CEO had conceded defeat.



How the controversy reached Nvidia's boardroom

The crisis centred on Huang's relationship with Alice Huang, a woman suspected by US intelligence of having links to Chinese espionage. The allegations initially appeared unlikely to threaten his position. Nvidia's board, which included longtime investors and people with close business associations with the CEO, was initially reluctant to intervene. Jensen Huang had also maintained that there was nothing unusual about his association with Alice Huang. In an interview with Bloomberg towards the end of his tenure, he defended their interactions, saying they were no different from his dealings with Chinese customers and business executives. "It was all completely normal and not unusual," he said.

But the situation became more difficult to contain after the Financial Times reported on November 6, citing US officials, that the relationship was romantic.

The meeting that changed everything

The fallout reached Huang's doorstep soon after. Nvidia general counsel Tim Teter visited the CEO at his home to question him about the allegations. Huang admitted to the relationship, Bloomberg reported, citing people familiar with the conversation. The admission placed the company's leadership in a difficult position. Teter subsequently told the directors that the allegations could no longer be left unaddressed. Nvidia announced an independent investigation on November 7, appointing law firm Wachtell, Lipton, Rosen & Katz to examine the matter. Huang then wrote to employees, acknowledging his infidelity, apologising to his family and saying he would cooperate with the investigation. For a company accustomed to taking its cues from its founder, the developments marked a significant departure from business as usual.

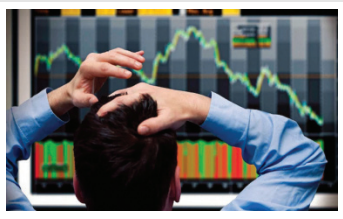
Chinese AI stocks slide after Huang's Nvidia exit: Why are investors worried

Shares of AI model developers Z.AI and MiniMax dropped amid concerns that Chinese companies could face greater difficulty accessing advanced AI chips.

New Delhi. (Agency)

Chinese AI stocks fell sharply on Friday as investors worried that Nvidia CEO Jensen Huang's resignation could further deepen the technology divide between the US and China.Shares of AI model developers Z.AI and MiniMax dropped amid concerns that Chinese companies could face greater difficulty accessing advanced AI chips. Data centre suppliers Zhongji Innolight and Eoptolink Technology also saw their shares decline, as both companies depend heavily on thHowever, domestic Chinese chipmakers gained as investors expected the latest developments to encourage greater reliance on homegrown technology. The Shanghai Composite Index and the CSI 300 remained largely unchanged by Friday's lunch break.

CHINESE AI FIRM FACE CHIP SUPPLY CONCERNS



Investors are concerned that Huang's exit could affect Nvidia's sourcing from Chinese suppliers and make access to its advanced chips more difficult.e US marketThere are also fears that Washington could ir oduce tighter restrictions on C ina's access to advanced p.ocessors, including through the rental of computing power from overseas data centres.Such restrictions could hurt Chinese AI companies that depend on powerful chips to develop and run their AI models. However, they could benefit domestic chipmakers as China looks to strengthen its own semiconductor industry.Shanghai-listed AI chipmaker Cambricon Technology rose 1.2% on Friday and was on track to gain 22% for the week. This would be its strongest weekly performance in six months., reported Reuters.Another domestic chipmaker, Hygon Information Technology, was poised to gain 7% during the week.

US-CHINA CHIP TENSIONS COULD DEEPEN

The developments have added to concerns over China's access to advanced American technology.

Nvidia CEO Jensen Huang stepped down on Thursday following revelations about alleged extramarital affairs, including one involving a woman suspected of having links to Chinese espionage. The controversy has triggered concerns across the AI industry.

US House Speaker Mike Johnson said on Thursday that support was growing in Congress for restricting chip exports to China.

Sensex falls over 400 points, Nifty above 25,100; HDFC Bank, M&M among top losers

New Delhi. (Agency)

The domestic equity market witnessed a weak trading session on Friday as investors turned cautious, with selling pressure in banking and automobile stocks weighing on the benchmark indices.

The 30-share BSE Sensex fell more than 400 points, while the NSE Nifty 50 traded above 25,100. HDFC Bank and Mahindra & Mahindra were among the biggest losers, adding to the pressure on the indices.The decline comes after a strong run-up in domestic equities over recent sessions, with both benchmark indices having gained around 10 per cent in November. Investors appeared to be booking profits after the rally pushed stocks to elevated levels.

Why is the stock market falling today?

Rising crude oil prices have emerged as a concern for investors, particularly given India's dependence on imported energy. Higher oil prices can increase the country's import bill, put pressure on the rupee and add to inflationary pressures.Brent crude has been trading around $95 per barrel amid concerns over disruptions to energy supplies following attacks on Saudi energy infrastructure and disruptions to shipping through the Strait of Hormuz.

Inflation has also added to market concerns. India's retail inflation rose to 6.09 per cent in October, moving above the Reserve Bank of India's upper tolerance limit of 6 per cent. The higher reading has raised questions about the inflation outlook and the central bank's room to ease monetary policy.Another factor weighing on sentiment is profit booking following the recent rally. After substantial gains in November, investors appear to be locking in profits, particularly in stocks that have witnessed significant appreciation.Despite the weakness in the market, foreign institutional investors have remained net buyers of Indian equities.

Foreign investors purchased shares worth Rs 7,831 crore on Thursday, extending their buying streak to nine consecutive sessions. Their November inflows have reached around $8 billion, the highest monthly inflow since December 2020, according to Reuters.

The continued foreign buying has provided some support to the domestic market, even as investors remain watchful of inflation, crude oil prices and global market trends.

What investors will watch next

Investors will track crude oil movements, foreign fund flows and global market cues for further direction.

Fabulous negotiations: Piyush Goyal hints at India-US trade deal announcement soon

New Delhi. (Agency)

Commerce and Industry Minister Piyush Goyal on Thursday said negotiations between India and the United States for a bilateral trade agreement were progressing smoothly, with only a few issues left to be resolved. He indicated that an announcement on the deal could come soon, adding that India was working towards securing one of the "best" trade agreements with Washington. "We are having a fabulous negotiation with the US. They are an important partner for us in trade and defence, and we share a multi-dimensional relationship. The negotiations are smooth and friendly, with no obstacles. There are just a few issues left, which we are sorting out. You could hear an announcement soon," Goyal told Business Today in an on-camera interaction. The minister also expressed confidence that the proposed agreement would give India favourable access to the American market, saying the country had negotiated a strong set of outcomes. "And in every respect, India will have one of the best deals with the US," he said. Goyal said India expected to secure highly favourable market access in the US for products in which it had a strong interest, particularly when competing with countries at similar levels of economic development. "Nations that make the same products and are at a similar level of development, like India. We will have the most preferred market access in the US post the deal in products of our interest," he said.

Kaju katli was Diwali's No. 1 sweet. Guess what Indians ordered next?

Kaju katli was the undisputed sweet favourite, but the savoury choices were just as interesting. Here's what Indians ordered most during the Diwali festivities.

New Delhi. (Agency)

Diwali is incomplete without good food. There are sweets to share, favourite dishes to savour and, often, a little extra ordering when family and friends come together. This festive season was no different. While boxes of kaju katli made their way into homes, masala dosa and paneer butter masala found plenty of takers on food delivery platforms.

And Indians weren't just ordering more food; they were also stepping out to celebrate over meals. According to Swiggy, a quick-commerce platform, food delivery orders grew by 10.7% during the Diwali festivities compared with the previous year, showing that more households turned to online platforms for their festive meals.

KAJU KATLI TOPS THE LIST OF FAVOURITE SWEETS

Masala dosa, kaju katli and paneer butter masala were among the most ordered dishes across the country during the festive period. When it came to sweets, kaju katli emerged as the clear favourite, followed by motichoor ladoo, rasgulla and gulab jamun.

The love for kaju katli was particularly strong in Bengaluru, Mumbai, Delhi, Jaipur and Hyderabad, where it topped sweet orders. Interestingly, regional preferences also found a place in the country's food choices, with appam and samosa making it to the list of popular orders.



BIG ORDERS ADD TO THE FESTIVE CHEER

Festive celebrations also translated into some sizeable food orders. In Hyderabad, a customer placed an order worth Rs 41,895 for 57 packets of assorted sweets. In Mumbai, another customer ordered seven assorted sweet hampers worth Rs 41,772 on Diwali. The platform also reported a rise in restaurant dining during the festival. Reservations on its Dineout platform increased sharply on Diwali compared with the previous year.

Diwali Eve reservations also recorded growth, while Bengaluru, Hyderabad, Mumbai, Delhi and Chennai were among the leading metro markets for restaurant bookings. The trend suggests that while many families preferred celebrating with food at home, others chose to step out and enjoy festive meals together.

In AAP 2nd list; two Bikram Singh Majithia ex-aides, two controversial entrants, an actor

Chandigarh.(Agency)

The Aam Aadmi Party on Thursday fielded two former close associates of Shiromani Akali Dal leader Bikram Singh Majithia, including his former personal assistant, and two candidates whose induction into the party had triggered political controversy, in its second list of 31 candidates for the 2027 Punjab Assembly elections.Talbir Singh Gill, once Majithia's personal assistant and among his trusted associates for nearly two decades, has been fielded from Majitha, the Akali leader's family stronghold. Majithia's wife, Ganieve Kaur Majithia, is the sitting MLA from the constituency.Gill's relationship with Majithia soured after the 2022 Assembly elections. He joined the AAP in May 2024 and was subsequently appointed its halqa in-charge in Majitha. The party had announced his candidature from the seat earlier this year.Another former Majithia associate, Sarabjot Singh Sabi, has been fielded from Mukerian. Sabi, who was associated with the SAD and considered close to Majithia, joined the AAP after leaving the Akali Dal.The party has also nominated former BJP leader Swaran Salaria from Sujanpur and Suhani Doda from Abohar, both of whose entry into the AAP had attracted political attention.

Salaria, who joined the AAP in May 2024, had been at



the centre of a controversy during the 2017 Gurdaspur Lok Sabha bypoll. The Congress had accused him of concealing in his election affidavit a rape-related case registered against him in Mumbai in 2014 and had approached the Chief Electoral Officer seeking disqualification of his candidature. Salaria had denied the allegation.In Abohar, the AAP has chosen Suhani Doda, the daughter-in-law of liquor businessman and former Akali leader Shiv Lal Doda, who was sentenced to life imprisonment in the 2015 murder of Dalit youth Bhim Tank. The case had triggered widespread attention in Punjab.Suhani joined the AAP in July 2026 and was appointed its halqa in-charge in Abohar the following month. Her induction had caused resentment among sections of the local party leadership, with former MLA Arun Narang resigning as halqa in-charge after her appointment.The list also includes Guriqbal Singh Mahal from Qadian, where he is expected to take on senior Congress leader Partap Singh Bajwa. Mahal had switched from the SAD to the AAP. Actor Sonia Mann has been fielded from Raja Sansi.The party has also relied heavily on constituency-level functionaries, replacing several sitting MLAs with organisational faces. Parminder Singh Goldy has been fielded from Kharar in place of Anmol Gagan Maan, Gopal Singh from Bathinda Rural in place of Amit Rattan Kotfatta, Nitin Kohli from Jalandhar .

Bengaluru: FIR against 31, including assistant commissioner in e-khata misuse case

BENGALURU.(Agency)

Greater Bengaluru Authority Special Commissioner (Revenue) Munish Moudgil, who had recommended suspension of Basavaraj Magi and Lokamata DS, assistant commissioner and in-charge revenue officers of KR Puram and Kengeri division, respectively, has now lodged a complaint with Halasuru Gate police station for violation of the Securitisation and Reconstruction of Financial Assets and Enforcement of Security Interest Act, 2002 (SARFAESI).

According to reports, Moudgil filed the complaint on November 9 when the Greater Bengaluru Officers and Employees Union was planning a protest questioning the suspension of the two revenue officers.It is said that the special commissioner got FIR registered against 31 khata holders in connection with Magi's case. "FIR has been registered against 31 people, including Basavaraj N Magi, who is accused number 1. Details about the FIR on Lokamata is yet to be confirmed," said a senior revenue officer of Bengaluru South City Corporation.

ED attaches Rs 2.78 crore assets of ex-senior Kolkata cop in land-grab case

Kolkata.(Agency)

The Enforcement Directorate (ED) on Thursday provisionally attached immovable assets worth Rs 2.78 crore belonging to former Kolkata Police deputy commissioner Santanu Sinha Biswas in a money laundering and corruption case involving alleged strongman Sona Pappu, officials told news agency Press Trust of India.The assets, which the agency described as proceeds of crime, include three flats in Kolkata and a plot of land in Kandi in Murshidabad district. They belong to Biswas, his family members and associates.Biswas held several important positions in Kolkata Police during the previous Trinamool Congress government. He also served as the officer-in-charge of Kalighat police station, under whose jurisdiction former chief minister Mamata Banerjee's residence is located.The ED arrested Biswas in May in connection with an alleged money laundering case linked to a land-grabbing racket. He is currently in jail."The ED investigation has revealed that the proceeds of crime were generated through illegal activities, including extortion, grabbing of real estate properties and unauthorised building construction through entities controlled by Biswajit Poddar alias Sona Pappu, Jay S Kamdar and associates," the agency said in a statement quoted by PTI.

Address without destination: Muslim groups hunt for Maharashtra UCC panel's office

Mumbai.(Agency)

They had an address, knew the floor and had a specific purpose for their visit. But what a delegation of Muslim organisations could not find at Mumbai's Old Custom House was the office of the chairperson of Maharashtra's committee on the proposed Uniform Civil Code (UCC).For nearly 90 minutes, representatives of five Muslim organisations searched various departments at the government building, seeking directions to the office of the retired judge heading the committee. Their search, they said, ended without a clear answer.

The delegation, comprising representatives of the All India Sunni Jamat-e-Ulema, Raza Academy, Jamat-e-Ulema Ahle Sunnat, Wahdat-e-Islami Hind and Kul Jamati Wifaq Maharashtra, had travelled to Old Custom House to submit a demand for extending the deadline for public objections and suggestions on the proposed UCC by another 100 days.The delegation included Maulana Aijaz Kashmiri, Anjum Ali Bape Sahab, Maulana Azmat Ali Sahab and Ilyas Momin, among others.According to Maulana Aijaz Kashmiri, the government had listed the committee chairperson's office address as Old Custom House, second floor. However, the delegation found that the address alone was not enough to locate the office.

Magisterial probe ordered into death of Greater Noida tourist in Bir-Billing

A four-member probe committee has been directed to submit a detailed report, along with findings and recommendations, within 14 days of the order's issuance.

Shimla.(Agency)

Two days after the death of the 26-year-old Shubham Dobliyal from Greater Noida during a tandem paragliding flight in Kangra's Bir-Billing, a magisterial probe was ordered to ascertain the circumstances of death, and lapses on the part of the paragliding pilot and the firm on Thursday.A four-member probe committee has been directed to submit a detailed report, along with findings and recommendations, within 14 days of the order's issuance.SDM (Baijnath) Sankalp Gautam, who is also Chairman of the Regulatory Aerosports Sub-Divisional Level Committee, issued the order.Tehsildar Raman Thakur (Baijnath), who will lead the probe; Bir Police Station SHO Inspector Dalip Singh; Technical Expert Jyoti Thakur; and an inspector from the District Tourism Office, Dharamshala, are part of the committee.The SDM said, "The committee has also been tasked with examining the validity of the tandem pilot's authorisation and licence, besides verifying the registration and approval of the paragliding operator involved in the flight. It will also examine the fitness, condition and maintenance of the paragliding equipment used at the time of the accident.""It will depend on the circumstances whether the statements



of the family members of the victim, who had also been present at Bir-Billing with Shubham, fell to death, are recorded or not," he said.The administrative sources said, "An ex-gratia assistance of Rs 4L, which is given to the kin of a victim who dies in an accidental death in Himachal Pradesh, can be given to the kin of the victim, Shubham Dobliyal, as per the rules and regulations."

The sources also said, "Although in this particular case, the victim had filed a form pertaining to the risk to life during the paragliding, which is an adventurous sport, even before taking the flight."On Tuesday, Shubham, who was in Bir-Billing with his sister and three cousins, fell to his death during a tandem paragliding flight. His sister and cousins had also undertaken tandem paragliding flights.Later, his body was retrieved by rescue teams from the dense forest area of Gharari Dhar, near Bir-Billing. The tandem pilot, Vinay Kumar, was booked for death due to negligence on the complaint of the victim's sister, Vanshika Dobliyal.The inquiry will scrutinise whether the pilot and operator complied with prescribed paragliding safety norms, operational guidelines, and weather-related restrictions. The committee will also examine relevant official records and record the statements of the concerned pilot, paragliding operator, eyewitnesses, and other persons who may have information relevant to the incident.

Masked man pulls off Rs 50-crore jewellery heist in Madurai, flees via lift shaft

Chennai.(Agency)

A lone thief broke into a newly-opened Tanishq showroom in Tamil Nadu's Madurai and fled with gold and diamond jewellery worth about Rs 50 crore, in a daring overnight heist. CCTV footage showed the suspect entering the showroom through an opening near the lift shaft, where installation work was underway.The theft came to light on Thursday morning when employees arrived at the showroom and discovered that jewellery displayed for sale was missing.The staff immediately alerted the police, who rushed to the spot and launched an investigation.According to preliminary estimates, around 13 kg of gold jewellery and 3 kg of diamond jewellery had been stocked at the showroom.However, the exact quantity and value of the stolen ornaments are yet to be established, with officials currently conducting an inventory.An examination of CCTV footage revealed that a man dressed entirely in black and wearing a full-face mask allegedly entered the showroom through an opening near the lift shaft.Investigators suspect that he used a rope installed for the ongoing lift work to access the building and reach the ground-floor showroom.The showroom is housed in a three-storey building and had been inaugurated on October 14.While sales were being conducted on the ground floor, the second floor was vacant and work was underway on the third floor to install lockers for storing jewellery.Several construction and maintenance activities, including lift installation, painting, electrical and plumbing work, were still in progress.An iron scaffolding structure has also been erected at the rear of the building for the ongoing work.Police suspect that the robber may have used the scaffolding to enter the premises.Nine special teams have been formed to track down the suspect. Police have seized CCTV footage from the showroom and neighbouring areas.Investigators are also examining vehicles that passed through the area from around 3 am, when the robbery is suspected to have taken place, and questioning their owners.CCTV footage of the suspect has been circulated among police personnel deployed at major bus terminals and railway stations across Madurai.

A car that is pet-friendly, an extension of its owner: Vehicle design ideas for 2036

Ahmedabad.(Agency)

What kind of car would a child who reaches the legal driving age of 18 in 2036 like to ride? Two students at Gandhinagar's National Institute of Design (NID) thought these young automobile users of the future might like a car that is "an avatar of its owner", or one that is "pet-friendly".These students may or may not be right – who knows what the world of cars might look like 10 years later? But for now, their prototypes have won awards at DesignXathon 2026, the second edition of Maruti Suzuki India Ltd's flagship automotive design competition.Jayendra Singh Tomar and Rahul S Nair, both 27-year-old automobile design students at NID, Gandhinagar, were awarded the first and second runner-up positions respectively from among 450 students of 70 design schools in India and abroad who participated in the challenge.The competition brief from India's largest automaker: "Envision an iconic vehicle GenZ and Gen Alpha would aspire to own in 2036".GenZ is the demographic cohort following the Millennials and preceding Gen Alpha. They are generally defined as people who were born between 1997 and 2012, which would make them 14-29 years old now. Gen Alpha are the first entirely 21st-century generation, with birth years 2010 to 2024, who would be between 2 and 16 years old in 2026.Team IED Torino (Istituto Europeo di Design in Turin, Italy) was declared the winner of DesignXathon, Maruti Suzuki said in a press release.

Refused to withdraw case, UP family attacked at home. Incident caught on camera

Uttar Pradesh.(Agency)

A family in Uttar Pradesh's Jhansi was attacked and threatened for refusing to withdraw a case pending since 2013. The accused threw stones at their house and snatched two mobile phones, with the entire confrontation caught on camera as the family was installing CCTVs for security.The incident took place on October 29 and has now come to light after the family lodged a police complaint.According to Somlata, a member of the family, a group of people arrived outside her house and started abusing the family while pressuring them to settle the old case.When the family refused to compromise, the accused created a ruckus outside the house and started throwing stones at its gate.The dispute then escalated, with the men accused of entering the house and assaulting family members. They also threatened to kill them if they did not withdraw the case.In a disturbing development, two mobile phones belonging to family members were snatched during the confrontation.

Somlata claimed that her son's phone was among those taken, even though police personnel were present at the spot.As the entire confrontation was caught on camera, the family said the dispute erupted while they were installing security cameras to monitor activities around their house.Somlata said her family had been facing pressure from the opposing party to settle the case, which has been pending since 2013.

Bengaluru: Prisoners' families speak of trauma, police harassment, financial ruin

BENGALURU.(Agency)

Elderly family members of undertrial prisoners on Thursday highlighted their struggles, including alleged police harassment, financial hardship, denial of pension, health problems and difficulties in accessing legal assistance, at a public hearing organised in Bengaluru.The hearing was organised at the Press Club by the Association of Prisoners' Families for Justice (APFJ), in association with the legal aid cell of St Joseph's Law College and Prarambh Resource Centre. More than 14 families shared their experiences.



Participants said the imprisonment of a family member often pushed elderly parents and grandparents into financial and social distress, forcing them to shoulder household expenses, medical costs and legal expenses, while caring for other dependent family members.Some elderly people said they continued to undertake domestic, construction and sanitation work despite health problems. One elderly woman said she was forced to beg after she became physically unable to work.Several participants alleged that police personnel visited their homes to intimidate and verbally abuse them. They also complained about difficulties in obtaining case-related information and accessing legal assistance. The hearing called for independent investigations into allegations of police harassment.Among those who shared their experiences was Geetha, a 61-year-old widow whose son Kiran, who suffers from schizophrenia, was arrested by Jeevan Bima Nagar police in connection with assault and robbery cases.She alleged that her son was not given medication for his mental health condition during his one year and eight months in prison and that police had not yet filed a chargesheet against him.Another participant, 65-year-old Siddamma from Mandya, said her grandson Mahadeva, 28, had died by suicide two days after being released from prison in January. He had been booked under Sections 399 and 402 of the IPC. She alleged that she had not received a copy of the FIR or documents required to obtain his death certificate.

4th ODI: Fiery Gurnoor Brar gets umpire's warning, Virat Kohli plays peacemaker

New Delhi.(Agency)

The sun was back out in New Zealand as the fourth ODI between India and New Zealand got underway at Bay Oval in Mount Maunganui on Friday. And with the bright sunshine came some heat on the field, with India's tall fast bowler Gurnoor Brar and New Zealand opener Tim Seifert involved in a fiery exchange. "Brar, who has made it a habit to get under the skin of opposition batters, kept needling Seifert as the New Zealand opener took the attack to India's new-ball bowlers. Seifert and Will Young had given the



hosts a flying start after stand-in captain Shreyas Iyer won the toss and opted to field. But Brar eventually had the last word in their contest.Having been taken for runs earlier in the innings, the 6ft 5in Punjab fast bowler returned to dismiss Seifert with a sharp bouncer. The New Zealand opener attempted to take on the short ball, only to get a top edge that was brilliantly pouched by wicketkeeper Ishan Kishan. Brar, however, was not content with the wicket alone. He walked towards Seifert and celebrated animatedly, getting right in the batter's face.Seifert was visibly unhappy with the send-off and appeared ready to confront the Indian pacer. Virat Kohli, however, stepped in and pulled Brar away, preventing the exchange from escalating further. The moment caught the attention of the on-air commentators, who expressed their surprise at Kohli playing the peacemaker, given his own history of animated on-field exchanges and confrontations with opposition players.

Once coached by Rahul Dravid, Chhattisgarh's Amandeep Khare chases his India dream

New Delhi.(Agency)

Andhra's spinners were making life hard for Chhattisgarh at the DVR Ground in Mulapadu, near Vijayawada. Saurabh Kumar, Tripurana Vijay and Lalith Mohan kept the scoring slow and kept taking wickets, and at the other end, Amandeep Khare could see his partners getting out trying to play shots. So he



stopped trying to score quickly. He defended for long spells, switched between a middle-stump and a leg-stump guard to find the odd gap, and stayed until Chhattisgarh had gone past Andhra's 231. When the last wicket fell, he was unbeaten on 89, 11 runs short of a hundred, and his side led by six.That turned out to be enough. Andhra declared their second innings on 184 for 3, which set a target of 179, and Chhattisgarh chased it down in 35.1 overs for the loss of five wickets. Khare made 30. It was Chhattisgarh's first win of the Ranji Trophy Elite season, and when he spoke to IndiaToday.in, that mattered more to him than the missed hundred.He had scored runs in the first two matches as well, and neither ended in a win. "It does not feel that good when you score runs but your team does not win," he said. This time Chhattisgarh got the lead, and he thinks that changed the game.

Harry Kane breaks England record, Italy stun France in Nations League thriller

Harry Kane marked a historic night for England with his 92nd international goal, while Italy stunned France with a memorable comeback. Spain maintained their perfect Nations League run, setting up a high-stakes clash with England for Group A3 top spot.

New Delhi.(Agency)

Harry Kane celebrated a landmark night for England with another match-winning performance as the Three Lions defeated Croatia 2-1 in the UEFA Nations League on Thursday. The England captain became his country's most-capped men's international before scoring his 92nd goal to secure qualification for the quarter-finals.

Italy produced one of the night's biggest results, recovering from an early setback to beat France 3-1 at San Siro. Pio Esposito scored twice as Italy registered their first home victory against France since 1962, leaving both sides level on points at the top of Group A1.World champions Spain continued their impressive run with a 2-0 victory over the Czech Republic, maintaining their perfect record in the competition. Alex Baena and Marc Pubill were on target as Spain extended their unbeaten run to 43 matches.Belgium also kept their qualification hopes alive with a 2-1 comeback win against Trkiye, while Thursday's results set up an intriguing final round of group fixtures. England and Spain have already secured quarter-final places, but their meeting in Madrid on Sunday will determine who finishes top of Group A3.



KANE MAKES HISTORY VS CROATIA

Kane's 126th appearance took him past Peter Shilton to become England's outright record holder for men's international caps. He marked the occasion by extending his national scoring record, converting a second-half penalty to seal a 2-1 win at Wembley.Morgan Rogers opened the scoring in the 24th minute after Jude Bellingham helped create the opportunity.

Croatia responded through Petar Sucic in the 59th minute, but England regained the lead five minutes later after Jarell Quansah was brought down inside the box.Kane stepped up and converted from the spot to take his international tally to 92 goals.

"It's a perfect opportunity now Sunday to try to prove ourselves," Kane told ITV Sport, looking ahead to the meeting with Spain.England need to beat Spain by at least two goals to finish top of the group, having lost 3-2 in the reverse fixture in September.

ITALY'S HISTORIC COMEBACK VS FRANCE

Italy had to recover from an early setback after Michael Olise capitalised on a mistake by Gianluigi Donnarumma to put France ahead. Pio Esposito restored parity in the 26th minute, finishing Nicol Cambiaghi's delivery to bring the hosts back into the contest.

Kumamoto Masters: Lakshya beats crowd favourite to reach semis, Srikanth ousted

New Delhi.(Agency)

Lakshya Sen continued his impressive run at the Kumamoto Masters Japan Super 500, producing a composed performance to beat home favourite Yushi Tanaka in straight games and reach the men's singles semifinals on Friday.The eighth-seeded Indian needed just 40 minutes to overcome the World No. 31, winning 21-16, 21-15 at the Kumamoto



Prefectural Gymnasium. Despite the vociferous home support behind Tanaka, Lakshya rarely looked troubled, using his attacking game and quick follow-up shots to keep his opponent under pressureThe victory is significant for Lakshya, who is chasing a place in the season-ending BWF World Tour Finals in China. The Indian is currently 12th in the World Tour rankings with 64,980 points and needs to break into the top eight to qualify. A title run in Kumamoto would give his chances a considerable boost.Lakshya will face sixth seed Alwi Farhan of Indonesia in the semifinals. The Indian has lost both his previous meetings against the World No. 10, making Saturday's contest another important test.Lakshya is bidding for his second successive title on the BWF Tour after winning the Hylo Open in Germany last month. Having skipped the Korea Masters, he has made an encouraging return to competition in Japan, dropping no games in his last two matches.

Lakshya gradually took control of the opening game after a tight start, with Tanaka briefly threatening a comeback before the Indian pulled away to take the lead.The second game followed a similar pattern, with the pair locked in a close contest until Lakshya's attacking play helped him open up a decisive four-point cushion. Tanaka struggled to keep up as the Indian maintained the pressure, eventually closing out th match without much fuss.

SRIKANTH BOWS OUT

Meanwhile, former World No. 1 Kidambi Srikanth's campaign came to an end after a 22-24, 15-21 defeat to Japan's Koki Watanabe in 41 minutes.

The unseeded Indian had enjoyed an encouraging run in Kumamoto, beating Denmark's Rasmus Gemke in the opening round before producing one of the upsets of the tournament by defeating fifth seed and World No. 8 Kodai Naraoka in a three-game battle on Thursday.

Usman Khawaja 100 percent wrong, his Sandpapergate story irresponsible: Pat Cummins

Sydney.(Agency)

Pat Cummins has hit back at Usman Khawaja over his recent revelations surrounding Australia's 2018 Sandpapergate scandal, accusing his former teammate of being casual with people's lives and reputations. The Australian captain, who considers Khawaja a friend, said he was particularly troubled by the former opener's admission that he had warned Cameron Bancroft to be careful while using sandpaper during the infamoAddressing the media for more than an hour in Sydney on Friday, Cummins strongly denied knowing that sandpaper was being taken onto the field and dismissed suggestions that he and other members of Australia's bowling attack were architects of the ball-tampering plan. He also questioned why Khawaja had waited eight years to reveal what he knew about the incident."Usman is a friend, but friends aren't casual with each other's lives and reputations. In his book he's been casual with my life and the lives of many others and I think Australian cricket," Cummins said in his opening statement.While acknowledging Khawaja's right to tell his story, the Australia captain stressed that there was a responsibility attached to making allegations that could affect other people's lives.us Cape Town Tes"I support him to tell his story, 100%. I'm glad he feels like he can but we have to be accountable for the things that we say and do," he said.

CUMMINS DENIES INVOLVEMENT

Cummins was unequivocal in rejecting Khawaja's suggestion that Australia's bowling group knew about the sandpaper being taken onto the field during the third Test against South Africa in Cape Town in March 2018."When he says we all knew, if by that he means we knew sandpaper was going out on the field, he's 100% wrong," Cummins said.

"I said that consistently for the last eight years. I did not know that was happening.



But I think Usman actually says things that are far more serious than that.

"He says that I and others were architects of a scheme to ball tamper with sandpaper. That's complete and utter nonsense."However, it was Khawaja's revelation about his interaction with Bancroft that appeared to have particularly unsettled Cummins. The Australia captain said he was shocked to learn that his former teammate had allegedly warned Bancroft to be careful while using the sandpaper.

Pat Cummins threw Khawaja under the bus: David Warner on Sandpapergate denial

David Warner has thrown his weight behind Usman Khawaja's Sandpapergate revelations, accusing Pat Cummins of throwing his former teammate under the bus after the Australia captain dismissed the claims as 'utter nonsense'.

New Delhi.(Agency)

Former Australia opener David Warner has hit back at Pat Cummins after the Australia captain rejected Usman Khawaja's revelations about the 2018 ball-tampering scandal, accusing him of throwing his former teammate under the bus. Warner said he stood firmly by Khawaja's account of the infamous Sandpapergate episode and was disappointed with Cummins' public response.Speaking on Fox Cricket ahead of Australia's first ODI against England, Warner said Khawaja had told the truth in his autobiography, Sabr, and deserved support rather than criticism.eleased players ahead of the auction."I still stick by Uzzy, and what he's written in that book, because it is the truth, and I really, really support him," Warner said."I actually feel for him at the moment. I actually feel that today, the captain threw Uzzy under the bus, and I'm very, very disappointed about that."Warner's comments came after Cummins addressed the controversy in an hour-long press conference, strongly rejecting Khawaja's claims about the extent of the Australian team's knowledge of the ball-tampering episode during the 2018 Cape Town Test against South Africa.

"If by that he means that we knew



sandpaper was going out in the field, he's 100 per cent wrong. I've said that consistently for the last eight years. I did not know that was happening," Cummins said.The Australia captain also took issue with Khawaja's suggestion that he and other members of the team were architects of a plan to alter the condition of the ball."That's complete and utter nonsense," Cummins said, adding that he was disappointed with the way Khawaja had handled the revelations.Cummins said the book had been casual with his life and the reputations of others, and questioned why Khawaja had not intervened when he allegedly knew that sandpaper was being used. He also said the revelations had reopened a painful chapter for those involved.

A LIFE PUNISHMENT

Warner, however, believes the consequences of the scandal have continued to follow the three players who were punished by Cricket Australia. Warner, Steve Smith and Cameron Bancroft were handed suspensions of varying lengths after the incident, with Warner and Smith receiving 12-month bans and Bancroft being suspended for nine months.All three of us have paid a big price in this thing. I hadn't spoken about it in eight years, but at the end of the day, we've got to live with these consequences daily. We've been served a life punishment," Warner said.The former opener said the focus on the three players had overlooked the emotional and personal cost they had endured since the scandal.

"When other people talk about how they've been affected by it, there's nothing worse for me, Steve and Cam, who have to walk out there every day and we cop abuse."Yes, we accepted it, but at the end of the day, my wife and I paid the greatest price. We lost a baby during that time. That's why it really hurts me the most until the truth is accepted," he added.

Who is Mahli Beardman? Australia's wild thing bags debut fifer vs England

New Delhi.(Agency)

Australia has a new wild thing in their ranks, and his name is Mahli Beardman. The moniker was initially held by Shaun Tait for his ferocious pace and his unique bowling action, and then given to Beardman's West Australian teammate Lance Morris after he was



thrust into the Australian Test squad a few years ago.Now, the young Beardman lived up to the moniker as he ripped apart England's batting lineup in front of his home crowd in Perth. The 21-year-old picked up five wickets in the first 28 balls of his ODI career, breaking multiple records along the way.Beardman made an immediate impact on his international debut, striking twice in quick succession to remove England captain Harry Brook and former skipper Joe Root. His double blow left the visitors reeling at 55/4 after 14 overs, with the Perth Stadium surface ofThe Australia Under-19 World Cup star was far from finished, though. He continued to rip through the England batting order, sending Jordan Cox, Sam Curran and Liam Dawson back to the pavilion to cap a memorable five-wicket haul.ering plenty of pace and bounce.The Australia Under-19 World Cup star was far from finished, though. He continued to rip through the England batting order, sending Jordan Cox, Sam Curran and Liam Dawson back to the pavilion to cap a memorable five-wicket haul.With this, he became the second Australian male cricketer to pick up a five-wicket haul on his ODI debut after Tony Dodemaide.



Kiara Advani

Opens Up About Toxic Trolling, Reveals Sidharth Malhotra's Reaction To Intimate Scenes With Yash

Kiara Advani has opened up about the criticism surrounding her intimate scenes with Yash in Toxic: A Fairy Tale for Grown-Ups, as well as the disappointment she experienced following the film's release. The actress discussed the response to the film during her recent appearance on Koffee With Karan Season 9, where she shared the couch with her husband, Sidharth Malhotra.

Kiara Advani talks about Toxic's poor response

Kiara Advani and Sidharth Malhotra are all set to welcome their second baby soon. During their appearance, the couple spoke candidly about their personal as well as work lives. Speaking to Karan Johar about the film's box-office performance, Kiara admitted that the opening weekend of Toxic was particularly difficult for her. While Toxic registered a strong start at the box office, its subsequent reception fell short of the expectations of the cast and crew.She said, "On day one, it is heartbreaking. Especially for this film, because as a team in totality any of us saw this coming. When it misfired despite it opening to what it did. It was heartbreaking for me that first weekend. I was very low about it. But, then, there was a lot of appreciation. The fact that I had gone outside of my comfort zone playing that role. I think in my journey this will be defining."Kiara also opened up about the trolling around her intimate scenes with Yash in the film. She revealed how Sidharth reacted to the entire controversy and online backlash that erupted after the release of the song Tabaahi.



The actress revealed that she faced personal attacks over her intimate scenes with Yash, with some social media users questioning her decision to take them on, particularly because she is married and a mother. The criticism also extended to Sidharth, as several people speculated about how he felt about his wife's on-screen scenes.Karan also called out the gender bias surrounding the backlash, noting that married male actors are seldom subjected to similar scrutiny for performing intimate scenes on screen. Responding to the discussion, Kiara clarified that Sidharth had no reservations about her scenes in the film and that the subject had never even become a point of discussion between them. She added, "He had not cared about it.

He has never brought it up. We have never spoken about it. It did not affect him, he was not bothered. It has been happening now for donkey years, for decades. From Aishwarya to so many wonderful actors."She further said, "What I must touch upon is when I was seeing what was going on the internet, there was a massive reaction of people who had already started calling it out, the hypocrisy, and I really did not feel the need to even justify."Toxic was helmed by Geetu Mohandas and it also starred Tara Sutaria, Nayanthara, and Huma Qureshi in key roles.



Deepika Padukone

Once Borrowed Rs 10,000 From Her Mother

Bollywood actress Deepika Padukone is one of the most bankable actresses in Bollywood at the moment. When she made her Hollywood debut with 'XXX: The Return of Xander Cage', Deepika also appeared on 'The Ellen DeGeneres Show'.While speaking to Ellen, the 'Bajirao Mastani' actress opened up about her father, Prakash Padukone's badminton career."He played at a time in India when nobody really played professional badminton… everybody wanted to become a doctor or a lawyer, but he was a sportsperson," Deepika shared.When asked if she ever wished to follow in her father's footsteps, the 'Jawan' actress replied, "I would have made him happy, but he always said, follow your heart."Expressing her love for acting, Deepika revealed that she knew by the time she was 16 that she wanted to be an actress.She added that being in front of the camera makes her extremely happy.



Deepika also told Ellen that she once borrowed Rs 10,000 from her mother to shoot for a portfolio.

While asking for the money, the 'Padmaavat' assured her mother that she would repay her the money and also make them proud."I sat my mother down one day and said, 'Can I please borrow Rs 10,000 from you? I needed money to shoot a portfolio. I told them one day I'd make them proud, and someday I'd repay them," Deepika revealed.After making her debut with 'Om Shanti Om' opposite Shah Rukh Khan in 2007, Deepika went to be a part of several prominent projects including 'Yeh Jawaani Hai Deewani (2013)', 'Chennai Express (2013)', 'Goliyon Ki Raasleela Ram-Leela (2013)', 'Piku (2015)', 'Bajirao Mastani (2015)', 'Padmaavat (2018)', 'Chhapaak (2020)', 'Pathaan (2023)', 'Jawan (2023)', and 'Kalki 2898 AD (2024)'.Up next, Deepika will be seen sharing screen space with SRK in the highly anticipated 'King'.

Saif Ali Khan Goes Shirtless In New Workout Video, Says He's 'Back On Track'

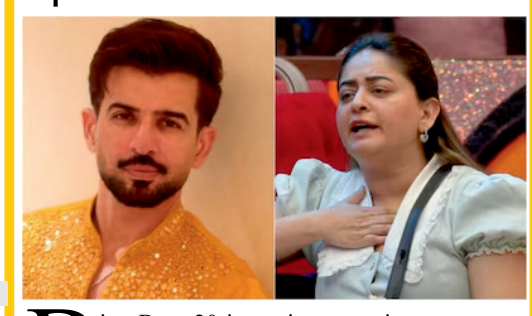


Actor Saif Ali Khan has resumed his fitness routine, giving a glimpse of his workout session through a new video. The actor shared the clip on Instagram in which he is seen shirtless while exercising.In the video, the 'Omkara' actor is seen flaunting his well-toned physique and muscles as he performs a series of exercises and a few yoga asanas. Going shirtless for the workout session, Saif appears focused on bringing both his mind and body back on track.

Alongside the video, Saif spoke about getting back on track, highlighting the importance of mental and physical well-being as he looks forward to the New Year. "Time to get back to work!.. First the mind.. then the body .. back on track for a happy new year," he wrote.A few days ago, Saif, who is an avid social media user, shared another interesting video on his Instagram account. The 'Hum Tum' actor posted a clip in which he was seen opening a champagne bottle using a meat cleaver after failing to find a bottle opener. In the video, Saif first placed his glasses on top of his head before swiftly opening the bottle in one smooth motion. He then handed the champagne bottle to one of his helpers.

Sharing the clip, he captioned it, "Nawabi hacks #23, when you can't find an opener, you try the meat cleaver!! Please do not try this at home…(sic)."Meanwhile, Saif recently made headlines following his appearance with wife Kareena Kapoor Khan on Karan Johar's popular chat show 'Koffee With Karan'. During the episode, Karan asked the couple to call someone famous. However, Saif expressed his desire to call his wine dealer instead. When the 'Jab We Met' actress pointed out that the wine dealer was not a celebrity, the actor quipped, "Well, he is a celebrity to me."

Bigg Boss 20 : Jay Bhanushali Slams Yung DSA, Kanika Mann For Dragging Tara Into Mahhi Vij's Task



Bigg Boss 20 is getting more intense every day, and the latest episode has left Jay Bhanushali angry. He has now vowed not to let his and Mahhi Vij's children watch the show anymore. The recent promo for the captaincy task shows Yung DSA, Kanika Mann, and others targeting Mahhi Vij to get her to react. During the conversation, they brought Jay and Mahhi's daughter Tara into it, which left Jay angry.Taking to his Instagram, Jay dropped a picture of Mahhi Vij with their children, Tara, Khushi and Rajveer, and penned a long note. "After witnessing everything on Bigg Boss, I have made one decision as a father: I will not let my children watch Bigg Boss anymore.I had decided that I will never speak about anyone's gameplay or give my opinion about any particular contestant and support Mahhi wherever I am needed," he wrote, but further slammed Yung and Kanika for their comments.While slamming them for bringing his 7-year-old daughter into the conversation, he said, "JUST FOR A TASK – Yung DSA talking about my children growing up and feeling ashamed of their mother's actions, Kanika saying she would never want to meet Mahhi's children, and Love Gill's mother bringing my daughter into the conversation by questioning how she would feel if someone said something similar about her daughter. Tara is a 7-year-old baby. She is not a contestant of Bigg Boss. Getting a child to put someone down is absolutely nonsense. Honestly, why are our children being dragged into something they have absolutely no connection with? Bigg Boss is a game. Disagree with Mahhi, question her gameplay and challenge her decisions, but bringing her children, motherhood and personal life into it is crossing a boundary."'As a father, I don't want my children growing up with a trauma that Tara's name is used in every sentence to put Mahhi down. The game may be entertainment for everyone, but for us, this is personal. My children's peace and innocence will always come first. Thank you. Goodbye, BIGG BOSS 20," Jay concluded.For the uninitiated, Jay and Mahhi announced their separation in January 2026 after years together. In their joint statement, the former couple said they had chosen separate paths but would continue to have each other's backs.

$400 Million In 18 Months: How North Korean Hackers Stole Money Using Images

world.(Agency).

North Korean state-backed hackers have stolen more than $400 million in cryptocurrency over the past 18 months using surreptitiously recorded images of people which are then used to target their contacts, the FBI said Thursday.As part of a social engineering scheme, which the FBI refers to as "FaceStealer," targets are lured to video chats on imposter versions of video meeting software such as Zoom, Microsoft Teams and Google Meet.The targets are issued invitations from genuine contacts they have previously interacted with, but whose social media and communication accounts have been compromised and whose images have been secretly recorded.Once on the call, the targets — who are also being recorded — encounter a mock technical error which requires a fix by clicking a link, which then infects the target's computer and social media accounts. The target's contacts are then used to target additional people.

Global Outage Hits Microsoft, Outlook, Other 365 Services Down

world.(Agency).

A widespread outage hit Microsoft platforms including Outlook on Thursday, with many users encountering trouble using their email accounts and other errors across the tech giant's suite of apps.Nearly 130,000 users on outage tracker Downdetector reported problems accessing Outlook just after 1 p.m. ET.
New reports have since fallen from that peak, but many said they couldn't send and receive emails, or had trouble loading their inboxes altogether.
Thousands also reported issues with Microsoft's workplace messaging app Teams, as well as its AI assistant Copilot and wider Microsoft 365 services.
Microsoft said that it was investigating disruptions, notably related to its email and Teams applications.In updates posted on social media, Redmond, Washington-based Microsoft said it was aware of users "experiencing issues accessing Exchange Online mailboxes through multiple connection methods in the Americas.

US Senator Chris Van Hollen announces bid to replace Chuck Schumer as Democratic leader

World.(Agency)

Democratic Senator Chris Van Hollen of Maryland has announced a bid to become the next Senate Majority Leader, challenging incumbent Democratic leader Chuck Schumer after the party's victories in the US midterm elections.
Van Hollen said on Thursday that he was running because “the American people called for change” and argued that Democrats needed new leadership to respond to the election result.
“It’s now on us to meet this moment, and to do that we need new leadership,” Van Hollen said in a statement. “This is not about any one person — it’s about answering the call of the American people. That is why I’m running for Senate Majority Leader.”The leadership election will be held by secret ballot in early December. It is expected to be the first contested election for the position of Democratic leader in decades, with senators privately debating whether Schumer should continue in the role.Schumer has said he has enough support to retain the position. In a statement following Van Hollen’s announcement, he welcomed discussions about the future of the caucus and reiterated that he had the votes to remain its leader.

An Israeli strike on a hospital highlights the devastation to Gaza's healthcare system

BEIRUT.(Agency).

A deadly airstrike on the biggest hospital in the southern Gaza Strip highlighted the devastation that Israel's campaign has wreaked on the Palestinian territory's healthcare system over the past three years.
The strike that hit Nasser Hospital's surgical wing killed six people, including a surgeon and a 13-year-old boy, and heavily damaged operating rooms and patient wards. The Israeli military said it targeted a Hamas commander using the hospital as a base, though it did not provide evidence for the claim.Israel has carried out near daily strikes in Gaza despite a ceasefire agreement with Hamas that took effect in October 2025. Israel says it is targeting militants. Israel launched its campaign in Gaza in retaliation for Hamas' deadly October 2023 attack on southern Israel.Direct attacks on hospitals have become rarer during the truce. But Thursday's strike underscored how Gaza's halth system is still struggling to recover.Here is a look at Israel's attacks on hospitals, its accusations against Hamas and the impact on Gaza's healthcare system.
Israel has attacked Gaza hospitals frequently in the warThe Israeli military besieged multiple hospitals around Gaza throughout the war, often surrounding them for weeks and battering them with strikes and gunfire while patients and staff were trapped inside and supplies ran out. Some sieges ended with troops storming hospitals, often leaving medical equipment destroyed, or with staff and patients forced to evacuate. Troops detained hundreds of healthcare workers.
Two major raids left Gaza City’s Shifa Hospital, the territory’s largest, in ruins.
Aside from the sieges, hospitals and other medical facilities have frequently come under Israeli fire or been hit by airstrikes that the military says target Hamas militants. During some of the worst months, as few as 14 of Gaza's 36 prewar hospitals were functioning, and shortages of medicine meant patients writhed in pain without painkillers and deadly infections ran rampant.”The World Health Organization says it has documented



more than 1,050 attacks on health facilities in Gaza, causing more than 1,000 deaths. The U.N. says more than 1,700 medical personnel were killed in the war, including in strikes away from medical facilities. At least six medical staffers from Gaza, including three prominent doctors, have died in Israeli prisons, according to rights groups that have documented abuses in custody.Israeli forces have struck Nasser Hospital repeatedly. In 2025, the military killed 22 people when it shelled a vantage point used by reporters on the hospital roof, then hit rescue workers and journalists rushing to help the wounded. Among those killed were five journalists, including Mariam Dagga, who was working with The Associated Press.While attacks during the ceasefire have waned, some strikes in recent months have damaged medical facilities, according to the U.N.Israel accuses Hamas of using the facilities for military purposesIsael has sought to justify the assaults by accusing Hamas of using the hospitals as command-and-control centers, though it has provided limited evidence. Palestinian and hospital oficials have denied these claims.
Hamas security men have sometimes been seen in hospitals, controlling access to certain areas.

Trump bluntly tells JD Vance to shift focus from Iran to targeting 'corruption and crime' at home

WASHINGTON.(Agency)

President Donald Trump on Thursday directed Vice President JD Vance to shift his focus away from the Iran war and instead devote himself to fighting what the president says is corruption and crime in Democratic-controlled cities and states.Vance, who served as the lead negotiator for a short-lived truce in the eight-month old war, has been blunt in blaming the war — and the economic reverberations it has caused — for Republicans' sweeping losses in last week's midterm elections in the United States.But Trump brusquely told the vice president in a social media post Thursday to shift his energies away from the Iran war to what he argues is a more pressing — and perhaps more politically salient — issue after Republicans were trounced at the polls.
“We don’t need a deal with Iran,” Trump said in the post. “Those days have long since passed. We’ve got their money,



Hundreds of Billions of Dollars, and we’ve got their Strait!”
Trump earlier this week said he believed the war “militarily is efectively over,” and appeared to double down on that message by pointedly directing Vance “to focus his complete and total attention” on his anti-fraud campaign.
Democrats have promised intense oversight of Trump's business dealings and other targets when they take control of Congress in January after voters identified corruption as one of their top concerns. Trump's post about Vance and the Iran war was, in part, responding to a flurry of reports about Democrats' plans.But it also came after
The Wall Street Journal reported Wednesday evening that Vance was weighing engaging in a new round of direct talks with a senior Iranian oficial.The vice president's ofce did not respond to a request for comment.The White House press ofice, in an email, responded to a query by highlighting that Trump made clear in his post that he sees no need to negotiate with Iran.

New York building collapse: 8 dead, 18 injured in Brooklyn; Two children among victims

world.(Agency)

Eight people, including two children and two construction workers, were killed and 18 others injured after a three-storey building collapsed in Brooklyn, New York. City authorities have launched a wider investigation after an earlier inspection report reportedly flagged cracks in the building's structure.New York City Mayor Zohran Mamdani confirmed that six people died at the scene, while two others succumbed to their injuries at nearby hospitals. The injured included 14 civilians and four firefighters."As of now, we have confirmed that two of those who died were construction workers," Mamdani said while briefing reporters on Thursday (local time).
Providing an update on the injured, the mayor said most of those receiving treatment in hospitals were in stable condition, although one person remained critical."The vast majority of those still being treated in hospitals are in stable condition. One person is in critical condition," he said.According to CNN, law enforcement sources identified seven of the eight deceased as Mamadou Barry, 23; José Luis Caguana Cosquillo, 26; an unidentified man in his early 30s; Kevin Santiago Reyes Gonzalez, 10; Juan Daniel Salvada Guzman, 31; Nicole Daniela Salvala Rodriguez, 9; Edgar Sapon, 26; and Gabriel Siguencia, 22.
Brooklyn Building Collapse: Earlier Report Flagged Cracks
Questions have emerged over the building's condition before the collapse, after an inspection report filed with the New York City Department of Buildings in March reportedly raised concerns about cracks in its north facade.

What we know after Jensen Huang resigns as Nvidia’s CEO

world.(Agency).

Nvidia CEO Jensen Huang has resigned from his top post at the chipmaker he co-founded, after reports of the tech titan's extramarital afairs came into the spotlight this week.One of those relationships has raised national security concerns. The New York Times reported that Huang had an affair with a businesswoman U.S. intelligence suspects to be a Chinese spy, which Beijing denies. Separately, the outlet and later others reported that Nvidia employees said Huang had another affair with an executive who reported to him directly — compounding calls for him to step down.Nvidia announced Huang's resignation on Thursday, effective immediately. The California-based company said that Colette Kress — who has been Nvidia's chief financial officer and executive vice president since 2013 — will step into the role of interim CEO.The scandal marks the most tumultuous chapter yet for Nvidia, whose high-end chips have emerged as the leading building blocks for artificial intelligence. Huang himself has become a key face in the AI race, both across the industry and often on U.S. President Donald Trump’s side in Washington.Nvidia's new leadership
Nvidia said Kress is now interim CEO. Prior to joining Nvidia over 13 years ago, Kress worked at Cisco, Microsoft and Texas Instruments.In a statement about her new post on Thursday, Kress said Nvidia’s “strength has always come from its people” and that she's “committed to building on the extraordinary foundation Jensen created over the last 33 years.”
Huang co-founded Nvidia, alongside Chris Malachowsky and Curtis Priem, back in 1993 — and until Thursday had led the company ever since, with no clear successor in sight. Huang's ouster has led to a scramble for a new permanent CEO, and Nvidia said it's considering both “internal and external candidates.”
The company's board of directors also said Thursday that it has named its first-ever chairman, Harvey C. Jones.
Afairs in the spotlight
Over the weekend, following news reports of Huang's relationship with a woman identified as former Megaspeed executive Alice Huang, Nvidia's then-CEO apologized for being “unfaithful to my wife.

Houthis Claim Drone Strikes On Riyadh, Saudi Military Sites



Riyadh.(Agency)

Yemen's Houthi militia has claimed to have carried out a series of drone and missile attacks targeting Saudi Arabia, including Aramco facilities in Riyadh, a military cargo plane at Sharurah Airport and Khamis Mushait Air Base, while the Saudi-led Coalition Forces said they intercepted and destroyed drones in the Eastern Region and Riyadh.In statements issued on Telegram, Houthi military spokesperson Brigadier General Yahya Saree claimed that the group's forces had targeted the Aramco company in the Saudi capital with a drone, adding that the operation had achieved its objective."Our armed forces have just targeted the Aramco company in the enemy Saudi capital, Riyadh, with a drone, and the operation achieved its objective successfully," Saree said.In another statement, Saree claimed that the Houthis had targeted a military cargo plane at Sharurah Airport using a drone and carried out a separate ballistic missile strike on Khamis Mushait Air Base.The Houthis "targeted a military cargo plane at Sharurah Airport with a drone, and the operation achieved its objective, thanks be to God. Another operation targeted Khamis Mushait Air Base with a ballistic missile, and the strike was direct, thanks be to God," he said.The Houthi spokesperson also claimed that the group's forces had again targeted pumping station number 7 along Saudi Arabia's East-West pipeline using a drone.

US Envoys Meet Zelensky After Putin Signals No Compromise

Ireland.(Agency)

US envoys met Ukrainian President Volodymyr Zelensky Thursday in Dublin to brief him on talks with Vladimir Putin, after the Russian leader indicated Moscow will not compromise on its hardline demands to end almost five years of war.Putin said he would not water down his demands to control parts of Ukraine that Russia claims to have annexed and ruled out agreeing to foreign peacekeeping troops in Ukraine -- a deployment that he said would be a "continuation of war".Washington's envoys, Jared Kushner and Steve Witkoff, were in Moscow after two days of talks in Abu Dhabi on ending Europe's worst conflict since World War II. Putin's comments appeared to douse hopes that a peace deal could be within reach, after Zelensky said there was a "window of opportunity" to achieve "a result" before 2027.The Americans, meanwhile, urged Putin to allow European representatives to sit at the table for the next round of talks.
Moscow has pushed to reframe the discussions on the war as part of a wider discussion about European security.
But Kyiv and European leaders have urged against a new "Yalta" -- a reference to the WWII-era deal to carve the continent into spheres of influence after the war -- and said Russia must stop hostilities first.Witkof and Kushner left the Kremlin on Thursday afternoon and headed to Dublin for follow-up talks with Zelensky, who was attending a European summit there.In the Irish capital, Zelensky said fresh restrictions had been placed on the Starshield satellite internet service, key to Ukraine's frontline communications.The limits hamper Kyiv's ability to intercept Russia's jet-drones, meaning "more of our people are killed", Zelensky said.Continuation of war'Usually held behind closed doors, the Kremlin chose to televise a lengthy opening exchange between Putin and the US envoys.The Russian leader rejected talk of a possible territorial settlement involving "grey" -- or demilitarised -- zones between Ukrainian and Russian positions."For us, there is only one line of demarcation: the state border. Because then it will be clear and obvious: here are we, and here are you," he said.Russia has seized swathes of eastern and southern Ukraine since launching its full-scale offensive in 2022, in addition to Crimea, which it annexed in 2014, and territory that was under the control of Russian-backed separatists.Moscow has formally annexed four regions of Ukraine -- Donetsk, Kherson, Lugansk and Zaporizhzhia -- despite not having full control over them.
The annexations are rejected by Kyiv and the West as illegal and not recognised by the international community.Advances by Russia's army have slowed throughout 2026 and hundreds of thousands have been killed in the conflict. Millions more people have been forced to flee their homes.