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FRIDAY

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## Karnataka CM DK Shivakumar seeks cut in curd price, KMF yet to implement it

**NEW DELHI . (Agency).**

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Even as Karnataka Chief Minister DK Shivakumar has asked the Karnataka Milk Federation (KMF) to reduce the price of Nandini curd by Rs 2 per litre, the federation has yet to implement the cut.Karnataka Milk Federation had hiked the price of a litre of curd from Rs 54 to Rs 68 and a half litre from Rs 28 to Rs 34. Amid protests from various quarters over the hike in prices of milk and curd, the Chief Minister had said that the price of curd will be slashed.

He, however, had not said when it would come into effect. "We are waiting for an official communication from the Chief Minister or the CM's office. After it is obtained, the KMF Board will discuss and take a final decision. It also depends on the union members," a KMF official said. On October 29, the State Government had announced a hike in milk prices by Rs 8 per litre. The rate of milk increased up to Rs 13 a litre, depending on the fat content. While the rate of curd is likely to be revised, milk, ghee, butter and buttermilk prices will not be touched, KMF officials said.

## Rajnath Singh says maritime future of Indo-Pacific cannot be shaped by any single country

**New Delhi(Agency).**

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Defence Minister Rajnath Singh on Wednesday said diversifying supply chains and strengthening regional cooperation are crucial to enhancing maritime interdependence among like-minded nations amid a strained security environment.In an address at the Indo-Pacific Regional Dialogue, Singh, without naming any country, said certain "actors" and "nations" are seeking to exploit the criticality of oceans for narrow unilateral gains as he called for building resilience to combat challenges in the maritime domain.

Describing oceans as bridges rather than barriers among nations, he highlighted their role in sustaining livelihoods and facilitating the exchange of goods, knowledge and culture.The defence minister said that the maritime future of the Indo-Pacific cannot be shaped by any single country acting alone, in remarks that came amid growing global concerns over China's military muscle flexing in the Indo-Pacific region."The global maritime security environment is strained by deliberate trade disruptions. We see blatant challenges to the freedom of navigation and the weaponisation of narrow maritime passages," he said.

"This growing instability in the maritime domain casts a long shadow over the broader international order," he added.Singh asserted that the answer to the vulnerabilities of an interconnected world lies in building resilience, emphasising that globalisation cannot be abandoned in response to every disruption, nor should maritime spaces that have enabled human progress be closed.

# From 5 to 26 cities: PM Modi highlights India's massive Metro expansion

**Prime Minister Narendra Modi has highlighted the expansion of India's Metro network from 248 kilometres in 2014 to nearly 1,200 kilometres across 26 cities in 2026. The remarks follow the launch of major Pune Metro projects worth approximately ₹21,800 crore, including the new Pink Line.**

**New Delhi (Agency).**

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Prime Minister Narendra Modi has highlighted the rapid expansion of India's Metro rail network under the NDA government, saying the country now has nearly 1,200 kilometres of Metro lines across 26 cities. More than one crore passengers use Metro services every day, according to the Prime Minister. The figures represent a major increase from 2014, when India had 248 kilometres of Metro lines operating across just five cities.In a post on X on November 5, PM Modi questioned how long cities such as Pune would have waited for Metro connectivity if the earlier pace of construction had continued. "YEARS….no…DECADES perhaps. And that was UNACCEPTABLE," he wrote. He linked the expansion to shorter commutes, improved productivity and better opportunities for people living in India's growing cities.

**India's Metro network has grown nearly five times since 2014**

According to figures shared by PM Modi, India's operational Metro network has grown from 248 kilometres in 2014 to nearly 1,200 kilometres in 2026.The number of cities with Metro connectivity has increased from five to 26 during the same period.The Prime Minister



said, "Today the Indian metro network is counted among the top three metro networks in the world."The expansion reflects the government's increased investment in urban transport infrastructure over the past 12 years.

**Pune gets Metro projects worth ₹21,800 crore**

The Prime Minister's latest remarks follow the inauguration of Pune Metro's Pink Line on November 3.Built at a cost exceeding ₹8,300 crore, the approximately 23-kilometre corridor connects Maan with District Court Metro station, linking the Hinjewadi IT hub with Shivajinagar.The line will have women train operators, with plans to meet around 30 per cent of its electricity requirements through solar energy.PM Modi laid the foundation stone for Pune Metro Phase II, involving projects worth approximately ₹13,500 crore.

**How Metro expansion is changing urban India**

For millions of daily commuters, Metro connectivity can mean less time spent in traffic and more predictable travel.The Prime Minister has linked these improvements to economic growth, particularly in cities with large employment centres.Maharashtra's operational Metro network has increased from approximately 10 to 11 kilometres in 2014 to nearly 175 kilometres.

# Jain Community in Turmoil: Sagar Chandra Sagar Controversy Raises Serious Questions Over Religious Sanctity

## Serious Allegations Shake Jain Community

**Mahanagar Metro Desk**

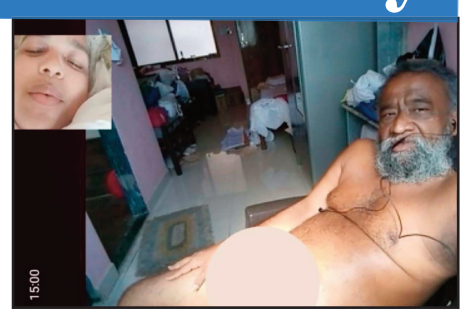
**Mandsaur, Madhya Pradesh:** Alleged WhatsApp chats, claims of inappropriate relationships and questions over donations worth crores trigger anger within the Jain community; calls grow for an impartial forensic investigation and strict legal action.A major controversy has emerged within the Jain community, raising serious questions about religious values, the dignity of ascetic life and the transparency of religious institutions. The controversy surrounding Sagar Chandra Sagar has reportedly sparked widespread concern and anger among Jain followers, with discussions extending from the Masaur region of Madhya Pradesh to the prominent pilgrimage centre of Palitana.The allegations have brought renewed attention to the fundamental principles of Jainism, including non-violence, non-possession, self-restraint and moral conduct, as taught by Lord Mahavira. However, it is important that the allegations be examined through an impartial investigation rather than treated as established facts.Viral Chats and Recordings Raise Questions About the Dignity of Ascetic LifeThe controversy gained momentum following the circulation of alleged WhatsApp conversations, audio recordings and photographs on



social media. The material has triggered discussions and raised questions about the conduct expected from individuals associated with the religious and ascetic traditions of Jainism.Serious allegations involving alleged inappropriate relationships with certain women and female ascetics have also surfaced. However, the authenticity of the circulating material and the claims made in connection with it have not been independently established.If the allegations are false, a clear and credible explanation would help address the concerns of devotees. If there is any substance to the claims, the matter should be investigated through the appropriate legal process. No individual should be considered above the law on the basis of religious status or attire.Forensic Investigation Essential to Establish the TruthAn impartial and scientific investigation is necessary to establish the authenticity of the material circulating on social media.Ex



perts should examine whether the alleged WhatsApp chats, photographs and audio recordings are genuine or manipulated. Any possibility of editing, fabrication or technical tampering must also be investigated.The objec



tive should be to establish the facts while protecting the dignity and reputation of all individuals involved. The matter requires a fair approach that respects both the legal rights of the accused and the concerns of the Jain community.Donations Worth Crores and Questions Over Financial TransparencyAnother significant issue emerging from the controversy concerns donations collected by Jain pilgrimage centres, temples and religious institutions.Devotees contribute money with the expectation that it will be used for religious activities, animal welfare, education, community service and humanitarian purposes.Questions have now been raised regarding the financial management of these institutions, the responsibilities of trustees and office-bearers, and the role of individuals associated with their administration and media coordination, including Abhay Chopra.

## Union Minister Kiren Rijiju shares 7 tips for Rahul Gandhi – Know what they are

**New Delhi(Agency).**

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Parliamentary Affairs Minister, Kiren Rijiju on Wednesday took to social media to make a few suggestions to Leader of Opposition in the Lok Sabha, Rahul Gandhi. In a 7-point rejoinder to the



Congress leader, who has repeatedly demanded an open-debate with PM Narendra Modi, the Union Minister said that the Congress Party should first start thinking about increasing the number of its MPs in the Parliament and for this, these were his suggestions.In his suggestion to Gandhi, Rijiju said that the Congress leader should start spending "more time in India" and also avoid "secret foreign trips." The Union Minister further said that, Rahul Gandhi should respect seniors and gain valuable wisdom from the elders, which is Indian tradition.He also advised Gandhi against meeting anti-India people and also stop promoting their agenda. He further said that the Congress MP should end deep hatred for the BJP, RSS and PM Narendra Modi.

He asked the Opposition leader to start treating the BJP as a political opposition and not an enemy.He then went on to say that Gandhi should start taking the Parliament more seriously and let MPs take part in debates and discussions in the House. Gandhi was further advised by Rijiju to respect the Constitution and honour Constitutional institutions.

## 'Come Debate In Parliament': Amit Shah's Challenge On Rahul Gandhi's Dare

**New Delhi(Agency).**

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Union Home Minister Amit Shah has hit out at Congress leader Rahul Gandhi for challenging Prime Minister Narendra Modi to a debate, telling him to debate in the Parliament and not on the streets."I want to challenge Rahul Gandhi directly. You challenge PM Modi for a discussion? If you want a discussion, simply write a letter to PM Modi. We are ready to convene a special session of Parliament to discuss the SIR exercise...Come and debate in Parliament," the minister said while addressing a rally in Haryana's Karnal.Shah also attacked the Congress over its demands for the resignation of Chief Election Commissioner Gyanesh Kumar, saying the





party "still lost" despite any Special Intensive Revision (SIR) in the Lok Sabha elections in 2014, 2019, and 2024."Where was the SIR in 2014? You were completely wiped out even then. Where was SIR in 2019? You lost. There was no SIR in 2024 either, yet you lost again. There was no SIR in Haryana or Maharashtra...You lost everywhere. You do not allow Parliament to function, and instead gather crowds on the streets to spread chaos, much like anarchy.

You're just creating a ruckus and staging boycotts in Parliament," he said.According to Shah, the workers of the BJP will give a "fitting reply" to him if he insists on gathering crowds on streets."The people of the country have consistently defeated Rahul Gandhi and the Congress party. The people of the country are not with you or the Opposition alliance. You called people from across the entire country to Delhi, appealed to 10 lakh people; the ground's capacity is only 70,000, and even that was half empty," he alleged.The home minister sought details of Gandhi's foreign visits, saying, "You're Leader of Opposition...People have the right to know."

## UK-based techie found dead floating face down in Gurgaon hotel jacuzzi after shopping with female friend; pills recovered

**Gurgaon.(Agency)**

A 37-year-old man from Agra, who worked for a Zurich-based R&D firm and had been living in Manchester for three years, was found dead floating face down in a hotel jacuzzi in Gurgaon on Monday evening. The deceased, Pranjal Pathak, was staying at Orsum Hotel in Sector 53. Hotel staff discovered him unconscious after opening his room with a master key when he failed to respond to repeated knocks. He was scheduled to check out around 11.30am on Monday. Techie arrived in India on October 24, travelled to Rishikesh with friends Pathak, a resident of Old Idgah Colony in Agra, had arrived in India on October 24. He travelled to Rishikesh with a group of friends and later returned to Delhi to drop them at the Indira Gandhi International (IGI) airport on Sunday.While his friends returned, Pathak stayed back to meet his female friend, a police officer said.

## BSF officer's 28-year-old son dies after falling from 10th floor of Gurgaon society

**Noida.(Agency)**

A 28-year-old man, identified as Ashim, died after falling from the 10th floor of an apartment building at The Leaf Society in Sector 85 on Wednesday morning. The circumstances surrounding the incident remain unclear, and police have initiated an investigation. According to police, Ashim was the son of Satyawan Khachi, a senior officer in the Border Security Force (BSF). His father resides at Asia House on KG Marg in Delhi and is currently posted in Koraput, Odisha. The victim lived with his mother in a 10th-floor apartment in one of the towers at The Leaf Society. He was unmarried.Police said Ashim was generally quiet and had no known disputes with anyone. However, he was suspected to have been under mental distress for the past few days and rarely stepped out of his room.The family told police that Ashim was on the balcony on Wednesday morning when he fell. Hearing the noise, family members and other society residents rushed to the spot and took him to a nearby hospital, where doctors declared him dead.

## Diwali bonus rumour sparks protest by 300 workers at Greater Noida factory

**Noida.(Agency)**

At least 300 workers of a private mobile manufacturing company staged a protest on its premises in Greater Noida's Ecotech-1 area on Wednesday morning over confusion surrounding the payment of Diwali bonuses. The protest, which began around 8 am, was called off after police and labour department officials intervened.

Additional labour commissioner Rakesh Dwivedi said the unrest was triggered by a message circulating among workers at the Oppo factory claiming that Supreme Court had directed all govt departments and private companies to pay employees their salaries along with a Diwali bonus of Rs 51,000 by Nov 5.Dwivedi said the message was fake and prompted a large number of workers to gather inside the company's campus."We spoke to the workers and explained that the message was false. However, confusion arose over the eligibility criteria for receiving the bonus. Employees who were eligible under the applicable rules were to receive the sum.

# Gurgaon AQI at 322, air remains very poor for second day

**Ghaziabad.(Agency)**

City's air quality index (AQI) rose to 322 on Wednesday, in the 'very poor' category for the second consecutive day.

Manoj Kumar, air analyst at the Centre for Research on Energy and Clean Air (CREA), told TOI, "Air quality likely to deteriorate further next week, with pollution around Diwali and stubble burning adding to the existing load." He also flagged the El Niño effect and lower surface wind speeds as factors that could limit pollutant dispersion.

Of the four monitoring stations in the city, NISE Gwalpahari recorded the highest AQI at 377, followed by TERI Gram at 347 and Sector 51 at 300. All three stations reported very poor air quality. Vikas Sadan recorded an AQI of 264, in the poor category.The PM2.5 level was highest on Wednesday at Gwalpahari (377 µg/m³), followed by TERI Gram (347 µg/m³), Sector 51 (295 µg/m³) and Vikas Sadan (264 µg/m³).The level of PM10 was highest at TERI Gram (338 µg/m³), followed by Sector 51 (300 µg/m³), Gwalpahari (285 µg/m³) and Vikas Sadan (209 µg/m³). According to the CPCB, the annual average permissible limits for PM2.5 and PM10 are 60 µg/m³ and 100 µg/m³, respectively.Meanwhile, HSPCB sealed 10



construction sites in the city after inspections found violations of dust-control norms. "The sites were found without essential pollution-control measures, including anti-smog guns, sprinklers and barricading," an HSPCB official said.Construction sites are required to take measures to prevent dust from spreading, including covering construction material, regular sprinkling of water, installing anti-smog guns and sprinklers, and barricading sites. Cameras and sensors are also required to monitor construction activity and dust-control measures.

The board warned that construction sites found violating the prescribed norms would face strict action, including sealing and penalties.Dr Arunesh Kumar, director and head of pulmonology at Paras Health, Gurgaon, said, "PM10 particles, which include larger dust and debris, irritate the upper airways and can cause prolonged coughing, throat soreness and bronchitis. PM2.5 particles are more dangerous because their smaller size allows them to carry harmful toxins and heavy metals deep into the lungs, damaging sensitive lung tissue. The effects of both types of particles make air pollution particularly harmful for children, senior citizens and people with pre-existing health conditions.""Cleaning up the construction site dust is not enough; we must aggressively reduce smoke and emissions from vehicles, factories, and burning garbage," Dr Kumar said.

He said reducing air pollution requires addressing both dust and smoke sources, rather than focusing only on construction-related pollution.

With stubble burning expected to pick up and festive emissions adding to the mix, authorities have asked civic bodies to intensify mechanical road cleaning, water sprinkling and dust control at construction sites. For now, health experts advise residents, especially children, the elderly and those with respiratory illnesses, to limit outdoor exposure during peak pollution hours.

# The Significance of Dhanteras: A Sacred Festival Celebrating Wealth, Health, Happiness and Prosperity!

**Mahanagar Metro Desk**

**Rupesh Solanki:** In Indian culture, every festival has its own significance and a unique philosophy of life. Dhanteras is one such auspicious festival. Marking the beginning of the five-day Diwali celebrations, this festival is considered a symbol of faith, prosperity and good fortune.Dhanteras is celebrated on the thirteenth day of the Krishna Paksha (the waning phase of the moon) in the Hindu month of Kartik. According to religious beliefs, Lord Dhanvantari emerged from the ocean during the Samudra Manthan carrying a pot of divine nectar on this auspicious day. Lord Dhanvantari is worshipped as the deity of health and Ayurveda. Therefore, this day is not only an occasion to pray for wealth but also a sacred opportunity to seek good health and a disease-free life.On Dhanteras, people worship Goddess Lakshmi and Lord Dhanvantari with devotion. There is a tradition of purchasing gold, silver, utensils and other auspicious items. The enthusiasm of shoppers in mar



kets, cleanliness in homes, colourful rangolis and the glow of traditional lamps double the joy of the festival. Observing the tradition of Yama Deepdaan (lighting a lamp in honour of Lord Yama) is also considered significant on this day.In modern times, Dhanteras is often associated with shopping and material prosperity. However, the true meaning of this festival is much broader. Wealth is not limited to money, gold or silver. The blessings of parents, love within the family, trust in relationships, good values in children and sound health are also invaluable treasures of life.Dhanteras also teaches us to include those in need in our happiness. Offering food to the hungry, bringing joy into the homes of underprivileged families and spreading hope and positivity in the lives of others are also true expressions of prosperity.Indeed, Dhanteras is not merely a day dedicated to the worship of wealth; it is an opportunity to embrace health, contentment, humanity and positive values in our lives. Only when wealth is accompanied by good values and prosperity by humility can life become truly meaningful and fulfilling.On this auspicious occasion, let us pray to Lord Dhanvantari and Goddess Lakshmi to bless every family with happiness, peace, good health and prosperity. May the lamp of happiness continue to shine forever in every home.

## City restores temporary green cracker sale licences ahead of 2-day relaxation

**Gurgaon.(Agency)**

Temporary licences for green cracker sellers have been restored from Nov 4 to 6, 2026, ahead of a two-day relaxation of the firecracker ban, deputy commissioner (DC) Uttam Singh said. Sales will be restricted to authorised outlets and traders licensed by the Petroleum and Explosives Safety Organisation (PESO).

Under the relaxation, issued in line with Supreme Court directions, residents can burst only green crackers certified by National Environmental Engineering Research Institute (NEERI) on Nov 7 and 8, between 6am and 7am and between 8pm and 10pm. The complete ban on firecrackers will return from Nov 9.will remain prohibited within 300 metres of hospitals, nursing homes, primary and district health centres, old-age homes, educational institutions and other notified silence zones. The curbs are aimed at protecting patients, senior citizens, children and other vulnerable groups from noise and air pollution.

Barium-containing crackers, products not approved by NEERI as green crackers, and the manufacture or sale of cracker chains (laris) are prohibited. Any such products found in shops or in the possession of traders or individuals will be seized, the DC said.

The administration and police have been directed to monitor compliance with the permitted sale locations and usage timings. Inspection teams at district and sub-divisional levels will check products against the list of approved green crackers on NEERI's website and verify QR codes issued to registered manufacturers. Samples may also be sent to PESO for testing. Those found manufacturing or selling prohibited products could face action, including cancellation of their licences or registrations. The teams will submit daily reports to the DC's office.

## Festive rush: Cops to divert vehicles from Atta market

**Noida.(Agency)**

Anticipating heavy footfall at major markets and shopping malls during the festive season, traffic police have issued an advisory for Nov 5 to 8, urging commuters to use public transport and designated parking facilities to avoid congestion.The advisory comes ahead of Dhanteras and Diwali celebrations, when a large number of shoppers are expected to visit



commercial hubs, particularly Sector 18 Atta Market and shopping malls in the city.

The diversions will be implemented around Atta Market depending on traffic conditions to ensure smooth vehicular movement. Vehicles travelling from Atta Peer Chowk towards Atta Chowk will be diverted left towards Rai Residency Chowk. Commuters will then have to take a right turn towards Cambridge School, make a U-turn beneath the elevated road and proceed through Sector 28 Car Market to reach their destinations.Similarly, vehicles moving from Atta Chowk towards Atta Peer Chowk will be directed left towards the Great India Place (GIP) Mall. They will take a U-turn beneath the Film City flyover before proceeding towards DLF and Centre Stage Mall.Traffic approaching Sector 18 Metro Station from the Film City flyover or Sector 18 gurdwara side will be directed through the Sector 18 underpass.In Dadri, the movement of heavy, medium and light goods vehicles between Luharli Toll Plaza and NTPC Tiraha will remain restricted under existing no-entry orders. If required, traffic on Railway Road may also be diverted from the bypass junction before the railway flyover towards NTPC Tiraha.Existing no-entry restrictions on heavy, medium and light goods vehicles along the Noida-Greater Noida Expressway will also remain in force.Traffic police have advised residents to avail themselves of metro services and other public transport options while visiting crowded markets and shopping centres. Motorists have also been instructed not to park vehicles along public roads and instead use designated parking spaces within markets and malls.Officials said the measures are intended to minimise traffic disruptions and facilitate smoother movement during the festive shopping period. Commuters facing traffic-related difficulties can contact the traffic police helpline numbers 9971009001 and 7065100100, or reach out through the official social media handle.

## Festive rush: No platform tickets at Ghaziabad railway station till Nov 14

**Noida.(Agency)**

Ghaziabad railway station will allow only passengers with confirmed tickets onto its platforms, as officials try to prevent a crowd build-up during the festive rush. Platform tickets will not be issued till Nov 14."In view of the festive rush around Diwali and Chhath Puja, the platforms will remain out of bounds for people accompanying till Nov 14. Differently abled, old and infirm will get one attendant to assist them to the train compartments," a railway official said.

Earlier this year, the festive rush on account of Eid-e-Milad and Raksha Bandhan choked the Ghaziabad railway station and the bus terminals, with footfall rising to almost double the daily average. On Oct 30 during PET Exam, the railway station also witnessed a spike in passenger footfall and extra force had to be deployed to manage the crowd.

The crowding revived memories of the crush at New Delhi Railway Station on Feb 15 last year when a wave of pilgrims tried to board trains bound for Prayagraj for the Maha Kumbh festival, leaving at least 18 people dead. A subsequent inquiry found that the station held far more people than it was built to handle, a situation worsened by the continuous sale of unreserved tickets.Ghaziabad railway station, which sees an average footfall of at least 50,000 passengers daily, also witnessed a surge in footfall crossing 1 lakh. Ghaziabad station is on the Delhi-Howrah line and caters to local commuters through which over 200 people pass daily.

Moreover, the railway station is undergoing a revamp. It began in January 2023 with a completion timeline of 30 months, but over three years later, only around 40% of the work has been



completed. Since several parts of the station have been off-limits to passengers, this is also contributing to the crowding on the platforms.

The station, spread across 1.5 lakh sqm, is one of 508 stations across the country being redeveloped under the central govt's Amrit Bharat Station Scheme. Officials told TOI in Aug that civil work related to the quarter building and station entry has started, but work on the concourse is yet to begin.

## Left in lurch by government, young students fill potholes on Karnataka highway

**KALABURAGI.(Agency)**

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Last Sunday, students in Kalamandargi village had an unusual civic agenda—they stepped up to fill potholes on the State Highway connecting Kalmaindargi to Basavakalyan. About 20 students, three of them college students, and 17 from primary schools, from Hirenagaon, Mudabi and Kalmaindargi villages joined hands to fix the road after the local administration ignored their repeated pleas.Inspired by the youth's attitude, some villagers, too, joined the effort. Jagadevi, a guest lecturer in Basavakalyan and resident of Kalmaindargi, said that Kalmaindargi has only one government primary school. After Class 4, the students go to government higher primary schools in Hirenagaon and Mudabi and Khuba College in Basavakalyan.She said that Kalyana Karnataka Road Transport Corporation buses have almost stopped plying to Hirenagoan, Mudabi and Basavakalyan taluk citing the poor condition of the road.

It was then that Jagadevi discussed the issue with the students. Assistant Executive Engineer, PWD, Kamalapur, under whose jurisdiction the road comes under, was not available for comment.

## Mahamagham rift: Thirunavaya temple trustee in Keralam appeals for unity

**MALAPPURAM.(Agency)**

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The trustee of the Thirunavaya Nava Mukunda Temple, the Zamorin, has asked the Juna Akhada and the Sangh Parivar-backed Margadharshak Mandal to set aside their differences and jointly organise the Mahamagham festival in January.In separate letters responding to applications from both groups seeking permission to use the temple premises for their respective events, the Zamorin made it clear that the venue would be allotted only if the two groups agreed to come together and conduct the festival peacefully.

"All sanyasi communities must stand together for the betterment of society. Without any underlying animosity or hostility, both groups should collaborate to conduct the Mahamagham peacefully," the letter said.The Nava Mukunda Temple Trust received four sets of applications, two each from the Juna Akhada and the Margadharshak Mandal, last month.The intervention comes amid a stalemate between the two groups, which have been preparing to hold separate events after failing to reach an agreement on organising a joint festival.

## Anti-ragging mobile app launched in Keralam

**HYDERABAD.(Agency)**

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With the aim to strengthen student safety, the government on Wednesday launched a mobile app that allows students to anonymously report ragging and other campus-related grievances. It has been named after JS Siddharth, who died allegedly by suicide in 2024 following ragging at College of Veterinary and Animal Sciences, Wayanad.The government also launched a project to establish 300 science centres across the state to promote scientific temper and inquiry-based learning among young people. The launch of the Student Aspiration Survey, aimed at paving the way for major reforms in higher education, and the inauguration of a special online course on scientific temper, prepared in collaboration with C-DIT, were also held.

Chief Minister V D Satheesan inaugurated the first sub-centre of Jawaharlal Nehru Centre for Scientific Temper project at Government Women's College, Thiruvananthapuram. He also launched the Siddharth Student Welfare mobile app.In his inaugural address, Satheesan stressed the need to revive the scientific spirit and rational thinking envisioned by India's first PM, Jawaharlal Nehru, both on campuses and in society.He also warned that the government would adopt a zero-tolerance approach towards ragging and ensure those responsible were brought to justice.

# Andhra Pradesh CID busts Rs 15-cr crypto fraud spread across 3 continents

**According to the police, the victim was allegedly induced to invest in cryptocurrency on the promise of high returns and cheated of Rs 15 crore. A case was registered at the CID police station in Mangalagiri last October on a complaint by the Tenali-based victim.**

**Hyderabad.(Agency)**

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Thirteen digital wallets, two fraudulent platforms and a trail spanning at least five countries in three continents — that's how the Andhra Pradesh Crime Investigation Department (CID) claims to have cracked a transnational cryptocurrency investment fraud involving approximately USD 1.5 million (Rs 15 crore).Following its investigation and identification of the accused, a court has directed a cryptocurrency company to convert the identified assets into USDT, a cryptocurrency stablecoin pegged to the US dollar, and transfer the amount to the Andhra Pradesh-based victim, the CID said.According to the police, the victim was allegedly induced to invest in cryptocurrency on the promise of high returns and cheated of Rs 15 crore. A case was registered at the CID police station in Mangalagiri last October on a complaint by the Tenali-based victim. Investigators said an organised transnational cybercrime syndicate routed the alleged proceeds of the fraud through multiple cryptocurrency wallets and international platforms to conceal their origin and movement. The victim initially transferred funds from her bank accounts to 13 non-custodial cryptocurrency wallets — one linked to Robinhood and 12 on Onchain, according to investigators.On the instructions of the accused, she allegedly transferred cryptocurrency



from these wallets to two investment platforms, Honeycomapi.org and Alibarbit.bit, believing them to be legitimate.According to the CID, 27 cryptocurrency transactions involving Bitcoin, Solana and Dogecoin, worth approximately USD 1.5 million, were made to the platforms. The funds were subsequently routed through multiple layers of transactions and mule accounts to obscure their origin and movement before reaching Gate Global Corporation, a cryptocurrency exchange based in the Cayman Islands, investigators said."Through detailed blockchain transaction analysis, technical expertise and international coordination, the CID successfully traced the movement of the defrauded cryptocurrency and identified the assets linked to the accused," CID DGP Ravi Shankar Ayyanar said.Fifteen Bitcoin transactions were traced to four accounts on the Gate.io exchange, which investigators said were linked to the syndicate. The identified assets were frozen through judicial proceedings.The investigation involved technical assistance and coordination with the Indian Cyber Crime Coordination Centre under the Union Home Ministry. The CID said it had arrested two accused from Hyderabad and two from Maharashtra. Four other accused are believed to be based abroad — one in Malaysia, two in China and one in Portugal.A chargesheet was filed against the accused before the Sixth Additional Junior Civil Judge-cum-Special Court for CID cases in Guntur, which issued .

## 'Fake Rs 3.5-crore drone grant' Motive unclear, no money lost: Technical Education Minister urges probe by central agencies

**Minister Rajesh Dharmani has said other students might have facade similar deception The minister, who had visited Sarvesh at PGIMER, Chandigarh, on Monday, said the technical education department formed an inquiry committee but felt the case warranted a central investigation.**

**Shimla.(Agency)**

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A week after the Himachal Pradesh Police registered an FIR into the cyber fraud involving a purported Rs 3.5-crore defence grant to a Hamirpur polytechnic student, investigators are yet to establish the motive behind the elaborate deception.Preliminary examination of bank accounts has revealed that no money was withdrawn or transferred from the joint account of 19-year-old Sarvesh Sharma and his mother, Kalpana Devi. The student was, however, kept under the impression for nearly two months that his drone project had secured government funding.Himachal Pradesh Technical Education Minister Rajesh Dharmani has questioned the intentions of those behind the fraud. "What was the motive of the cyber fraudsters who kept a computer engineering student under deception for nearly two months but did not take a single penny? They obtained his drone designs and project details. This is not an ordinary cybercrime case. There could be other students who have faced similar deception. The CBI or another central agency should investigate the matter."The minister, who had visited Sarvesh at PGIMER, Chandigarh, on Monday, said the technical education department formed an inquiry committee but felt the case warranted a central investigation.Dharmani told The Indian Express, "I believe that central probe agencies should undertake this case."

A family member said the joint bank account had been blocked and reiterated that the family had suffered no monetary loss so far. "Our concern is about the drone designs and technical documents Sarvesh shared with the fraudsters. We do not know how this information could be used," they said.Superintendent of Police (SP), Hamirpur, Balbir Singh, said the investigation is ongoing and preliminary scrutiny had not established any financial loss to the student.Meanwhile, the inquiry committee visited Government Polytechnic College, Hamirpur, on Tuesday.A Joint Director led the team and inspected the students' hostel room and classroom and recorded statements from his classmates, teachers, and college authorities. It also took possession of documents related to the project and the purported funding.Sarvesh, a fifth-semester Computer Engineering student at Government Polytechnic College, Hamirpur, had submitted a proposal under the individual category on the purported iDEX website for a drone purportedly capable of evading radar detection. He subsequently received emails claiming that his project, titled 'Rudra Edge T-1 (Spectra)', had been approved for a Rs 3.5-crore grant from the Ministry of Defence.



However, the Defence Innovation Organisation (DIO), which oversees iDEX, has categorically denied sanctioning any such grant to Sarvesh or an associated startup. The Ministry of Defence has also denied releasing the claimed funds.Sarvesh had registered a startup, Rudra Edge, in September and opened a joint bank account with his mother to facilitate the purported release of the grant. The iDEX website, which had been displaying an under-maintenance message, was restored on Tuesday, according to the information provided by the organisation.

## Karnataka: Man kills lover, dumps body on Gokak hillside

**BERHAMPUR.(Agency)**

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A 25-year-old woman was allegedly murdered by her lover after she repeatedly insisted that he marry her, bringing to light a shocking case of betrayal following a four-year relationship.The deceased has been identified as Rakshita Sarikar of Harugeri village in Raibag taluk. The accused has been identified as Basappa Siddappa Satannavar of Adalahatti village in Athani taluk.According to the complaint lodged by the woman's family, the accused had been in a relationship with Rakshita for the past four years after promising to marry her.



However, he allegedly kept postponing the marriage.On October 28, the accused reportedly took Rakshita from Harugeri to Gokak Falls. At around 4 pm, the two were sitting on a roadside platform near the falls when Rakshita questioned him about why he had failed to marry her despite promising to do so for several years. An argument reportedly broke out between them over the issue.The accused slapped her hard, strangled her with his hands and subsequently tightened a stole around her neck, killing her, the family alleged in their complaint. After the murder, he allegedly dumped her body among thorny bushes on a steep hillside near the falls in an attempt to destroy evidence and conceal the crime.

## 8-year-old gets bail in Haryana school attack; viral videos to be taken down

**Chandigarh.(Agency)**

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The Juvenile Justice Board (JJB) in Panchkula, Haryana, on Wednesday granted bail to the eight-year-old boy accused of assaulting a six-year-old kindergarten student at a government school and directed the removal of videos and photos of the incident from social media.The direction came after the girl's father filed a petition under the Juvenile Justice (Care and Protection of Children) Act, 2015, seeking the removal of videos and photographs of the incident to protect the minor's identity.The boy's father had moved the bail application during the hearing before the Board. His counsel, Manbir Singh Rathi, submitted that the child had no previous criminal record and that continued custody could adversely affect his education, academic progress and overall development.



The bail application also stated that the parents would provide the child with appropriate counselling, behavioural guidance and a supportive family environment to help him understand the consequences of his actions and reform. They undertook to ensure that he attends counselling sessions and undergoes rehabilitation measures as advised by the competent authority, through an application filed by the counsel.

**Girl discharged from PGIMER**

The incident occurred on October 28 inside an empty classroom at a government school in Panchkula. The boy, a Class 3 student, allegedly attacked the six-year-old kindergarten student with a brick, repeatedly hitting her on the head, banging her against a bench, dragging her by her school tie and kicking her multiple times until she fell unconscious. The girl suffered multiple injuries and was rushed to PGIMER, Chandigarh, where she remained hospitalised until her discharge on Wednesday.The boy was produced before the Board on Saturday and subsequently sent to an observation home in Ambala.

The incident triggered widespread outrage and prompted the government to constitute a five-member committee to examine the circumstances surrounding the assault. The government also ordered a comprehensive safety audit of schools across the state to identify security gaps.

## Changing rainfall patterns boosting Karnataka agriculture sector: Study

**BENGALURU.(Agency)**

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Changing rainfall patterns across the Western Ghats have contributed to increased rainfall in Karnataka's interior regions, benefiting agriculture and horticulture, even as the coastal areas and western slopes of the Ghats have witnessed a decline in rainfall, according to a study by the University of Agricultural Sciences (UAS), Bengaluru.

The study, presented by Agrometeorology Scientist Dr MB Rajegowda, examined changes in the state's climate and rainfall distribution and their impact on agriculture. It found that Karnataka's average temperature increased by up to 1.5 degrees Celsius between 1900 and 2020. The state's average annual rainfall also rose from 1,140mm during 1901–1950 to 1,208mm during 1950–2008.However, rainfall changes varied across regions. Annual rainfall along the coastal region declined from 4,500mm to 4,000 mm, while the western Ghats recorded a decrease from 4,010mm to 3,680mm. In contrast, North Interior Karnataka saw rainfall increase from 640mm to 740mm, while South Interior Karnataka recorded an increase from 685mm to 836mm.

Explaining the changes, the study attributed the shifting rainfall distribution partly to the orographic effect. Monsoon clouds originating over the Indian Ocean enter the western coast through the Arabian Sea. Around 75% of these clouds precipitate along the coast and Western Ghats, while the remaining 25% cross the mountain range towards interior Karnataka.According to the study, rising land and atmospheric temperatures influence cloud density and movement, pushing clouds towards the eastern side of the Ghats, where they contribute to rainfall in the interior regions.The study also highlighted the impact of industrialisation, urbanisation, agricultural expansion, road construction, small hydropower projects and tourism on forest density in the Western Ghats. It noted that the Gadgil and Kasturirangan committees constituted by the Centre had examined biodiversity, environmental conditions and development activities in the region.However, detailed assessments of climate change and its implications for agriculture across Karnataka were beyond their scope.The changing rainfall patterns have coincided with an expansion in cultivation. Agricultural land increased from around 50–60 lakh hectares.



## Let the race to succeed Trump begin

Even those who merely skim through the current state of politics in the United States are unanimous that the Republican Party, which President Donald Trump has recreated in his image, will lose one or both chambers of the US Congress in the mid-term polls on November 3 (November 4 in India).

Yet, throughout his adult life, Trump has bounced back from adversities like the proverbial cat of nine lives. He has changed the US, perhaps forever, and the world in our time. Like the personification of many legends, he is erratic and unconventional, resulting in the unpredictable.The outcome of the mid-term congressional elections, therefore, can be reduced to one word: turnout. Democrats will turn out to vote on November 3 with missionary zeal. Many Republicans have soured on Trump, yet they cannot bring themselves to vote for the other party. They are very likely to sit at home on election day. So will many right-leaning independents and undecided voters who tend to cast their ballots for right-of-centre nominees at the last minute.Candidate George W Bush had Karl Rove—nicknamed 'the Architect'—to ensure massive turnouts of voters who made up the Republican base. Rove was to Bush Jr what Amit Shah is to Narendra Modi. Similarly, candidate Barack Obama had David Plouffe, David Axelrod and Valerie Jarrett to ensure the turnout.Trump is severely handicapped in this regard. His earliest campaign managers like Corey Lewandowski and Steve Bannon are either about to go to jail for their corruption in his current administration or have done a jail term for wrongdoings in his previous presidency. Trump, as he approaches sunset at the pinnacle of his public life, is happier now in the company of his executive assistant—the 35-year-old Natalie Harp—than among hard core political operatives.On the critical need for mobilisation, there is an example by which Indians can relate to the relevance of turnout in US elections. During the Covid-19 pandemic, Eshwer Prasad Teki, who is Union Minister Hardeep Singh Puri's chief aide in charge of development of his adopted district of Sonbhadra in Uttar Pradesh, went there to check on the vaccination drive. To his horror, Teki discovered that the vaccination centres were deserted. No one from the district's villages was getting vaccinated. They did not have the means or the money for transport to the vaccination centres.Teki also found that 30 ambulances were idly stationed at one location in the district headquarters. His request to the health authorities to ferry villagers on these ambulances to be vaccinated was turned down on the ground that the ambulances were kept for emergencies. "All 30 ambulances?" Teki exploded. "What huge emergency would be requiring 30 ambulances at the same time?" The district health authorities were unmoved.

Luckily, the young district collector was open-minded and Teki convinced the collector to use these ambulances to transport villagers for vaccination. Their turnout became impressive. Sonbhadra was soon at the top of the vaccination records in UP. This and other similar initiatives in people mobilisation catapulted Sonbhadra to one of the top five slots among the Aspirational Districts Programme of NITI Aayog for six consecutive years.Pundits have so far focused on how much of a lame duck Trump will become if Democrats reclaim the House of Representatives with a workable majority. They have also been discussing the chances that the President will be impeached if Democrats retake the Senate as well. Trump himself has expressed such fears while motivating the Republican base to turn out to vote.There is much more to the mid-term results than these. For example, the results will be a pointer to who will succeed Trump as his party's candidate in 2028. Trump is in his second presidential term. The American Constitution prohibits a President from serving more than two terms.

## Booster shot for satellite navigation

### India must respond to geopolitical shifts in the wake of Operation Sindoor

AT a conference on nuclear non-proliferation, hosted by the Strategic Vision Institute in Islamabad on October 20-21, Lt Gen Khalid Ahmed Kidwai, Adviser to Pakistan's Nuclear Command Authority (NCA), spelt out his country's strategic and nuclear posture after Operation Sindoor. His remarks should be studied carefully as they point to certain important shifts in Pakistan's strategic stance, including its nuclear approach vis-à-vis India.

Kidwai's rhetoric indicates that Pakistan's calculations are changing in response to a stronger Chinese commitment to its defence, as was witnessed during Op Sindoor, a partial revival of American patronage and its role as a mediator in the ongoing Iran war. This is further enhanced by the Makkah Defence Pact, signed by Pakistan, Saudi Arabia and Turkiye in August. Kidwai cites the pact as a step towards reinforcing deterrence against India. This rhetoric may be self-serving, but what lies behind it in terms of geopolitical shifts should be properly evaluated. Pakistan has gained a higher geopolitical profile and greater room for manoeuvre that India must acknowledge and respond to.It is worthwhile to trace the trajectory of Pakistan's nuclear strategy since it became an overt nuclear-armed state, like India, after a series of nuclear tests in May 1998. In those early days, it committed itself to a Credible Minimum Deterrence (CMD) just as India did, but unlike the latter, did not subscribe to a No-First Use (NFU) posture.After taking over as the first Director of the Strategic Plans Division in December 1998, Kidwai envisaged the use of nuclear weapons only if Pakistan confronted an existential threat. He stated that Pakistan would consider the use of N-weapons against India if the latter attacked and occupied a large part of Pakistani territory; destroyed most of Pakistani military assets; tried to economically strangle Pakistan; or instigated widespread internal political subversion in the country. These were worst-case scenarios, with nuclear weapons serving as weapons of last resort. It was his view that nuclear deterrence made the prospect of a conventional war between the two sides unthinkable.




Kidwai dates the first important shift in Pakistan's nuclear approach to India's adoption of the Cold Start strategy (2004), which sought to find space for hitting Pakistan with conventional thrusts across the border without triggering a nuclear response. Since then, he has claimed that Pakistan's response has been to acquire weapons and capabilities to deny any such space to India.Thus, in 2011, the 60-km-range Nasr tactical nuclear weapon was deployed to respond to Cold Start-type operations. India's response has been that any use of nuclear weapons, of any yield or range, would, under its nuclear doctrine, invite massive retaliation; that nuclear weapons, once used, would trigger an escalatory dynamic resulting in an all-out nuclear war. Pakistan dismisses this contention.In 2013, Kidwai formally adopted the term "Full Spectrum Nuclear Deterrence" (FSND), though CMD was not abandoned. In a speech at the Carnegie Endowment in 2015, he explained that FSND was aimed at ensuring that no space for war below the nuclear level was available to the adversary. This was backed by a range of weapons and a variety of delivery systems. No target within the Indian landmass would be out of range. He claimed that Shaheen-3 missile (then newly deployed), with a range of 2,750 km, could reach bases in the Andaman and Nicobar Islands. In his latest remarks, he has called India "target-rich" and said that "there is no place for India's strategic weapons to hide."Kidwai has claimed that after Op Sindoor, "new normals" are "now defined by Pakistan," that the Pakistan Air Force is now the dominant air power in the region and the "robust combination of nuclear and conventional forces" ensures strategic stability. He referred to Pakistan's "retaliatory policy of Quid Pro Quo Plus", which was "responding with punishment greater than the adversary's original sin."Interestingly, this is conventional retaliation and not nuclear, which implies that Pakistan believes it has overcome India's conventional superiority. Kidwai then upped the ante to recommend that in the next round, "retaliatory punishment should be so severe and unforgiving, directed at the heart of India's vulnerabilities, which are numerous, that India's dangerous strategy of imposing on Pakistan the BJP's policy of externalising India's internal politics is buried once and for all."This is inflammatory and provocative language that has the potential for dangerous overreach. One should take the threat seriously.Kidwai has interpreted India's development and deployment of sea-based ballistic missiles as a "destabilising" move. Rather than accept it as a second-strike capability aimed at responding to a first strike by an adversary, he is treating it as evidence that India is shifting away from NFU and preparing for a first strike.

He has warned that Pakistan would have to respond by developing its own sea-based strike capabilities in order to restore strategic stability in South Asia. One should expect Pakistan to seek Chinese assistance to help neutralise India's more advanced capabilities in this regard. The Babur-3 submarine-launched cruise missile has already been announced and the Ababeel MIRV (multiple independently targetable re-entry vehicles) system is under testing.India should also examine the implications of the consolidation and centralisation of Pakistan's nuclear command and control structure. The NCA Act was amended earlier this year to create the post of Commander of the National Strategic Command, who will also advise the Commander of the Defence Forces, Field Marshal Syed Asim Munir.Taken together, Kidwai's remarks and other developments presage a more assertive, even intemperate behaviour by Pakistan. While reinforcing its own deterrence capabilities, India should pursue political engagement with Pakistan that will create an opportunity to make a better assessment of the situation and explore confidence-building measures, even if they are of limited utility to begin with.The nuclear and conventional balance is shifting in our region and beyond. We need a better compass to navigate a more challenging security terrain. Minimising the scope for misperception and misinterpretation of each other's intent is in mutual interest.

## Update disaster atlas to prepare better for storm

### Both Odisha and Andhra Pradesh have to reorient their disaster management strategies to encompass multiple calamities from the same event

As a second powerful cyclone barrels into India's east coast today within a week, it's essential to look at how the government apparatus handled the first. Odisha was clearly caught on the wrong foot by Arnab, a severe storm that can serve as a preview of extreme weather events to come. The tropical storm made landfall in Andhra Pradesh on October 28 before moving to the southern districts of Odisha, where it caused extensive damage in Ganjam, Gajapati and Kandhamal districts. It poured 70 percent of the month's average precipitation in Ganjam, home to over 40 lakh people, in just two days.The unprecedented flooding created so much chaos that the administration had a tough task accessing key regions for two days, forcing the use of helicopters to evacuate people and airdrop relief materials. In Kandhamal district, one landslide claimed three lives and another, brought to notice two days later, is feared to have trapped 12 people, triggering a massive search operation. The government has announced a special package including cash assistance to each affected family.As Murasu bears down on the Andhra coast, the longer-term takeaway from Arnab is the increasing unpredictability of storms revealing gaps in our predictive capabilities. The India Meteorological Department had estimated last week's storm to pass over Malkangiri, the southern-most district of Odisha, on the night of October 28; however, it took over eight hours to complete landfall at the Andhra coast. As a result, it poured much of the rain on the eastern face of the Eastern Ghats, inundating Ganjam and triggering landslides in Kandhamal. Given the alerts, the government had deployed much of its resources in Malkangiri and adjoining districts, only to be taken by surprise.This glaring gap in prediction and preparation proved the undoing of disaster management and the government's 'zero casualty' objective. As a result, Ganjam, a district that sent 11 BJP MLAs to the Assembly in 2024, now faces public ire. That should be Arnab's lesson for all administrators.Both Odisha and Andhra Pradesh have to reorient their disaster management strategies to encompass multiple calamities from the same event and ensure nimbleness to divert resources at a short notice. They have to rework the disaster atlas and broaden the sphere of impact through a comprehensive update of vulnerabilities. Given the changes, we cannot fight tomorrow's disaster with yesterday's preparedness.



## Sabarimala review | Separating custom from the law

### Barring women aged 10-50 at Sabarimala fails several tests including that of science. The nine-judge Bench must decide whether a practice unsupported by scripture or a rational nexus with the stated objective can prevail over the constitutional guarantees of equality and dignity

The Sabarimala debate evoked mixed responses on whether excluding women aged 10-50 from temple entry can survive the test of "reasonable classification with rational nexus to the object to be achieved" under Article 14, read with Articles 15 and 25 of the Constitution. Supporters, predominantly male devotees, defend the exclusion as inseparable from Lord Ayyappa's status as a Naishtika Brahmachari, or eternal celibate, whereas critics see it as a discriminatory, gender-inflected custom that cannot claim protection. Both positions deserve to be tested against the record and rational nexus, not sentiment.The Kerala High Court, in S Mahendran (1991), held the exclusion a longstanding practice tied to Ayyappa's celibacy. The Supreme Court took the opposite view in Indian Young Lawyers Association vs Kerala (2018), striking down Rule 3(b) of the Kerala Hindu Places of Public Worship (Authorisation of Entry) Rules, 1965 fixing the age band of 10-50, which the temple relied on. The court then referred the review questions to a larger Bench in Kantaru Rajeevaru vs Indian Young Lawyers Association (2020), presently reserved for judgement since May 26.Two claims for the exclusion do not hold up. It is neither ancient nor immemorial: no Puranic text mentions the Ayyappa cult. Scholar Radhika Sekar calls the rites a regional accretion and the age bar came from Rule 3(b) of 1965—barely six decades old, not through ancient custom. An early-19th-century British era survey recorded the restriction keyed to puberty, not a fixed age band. A 1991 Kerala High Court hearing recorded that women—including Maharani Sethu Parvathi Bayi in 1940, in her forties at the time—had visited the shrine, though they were denied by the Travancore Palace much later. In January 2019, Sasikala, a 46-year-old who had undergone hysterectomy, was stopped at the gate—showing that the rule tracks age, not biology.Article 14 forbids classification without an intelligible differentia and a rational, not hypothetical, nexus to the object sought (Ram Krishna Dalmia vs Justice S R Tendolkar, 1958; E P Royappa vs Tamil Nadu, 1974). If the object is to guard celibacy from menstruating women, does the 10-50 age band accurately track menstrual status? Barely.Data from flagship national health and family surveys show that Indian girls reach menarche at a mean age of 13.5 years (Meher and Sahoo, Scientific Reports, 2024); so most girls at the lower end of the age band would not have started menstruating. At the upper end, natural menopause averages 46 nationally (47.6 in Kerala, by one estimate; many earlier by surgery or illness) (Ghosh and Syamala, GeoJournal, 2024), which reflects a large demographic still below 50. A band that admits girls who have not yet started and women who have stopped is a guess dressed as a proxy—the hypothetical connection that Ram Krishna Dalmia and E P Royappa reject. No court is equipped to fix an age limit on a biological function it has not examined.



Barring every woman between 10 and 50 because her presence alone threatens a deity's celibacy insults her modesty more than any menstrual taboo. It insults the deity too: if celibacy earned over ages of devotion collapses at a woman's presence, not conduct, that is not a claim about sanctity. It is a claim about women. Menarche has no logical link to celibacy. Male desire is not confined to menstruating women, and menstruation marks reproductive capacity, not desirability—celibacy concerns the latter. A classification keyed to fertility cannot even serve as an irrational proxy for a vow against desire, let alone a rational one; it forms no intelligible differentia at all. Nor is there a fix: the court can rule neither for the age band, which fails rational nexus, nor for policing menstrual status, since forced disclosure of menstrual status violates the right to privacy under Article 21 (K S Puttaswamy, 2017). Women proving their menstrual status to officials at the temple gate is a sheer intrusion on bodily privacy that no order governed by the rule of law or by basic morality can countenance. Custom draws authority from the legal order, not above it and that custom cannot override equality by default as held in N Adithayan (2002) and Shayara Bano (2017) confirmed tradition does not shield .scrutiny merely for

# Friends can make your marital conflict Less stressful



**Marital conflict can lead to lots of mental and emotional stress. People who have friends and family to talk to and share their problems with experience relatively lower levels of stress as compared to those who have no friends outside of marriage to share their concerns with.**

Marital conflicts can take a toll on your health, but having even a few close friends and family members to turn to can help reduce the stress associated with such conflicts, new research suggests. Social networks may help provide protection against health problems brought about by ordinary tension between spouses, said the study published online in the journal Social Psychological and Personality Science.



"We found that having a satisfying social network buffers spouses from the harmful physiological effects of everyday marital conflicts," said Lisa Neff, Associate Professor at the University of Texas at Austin in the US. "Maintaining a few good friends is important to weathering the storms of your marriage," Neff said.

The research looked at 105 newlywed couples who kept daily records of marital conflict in their home environment and completed questionnaires about the number, quality and characteristics of their connections with friends and family.

In addition, the couples participating in the study collected morning and evening saliva samples for cortisol testing every day for six days. Cortisol levels over the course of the day are a measure of the stress response. The overall number of friends and family members that study participants reported having did not appear to affect couples' ability to handle conflicts nearly as much as the quality of those outside relationships.

The researchers found that people who reported having even a few close friends or family members to talk to outside of their marriage experienced lower levels of stress when marital conflicts arose."Even everyday conflict takes a toll on people physiologically," Neff said.

"But we found that the association between marital conflict and cortisol responses completely disappears when people are happy and satisfied with their available social network," Neff added.



## Mothers supporting child's negative emotions can impact their social adjustment: Study

**The findings suggest that is may be helpful for parents to consider other strategies to guide their children to develop their own skills in emotion regulation and social interaction.**



Dear parents, you may have to stop favouring your child in every situation, as according to a study, mothers supporting their child's negative emotions may impact their social adjustment and social interaction in school.

According to a study, mothers, who are more supportive of their children's negative emotions, rate their children as being more socially skilled and these same children appear less socially adjusted when rated by teachers.

Specifically, mothers' supportive reactions predicted fewer socio-emotional skills and more behaviour problems, according to children's third-grade teachers.

These contrasting patterns suggest a potential downside to mothers' supportiveness of children's negative emotions for third-grade children's social adjustment in school.



Co-author of the study Dr. Vanessa Castro said that it's not clear, if the parents are causing these problems by hovering or providing too much support when less support is needed or if the parents are rightfully providing more support because their children are experiencing these social and emotional problems, or if the children are exhibiting very different emotional and social behaviors at home than they are at school.

The findings suggest that is may be helpful for parents to consider other strategies to guide their children to develop their own skills in emotion regulation and social interaction.

## Study suggests that your toddler can predict your next move

Your toddler may have the ability of registering your routine activities and based on that can guess what you might be most likely to do next, suggests a research.



The findings demonstrated that infants, as young as eight-month-old, look for consistent patterns of behaviour and make judgements about people's preferences based on simple probabilities calculated from observed events and actions.

"Even before they can talk, babies are keeping close track of what's going on in front of them and looking for patterns of activity that may suggest preferences," said Lori Markson, Associate Professor at the Washington University in St. Louis.

"Make the same choice three or four times in a row, and babies as young as eight months come to view that consistent behaviour as a preference," Markson added.

For the study, detailed in the journal Infancy, the team conducted a series of experiments on a sample of 60 healthy, full-term infants with an even split of males and females ranging in age from seven to nine months and an average age of eight and a half months.

The researchers tracked whether infants, when asked to give a toy to the actor, would reach more often for the toy consistently chosen by the actor in previous trials, thus implying that the infant understood the actor's preference.

"Consistency seems to be an important factor for infants in helping them sort out what's happening in the world around them," Markson said.

"Our findings suggest that if a person does something different even a single time, it undoes the notion of someone having a clear preference and changes an infant's expectations for that individual's behaviour," Markson noted.

The researchers tracked whether infants, when asked to give a toy to the actor, would reach more often for the toy consistently chosen by the actor in previous trials, thus implying that the infant understood the actor's preference.



**Parents and in-laws are now moving to be closer to their children, and some opt to live in separate homes to get their own space.**



# Say hello to the nuclear Joint Family

Gone are those days when a girl, after get ting married and migrating to another city, would only get to see her parents occasionally . With families becoming nuclear and no one to take care of the elderly after their children leave home, parents are relocating to stay with their kids or in the same vicinity .

City-based HR professional Ruchi Sharma's father stays in the same apartment complex as her. "He shifted to this complex three years ago.The idea was to have a good support system for both of us. It is good for my children as they get guidance in all spheres of life. Also, if I am not home, they can always go to their grandfather, in turn ensuring that he doesn't feel lonely .In case there is a medical emergency, it is easy for us to take care of him.Otherwise, if he is alone in another city or in another part of Bengaluru far away from us, who can we trust to look out for him?" says Ruchi. Her father SK Sharma adds, "With somebody so close, it gives you a sense of security . Also, family support is much more important than social support. Daily interaction with one's grandchildren also lifts one's emotional state."

Domlur resident and scientist Shilpa Vora stays with both sets of parents in the city. As her siblings and her husband's siblings stay abroad, the onus of taking care of their parents fell on the couple. "My parents shifted from Mumbai when my mother had a relapse of leukemia, and frequent travel between Mumbai and Bengaluru became difficult for us. So my parents shifted near us so as not to disrupt our daily lives. Now that my mother has passed away, my father stays in a flat in the same residential society as us, as we did not want him to stay alone and manage a house by himself in another city. We make it a point to have dinner together as everyone gets to interact with each other. It works for everybody -from the children's point of view, they get attention from both sets of grandparents. My in-laws, who stay with us, are good company for my father-in-law too. We can also take care of them and get their support in times of crisis," explains Shilpa.

The other factor that has attributed to this change is that now, a married woman is not obliged to stay in a particular home. "These days, in-laws understand that one has to take care of both sets of parents. So, over time, it becomes one big family . Also, it is good that rather than us travelling to meet them all the time, they shift near us so that we can be there for each other," says professor Madhu Venkat, who has stayed with both sets of parents. "When my father was ill and I had to work, my mother-in-law would cook healthy food for him and keep him company . I think this arrangement is fantastic," she says.



# Interaction helps toddlers develop Language

**Next time you read to your baby, pay attention to the babbling as interaction is the key to language development during reading, reveals a new study.**



The researchers found that babies made more speech-like sounds during reading than when playing with puppets or toys. They also discovered mothers were more responsive to these types of sounds while reading to their children than during the other activities.

"A lot of research shows that book reading even to infants as young as six months of age is important to language outcomes, but I am trying to explain why by looking at the specifics, which could be responding to speech-like sounds," said study co-author Julie Gros-Louis from University of Iowa in the US.

"If we know what specific interactions are occurring between care-giver and child and we can link that to language outcomes, then it would not just be telling parents, 'Read a lot of books to your kids,'" Gros-Louis added.

The study looked at how mothers responded to their 12-month-olds during book reading, puppet play, and toy play.

Researchers observed the interactions of 34 mothers and their 12-month-olds during three 10-minute periods of different activities: puppet play, toy play, and book reading.



The babies were seated in a high chair to control proximity to their mothers and to prevent them from getting up and moving around the play room.

The study also found that no matter the context, mothers' responses to speech-like sounds were often imitations or an expansion of the sound.

"The current findings can contribute to understanding how reading to preverbal infants is associated with language outcomes, which is not well understood in contrast to reading interactions with older toddlers," according to the study.

# Parents get children into the entrepreneurship Game early

**If you've got a child who's always dreaming up schemes to get rich, you might just be sharing a house with the next big entrepreneur.**



The increasing spread and use of technology is making it far easier to set up new ventures, run by ever-younger businesspeople. So, students can craft their own bags and phone cases and sell them online, offer dogwalking or baby-sitting services online, or build and monetize their own apps. And parents are being told that they should encourage these traits rather than order their children back to their books.

"Entrepreneurship is tipped to become an even more important character trait for the next generation to enter the workforce. While their parents might have been able to lock in careers for life, those still in the education system or getting their first jobs are likely to juggle many roles and have to self-manage a lot more," writes Susan Edmunds for stuff.co.nz.

Studies have established that children whose parents ran their own businesses are more likely to become entrepreneurs, and that a third of five-year-olds have natural entrepreneurial traits. But by the time they leave secondary school, it had dropped to 3%. So parents have to foster entrepreneurial traits and teach kids the necessary skills by talking to them about risk taking, strategy and ambitions.

"It's amazing how switched on [children] are to the power of money . They get quite motivated," Edmunds quotes Bradley Gerdis, managing director at payment solutions startup Smartpay, as saying.

Starting early by talking to children about the interesting things people are doing not only makes them creative and curious individuals but also teaches them the value of money and fosters a strong work ethic. Parents could also work with children on their ideas, encouraging them to look at all aspects of a business, and help them set it up on a small scale. Starting early seems to be the best way to catch that unicorn.



## Rare Central Asian white stork draws birdwatchers

**Delhi.(Agency)**

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A rare white stork, believed to be a scarce Central Asian subspecies,has been spotted at the Okhla Bird Sanctuary, drawing birdwatchers, naturalists and wildlife photographers to the urban wetland at the entrance of Noida along the Yamuna River, experts said.The bird was first sighted on November 1 by Tejaswi, a birder, and has been spotted for three consecutive days since, according to wildlife enthusiasts.Ornithologists believe the bird could be the Ciconia ciconia asiatica, a rare subspecies that breeds primarily in Uzbekistan and southern Kazakhstan and has an estimated global population of fewer than 2,000. The population migrates south towards its wintering grounds, which extend from Iran to the Indian subcontinent, the experts said.White storks are considered rare visitors to the Delhi-NCR, with previous records including sightings at Okhla in March 1992 and February 2005, Palwal in 2004-05, and near Jewar in March 2019. The latest sighting has generated considerable excitement among the region's birding community, with several naturalists and wildlife photographers visiting the sanctuary to catch a glimpse of the migratory bird.Naturalist and wildlife photographer Nikhil Devasar described the sighting as a significant moment for birdwatchers, particularly if the bird is confirmed to belong to the Central Asian subspecies.Fellow birder Rohit Sharma said the sighting highlighted the importance of protecting urban wetlands and their habitats. The appearance of the bird comes amid the winter migration season.

## DU professor sent on leave after sexual assault allegations

**Delhi.(Agency)**

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A professor at DU's Daulat Ram College has been sent on leave following a complaint by a female student alleging sexual harassment and assault. The college's Internal Complaints Committee (ICC) is examining the matter, university officials said on Wednesday.According to a student speaking on behalf of the complainant, the professor allegedly sent the student several inappropriate sexual messages, attempted to molest her and threatened to fail her. The alleged incident took place on October 27, while the complaint was filed on October 29, the student said.

University officials confirmed that the complaint had been forwarded to the college's ICC for examination. The professor was sent on leave after the complaint was received, they said. The allegations are yet to be established, and the matter is under investigation by the committee. Meanwhile, the Daulat Ram College Students' Union on Wednesday expressed solidarity with the complainant and demanded a fair, impartial and time-bound inquiry into the allegations.The students' union president said the case must be investigated thoroughly and that strict action should follow if the allegations are substantiated. "It should be followed by strict action, including termination of the accused professor if the allegations are established," the union president said.

The union also warned that any delay in the investigation or in delivering justice would compel it to launch a large-scale protest and approach the University Grants Commission and other relevant authorities. Emphasising the need to ensure a safe campus environment, the union president said the safety, dignity and justice of every student were non-negotiable.

# 24-hour deadline to produce accused in court starts from moment of detention: SC

**Delhi.(Agency)**

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The Supreme Court on Thursday ruled that the 24-hour deadline for producing a detained person before a magistrate begins from the time of detention, not from the time of formal arrest, holding that authorities cannot use the artificial distinction between the two to delay judicial scrutiny.A bench, comprising Justice Ujjal Bhuyan and Justice Atul S Chandurkar, said that counting the 24-hour period only from the formal arrest would violate the constitutional mandate under Article 22(2) and Section 56 of the Bharatiya Nagarik Suraksha Sanhita (BNSS)."There cannot be any temporary suspension of a fundamental right," the Supreme Court observed.The bench directed magistrates to record the date and time of detention and verify whether the 24-hour constitutional limit for producing the person before them has been followed."Article 22(2) does not sanction exclusion of the time taken for inquiry or investigation before the arresting authority could effect arrest of the detainee. This is beyond the mandate of clause (2) of Article 22. The only exception the Constitution itself provides is the time necessary for the journey from the place of arrest to the court of the magistrate," the Court pronounced, according to a Live Law report.The court made it clear that the time spent in custody before formal arrest cannot be excluded from the 24-hour calculation, ruling that any such interpretation would undermine the protection against detention without timely judicial oversight."Therefore, the dichotomy that the period of 24 hours for the purposes of clause (2) of Article 22 commences from the completion of such search and seizure and only from the time of arrest recorded by the arresting authority is not only unsustainable in law but is entirely unconstitutional," the bench added.

The court also observed that Article 22(2) uses the phrase "every person who is arrested and detained in custody", with the terms 'arrested' and 'detained' being joint and conjunctive, and therefore carrying the same meaning.It said the Constitution does not recognise detention independent of arrest.Rejecting any artificial distinction between arrest and detention, the bench said such an interpretation would raise questions about who gets to decide what constitutes a brief period of investigation and when such detention crosses that threshold.The observation was made when the bench was hearing appeals filed by four persons challenging the Tripura High Court's refusal to grant them bail in an Narcotic Drugs and Psychotropic Substances (NDPS) Act case.They were detained during a search and seizure operation at 2 pm on September 29, 2025, but their formal arrest was recorded only at 11 am the following day.The bench held that they should have been produced before a magistrate within 24 hours of their detention on September 29.Noting that they had remained in custody for around 18 hours without judicial oversight, the court held that their detention violated Article 22(2) and ordered their immediate release.The court also underscored the need for judicial oversight of detention, citing instances of custodial violence.

## DDA housing sales record 80 per cent rise

**Delhi.(Agency)**

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The Delhi Development Authority has recorded an impressive growth of nearly 80% in housing sales during the first seven months of FY 2026-27, as compared to the corresponding period of the previous financial year.A total of 9,332 flats across various categories were sold during April to October 2026, against 5,198 flats during the same period last year. This represents an increase of 4,134 flats in sales, reflecting growing public confidence in DDA's housing initiatives.

A notable feature of this performance is that sales in all three major housing categories—LIG, MIG and HIG—during the first seven months of the current financial year have already surpassed their respective sales figures for the entire FY 2025-26.During April to October 2026, DDA sold 5,171 LIG flats, as compared to 3,547 flats during the entire FY 2025-26. Similarly, 1,704 MIG flats were sold during the first seven months of the current financial year, against 1,580 during the entire previous financial year.

HIG sales also registered a significant increase, with 820 flats sold during April to October 2026, compared to 404 during the whole of FY 2025-26.Narela has emerged as a major contributor to DDA's housing sales, accounting for more than 90% of the total sales during the current financial year so far. The area is steadily developing into a preferred residential destination, supported by major infrastructure projects such as the Urban Extension Road-II (UER-II) and the upcoming Rithala-Narela-Kundli Metro Corridor.

Additionally, the proposed 138-hectare Education Hub in Sectors G2 to G6, with land allotted to several universities and educational institutions, along with the Narela Sports Complex, green spaces and other civic amenities, is expected to further strengthen its appeal as a well-planned residential destination.DDA's housing schemes are designed to offer a convenient and transparent home-buying experience. Prospective buyers can purchase flats from the comfort of their homes through the DDA Awaas Portal. The flats are freehold and ready to move in, while sample flats are also available to enable prospective buyers to assess the properties and make informed decisions.

# AQI touches 482 as Delhi battles worsening pollution, severe air likely to persist

**According to data from the Central Pollution Control Board (CPCB), seven monitoring stations across the city recorded AQI levels above 400, indicating severe air quality.**

**Delhi.(Agency)**

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Delhi's air quality deteriorated sharply on Thursday, with the overall Air Quality Index (AQI) touching 482 at 8.01 am, placing the national capital in the severe category as several parts of the city continued to record high levels of pollution.According to data from the Central Pollution Control Board (CPCB), seven monitoring stations across the city recorded AQI levels above 400, indicating severe air quality.Punjabi Bagh recorded the highest AQI at 446, followed by Narela (434), Rohini (431), RK Puram (416), Bawana (412), North Campus of Delhi University (408) and Patparganj (405).Air quality in several other parts of the city remained in the very poor category. Okhla Phase-2 and India Gate recorded an AQI of 399 each, while ITO reported 397 and Dwarka Sector 8 recorded 396. Chandni Chowk and Vasundhara Enclave registered AQI levels of 356 and 330, respectively.Anand Vihar recorded an AQI of 293, while the India Meteorological Department's Lodhi Road station reported 268, with both locations falling in the poor category.The deterioration comes ahead of Diwali, with forecasts indicating that pollution levels could worsen further over the coming days. According to the Air Quality Early Warning System, Delhi's air quality is likely to slip into the severe category on November 6 and 7, with the outlook for the subsequent six days also indicating severe conditions.The national capital had recorded an average AQI of 377 on Wednesday, its worst reading in 288 days,




according to CPCB data. The last time the city recorded a higher reading was on January 20, when the AQI stood at 378. As many as 22 monitoring stations had reported severe air quality on Wednesday, highlighting the widespread deterioration.The spike in pollution levels has been attributed to a combination of local emissions, agricultural residue burning in neighbouring states and unfavourable meteorological conditions that hamper the dispersion of pollutants.According to the Indian Institute of Tropical Meteorology's (IITM) Decision Support System, stubble burning accounted for an estimated 16.28 per cent of Delhi's PM2.5 pollution on Wednesday, while the transport sector contributed 18.17 per cent.Other sources included residential emissions, industrial activity, construction and road dust.Satellite data from the ICAR-Indian Agricultural Research Institute detected 467 farm-fire incidents across six states on November 4. Madhya Pradesh accounted for 157 incidents, followed by Punjab (151), Rajasthan (111), Uttar Pradesh (33), Haryana (10) and Uttarakhand (five).

## ECI de-links Form 6 from SIR declaration flagged by 2 Election Commissioners

**Delhi.(Agency)**

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The Election Commission of India (ECI) has implemented its decision to completely de-link the Special Intensive Revision (SIR) declaration from online Form 6 across all states, including those where the revision exercise is still underway.The decision, which was disclosed by the poll body in a counter-affidavit before the Supreme Court on October 26, was implemented on the ECINet portal on November 4–5.The move follows concerns raised by two Election Commissioners over the insertion of the SIR declaration into Form 6.Under the revised arrangement, applicants will now have to submit the declaration separately instead of filling it out as part of the online application used to seek inclusion in the electoral roll.The declaration had already been removed from Form 6 in states where the SIR exercise had been completed. The latest implementation extends the separation to states where the revision process is still underway.The issue dates back to May 16, when Election Commissioner Vivek Joshi objected to the insertion of the SIR declaration into Form 6 without a formal amendment. On August 13, Election Commissioner Sukhbir Singh Sandhu also described the change as unauthorised and illegal.On September 26, the full Commission had decided that the declaration would remain applicable in states where the SIR was underway but would be removed from Form 6 in states where the exercise had concluded.Subsequently, on October 21, the ECI's Electoral Roll Division decided to separate Form 6 and the SIR declaration in the online application process. The Commission disclosed this decision in its counter-affidavit before the Supreme Court on October 26, before implementing the change across states in early November.The development comes amid sustained protests by Opposition parties against Chief Election Commissioner Gyanesh Kumar over the SIR exercise.The INDIA bloc has demanded Kumar's resignation, accusing the poll body of irregularities in the revision of electoral rolls and raising concerns over the deletion of voters' names.Opposition leaders, including Rahul Gandhi, have led demonstrations against the CEC in Delhi, while protests have also spread to other parts of the country. The Election Commission has maintained that the revision exercise is intended to ensure the accuracy of electoral rolls.



## Supreme Court's Big Remark On 'Arrest', 'Detention' And 24-Hour Deadline

**Specialised equipment and appliances required to tackle fires involving highly combustible materials will be procured in accordance with MHA norms through an MoU with the Delhi Metro Rail Corporation.**

**Delhi.(Agency)**

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The Supreme Court on Thursday ruled that the 24-hour constitutional deadline for producing an arrested person before a magistrate begins from the moment he is detained, and not from the time the police formally makes the arrest.Holding that there can be no artificial distinction between 'arrest' and 'detention' for the purpose of Article 22(2) of the Constitution, a bench of Justices Ujjal Bhuyan and Atul S Chandurkar said any interpretation allowing the police to exclude the period of pre-arrest detention would be contrary to the constitutional mandate."The view that 24 hours begin only from the formal arrest is contrary to the constitutional mandate of Article 22(2) and Section 56 of the BNSS," the bench observed.

The verdict that the only period that can be excluded while computing the 24-hour deadline is the time reasonably required to travel from the place of arrest to the magistrate's court.The time spent on inquiry, investigation, search or seizure before formal arrest cannot be excluded, it added.Article 22(2) provides that every person, who is arrested and detained in custody must be produced before the nearest magistrate within 24 hours of arrest, excluding the time necessary for the journey from the place of arrest to the court.The top court disapproved of the views taken by the Orissa High Court in the Aryaman Pattanaik case, the Madras High Court in the Kannan case and the Kerala High Court in the Arun K Thomas case, which had permitted the period of detention before formal arrest to be excluded while calculating the 24-hour deadline.The bench said that no period



can be excluded while computing the deadline, except the time necessary for the journey from the place of arrest to the magistrate's court.

The top court disapproved of the views taken by the Orissa High Court in the Aryaman Pattanaik case, the Madras High Court in the Kannan case and the Kerala High Court in the Arun K Thomas case, which had permitted the period of detention before formal arrest to be excluded while calculating the 24-hour deadline.

## Google expands employee buyout programme to five countries as AI takes priority

**New Delhi.(Agency)**

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Google has expanded its voluntary employee buyout programme to five countries as the technology giant restructures its workforce and redirects resources towards artificial intelligence (AI) and cloud computing.The programme, rolled out in June 2025, covers employees in Canada, France, Germany, Japan and Switzerland. It offers eligible workers financial incentives to leave the company voluntarily as Google seeks to streamline operations and control costs amid increasing investments in emerging technologies.

Under the scheme, employees in Switzerland and other affected regions are reportedly eligible for severance payments equivalent to one month's salary for every year of service, capped at a maximum of 12 months' salary. Employees who accepted the offer were expected to begin leaving the company in August 2025.However, the initiative does not cover Google's entire workforce. It excludes its high-priority divisions, particularly Google Cloud and the AI research unit DeepMind. The move reflects the company's continued focus on strengthening these businesses through investment and recruitment.

## Rupee falls 9 paise to 94.55 against US dollar in early trade

**MUMBAI.(Agency)**

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The rupee depreciated 9 paise to 94.55 against the US dollar in early trade on Thursday pressured by the broad strength of the American currency in the overseas market.Forex traders said a positive domestic market and softening of crude oil prices cushioned the downside.

At the interbank foreign exchange market, the rupee opened at 94.36, then fell to 94.55 against the US dollar, registering a fall of 9 paise from its previous close.

On Wednesday, the rupee stayed firm for the second straight session to settle 29 paise igher at 94.46 against the US dollar.

"Forward-looking markets are aggressively erasing the geopolitical risk premium built up from the US-Israel conflict with Iran, as a Democratic-controlled Congress is expected to severely constrain funding for military escalation and push for near-term diplomatic negotiations," said Anil Kumar Bhansali, Head of Treasury and Executive Director, Finrex Treasury Advisors LLP.

## Cybersecurity demand creates new opportunities for Happiest Minds as clients add AI safeguards

**NEW DELHI.(Ajency)**

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Happiest Minds Technologies is seeing increased demand for cybersecurity assessments, AI governance and AI security as clients continue AI deployments with added safeguards, co-chairman and chief executive Joseph Anantharaju said.

The demand is creating opportunities for the company's Infrastructure Management and Security Services (IMSS) business unit, Anantharaju said.

"On one hand, this is really helping our IMSS business unit by giving opportunities by raising doubts and ris," he said.

He said clients were continuing with AI implementation, but were taking precautions. "I think customers are looking at how to put guardrails and move forward with their implementation. I think they are being more careful and deliberate about how they implement AI."Happiest Minds reported consolidated revenue of Rs 645.43 crore for the September quarter in rupee terms, up 12.5% year-on-year and 2.7% sequentially. Revenue in constant currency grew 6.8% year-on-year and 2.4% quarter-on-quarter.

# A gold ring, a lightweight necklace, a coin: How Indians are buying gold this Dhanteras

**New Delhi.(Agency)**

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Priya Vashishtha from Noida wants a gold ring she can wear every day. Neha Ranjan from Indore has her eyes on a lightweight necklace and earrings set for the festive season. Sanjay Malviya from Gurugram, meanwhile, plans to buy a 5-gram gold coin as part of his savings.Three buyers. Three different choices. One common attraction: gold."Gold has become so expensive. A heavy necklace would mean spending a lot more. I would rather buy a lightweight ring that I can wear every day without stretching my budget," says Priya.Neha, too, is keeping an eye on her spending. "I have always preferred jewellery to coins because I can actually wear it. But with gold prices rising so much, buying a heavy set does not make sense right now. A lightweight necklace and earrings set is a better choice," she says.Amit has a different approach. "I prefer gold coins because I see gold as a long-term investment. Jewellery comes with making charges, which add to the cost. A coin is a simpler way to accumulate gold. Even though prices are high, I don't want to miss the tradition of buying gold on Dhanteras," he says.

Their choices reflect a larger shift in how Indians are approaching Dhanteras shopping this year. While the tradition of buying gold remains firmly rooted, the form in which consumers choose to own it is changing. Some are opting for lightweight, everyday jewellery, others are looking at coins and bars, while digital gold is also finding interest among younger buyers.So, what is driving these choices? Are high gold prices changing buying habits, or are consumers simply finding new ways to celebrate the festival without overshooting their budgets?

**GOLD GETS DEARER, BUYERS GET SMARTER**

Gold prices have become an important consideration for households planning their Dhanteras purchases. However, expensive gold does not necessarily mean consumers are walking away from the market. Instead, they are adjusting what they buy to fit their budgets.Sudeep Nagar, Co-founder and



Chief Operating Oicer of BlueStone, says consumers are not necessarily spending more, buying less or switching to cheaper alternatives. They are simply buying differently."Consumers arrive with a budget rather than a weight — thirty thousand rupees, fifty thousand, a lakh. When the metal moves, that number does not move with it. So what changes is what the budget reaches, not whether she buys or how often," he says.

According to Nagar, customers are not necessarily looking for cheaper products. They want something that offers value within the amount they have decided to spend.He also points out that demand has remained resilient despite gold prices staying elevated for an extended period. Consumers have absorbed higher price levels and continued purchasing, suggesting that the appeal of jewellery has not diminished.For Ankur Daga, Founder and CEO of Angara, the movement in silver prices has also influenced festive buying decisions.He says buyers had held back when silver prices were touching record highs earlier this year. However, the subsequent correction has brought shoppers back to the market."Indian buyers watch precious metal rates very closely. The moment they saw prices slip below the Rs 2 lakh mark, they treated it as a window to buy. On our own platform, we're seeing festive sales up roughly 35% to 40% in value year on year," Daga says.

# Regional airlines seek revised ATF relief as fuel costs force flight cuts

**New Delhi.(Agency)**

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Regional airlines are hoping the Civil Aviation Ministry will bring back the aviation turbine fuel (ATF) Price Stabilisation Fund (PSF) with more favourable terms, as rising fuel costs put pressure on their operations and force some operators to scale back flights.

Industry insiders told India Today that the high cost of jet fuel is making it increasingly difficult for regional airlines to maintain operations. They said the situation has become particularly challenging for carriers operating routes that larger airlines are often unwilling to serve..A senior official of a regional airline said that even as the fleet capacity of some operators increases, their operations are declining because of the high cost of fuel. The official said airlines are being pushed into a difficult position, with running more flights increasingly translating into higher cash burn.Star Air, one of India's biggest regional airline operators, has reduced its operations from 68 flights in the summer schedule to 52 in the winter schedule. The reduction comes amid rising fuel costs.An industry insider said operating more flights has become equivalent to burning more cash. As a result, regional as well as larger Indian airlines have been recalibrating their operations.

The pressure has also been compounded by geopolitical tensions in the Middle East. Higher ATF prices have coincided with airspace restrictions, affecting airline operations. Indian carriers, including Air India and IndiGo, have also been dealing with the impact of Pakistani airspace restrictions.At the Aviation India event in Delhi, Air India CEO Tewolde Gebremariam had highlighted how international competitors were not facing similar challenges in terms of airspace restrictions.

**AIRLINES SEEK A REVISED ATF PRICE STABILISATION FUND**

The renewed pressure on airlines has



brought the government's ATF Price Stabilisation Fund proposal back into focus.In June 2026, the Union Cabinet approved one-time budgetary support of up to Rs 10,000 crore for oil marketing companies (OMCs) to provide ATF price stabilisation support to Indian airline operators for their domestic and international operations.

The proposed support was intended to help stabilise jet fuel prices even when global rates rose sharply, providing an additional cushion to Indian carriers. However, the scheme was discontinued a month later after it failed to attract takers.ATF prices have seen significant movement over the past few months. In March, jet fuel prices in India were nearly Rs 105 per litre. They rose sharply to around Rs 207 per litre in April. When the ATF PSF was introduced by the Civil Aviation Ministry, prices were around Rs 115 per litre and continued to rise over the following two months. In October, ATF prices stood at around Rs 137 per litre.

The renewed pressure from fuel costs has revived interest among airline executives in bringing back the scheme, this time with changes to its terms.A senior executive of an airline operator told India Today that certain conditions in the earlier proposal had made airlines uncomfortable."There were certain conditions in the earlier PSF proposal which made the airlines uncomfortable, including the OMC from which we can acquire the fuel. Moreover, it required us to enter the MoU immediately and end our old commitments. We had never imagined the ATF prices will go to levels it is on right now," the executive said.The executive added that a revised proposal could find more takers."If the government comes with tweaked clauses in the PSF proposal, possibly there will be takers this time around," the executive said.

**REGIONAL AIRLINES SEEK MORE FAVOURABLE TERMS**

Regional airlines are also seeking a proposal that takes into account their relatively smaller fuel consumption and the role they play in connecting routes that may not attract larger operators.

## From cheaper oil to FII flows: How US midterm results could help Dalal Street

**New Delhi.(Agency)**

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The outcome of the US midterm elections could have implications beyond American politics, with potential consequences for global financial markets, including India. A shift in congressional control could place limits on President Donald Trump's ability to push aggressive trade and tariff policies, while expectations of easing geopolitical tensions have also contributed to a sharp decline in crude oil prices.For Indian markets, these developments could create a more supportive external environment. Lower oil prices, a softer US dollar and a moderation in US bond yields could help ease some of the pressures on the domestic economy and potentially improve foreign investor sentiment. However, the extent of any benefit will depend on how these trends develop and whether they are sustained.

The impact is unlikely to be immediate or guaranteed, with domestic corporate earnings, valuations and global developments continuing to influence the direction of Dalal Street.

**LOWER CRUDE PRICES EASE PRESSURE ON INDIA**

One of the most important channels through which the US election outcome could affect Indian markets is crude oil.India is heavily dependent on imports to meet its crude oil requirements. A sustained fall in global oil prices could help reduce the country's import bill, ease pressure on the current account deficit and limit imported inflation.This could be positive for sectors that are sensitive to fuel and raw material costs, including aviation, paints, chemicals and other energy-intensive industries. Oil marketing companies could also see changes in their margins, depending on how retail fuel prices and refining costs move.Crude prices have come under pressure amid expectations that the new balance of power in the US Congress could increase pressure on Trump to pHowever, this remains an expectation rather than a certainty. The US President retains considerable authority over foreign policy, and any breakdown in diplomatic efforts or fresh escalation in the region could push oil prices higher again.ursue a diplomatic approach to the Iran conflict.

# Why did Wall Street rally and oil prices fall after US midterm elections

**NEW DELHI.(Ajency)**

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Global markets saw a sharp shift in sentiment after the US midterm election results, with Wall Street ending higher and crude oil prices plunging more than 8% on Wednesday. Investors bet that the Democratic Party's sweeping victory could increase pressure on President Donald Trump to de-escalate the Iran conflict, easing concerns over global energy supplies.Oil prices extended their decline on Thursday, with Brent crude falling below the $95-per-barrel mark. In the latest market snapshot, Brent was trading at $93.83 per barrel, down 0.83%, while US West Texas Intermediate (WTI) crude stood at $87.05,




down 1.21%.The latest levels mark a decline of around 8.8% in Brent and 9.3% in WTI compared with the previous levels of $102.84 and $95.95, respectively, shared on Wednesday.The sharp fall in oil prices came after Democrats won control of both the US Senate and House of Representatives in the midterm elections, marking a major setback for Trump's Republican Party.

**WHY ARE OIL PRICES FALLING?**

The election outcome has raised expectations that a Democratic-controlled Congress could constrain Trump's military options and push for a negotiated end to the US-Israeli conflict with Iran.The conflict had triggered a surge in crude prices amid concerns over disruptions to energy shipments through the Strait of Hormuz, a key global oil transit route.

Investors are now assessing whether the change in political balance in Washington could make it harder for Trump to continue the conflict, potentially easing pressure on global oil supplies.According to a Reuters report, Brent crude fell 8.7% to $94.62 a barrel on Wednesday, while US WTI dropped 8.3% to $88.12. Both benchmarks touched their lowest levels since August 31.US President Donald Trump said Washington had no immediate plans to strike Iran and acknowledged that the war had contributed to his party's electoral defeat. However, analysts have cautioned that the situation remains uncertain, with negotiations between Washington and Tehran still far from a resolution.

**IRAN'S HORMUZ MOVE ADDS TO SUPPLY RELIEF**

Adding to the developments around energy supplies, Iran has lifted Strait of Hormuz transit restrictions for ships from India, China, Iraq and Qatar, according to an Economic Times report.Amir Hayat Moqaddam, deputy chairman of the Iranian parliament's national security and foreign policy committee, said ships from these four countries could pass through the Strait without restrictions.

# Sebi eases digital KYC rules for NRIs, foreigners

**NEW DELHI.(Ajency)**

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Effective December 3, non-resident Indians (NRIs) and foreigners willing to invest in the country will have an easier know-your-customer (KYC) onbaording process as capital markets watchdog Sebi relaxes those norms for persons resident outside India (PROIs or NRIs).The market regulator also allowed those from the financial action task-force (FATF)-compliant countries to complete digital onboarding without being physically present here.The revised framework, issued on Wednesday, will cover NRIs, overseas citizens of India (OCIs) and foreign nationals. However, clients residing in FATF-non-compliant countries will continue to follow existing KYC requirements.Under the revised norms, intermediaries can accept digital submissions of KYC information and supporting documents. The regulator has also made KYC records portable, allowing them to be shared across intermediaries irrespective of whether all individual attributes have been validated. Intermediaries can rely on KYC undertaken by another Sebi-registered intermediary or an entity regulated by another financial sector regulator, based on records obtained from KYC registration agencies or the Central KYC Records Registry. The framework requires intermediaries to collect copies of passports and, where applicable, OCI cards. Overseas addresses will be accepted as proof of address. Clients can submit KYC forms digitally or physically, while specimen signatures can be submitted electronically, subject to verification during video-based in-person verification. Sebi has mandated the presence of an authorised official during




video verification and subjected the process to concurrent audit. Intermediaries will remain ultimately responsible for client KYC, including enhanced due diligence based on risk profiles. Intermediaries must provide completed KYC information to KRAs within three working days. The revised provisions will also apply to re-KYC of clients in FATF-compliant countries.

## Odisha govt to permanently shift people from unsafe places in wake of cyclone Arnab

**BHUBANESWAR.(Agency)**

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The state government has planned to permanently shift people residing in villages located in high-risk hilltop and foothill areas to safer places in plains, in wake of the massive landslides triggered by cyclone Arnab.Speaking to mediapersons on Wednesday, Revenue and Disaster Management minister Suresh Pujari said survey was underway to identify such vulnerable habitations, with focus on Gajapati and Kandhamal, which have seen maximum landslide vulnerability.

Gajapati alone has around 150 landslide-prone spots, the minister said, stressing need for long-term structural solution rather than temporary relief.He said the families willing to shift will be given houses in plain areas under state welfare housing schemes meant for rural families who are not covered under central housing programmes. "They will be rehabilitated as per their own choice," Pujari added.To prepare better mitigation plans for hill districts, an official team from Odisha recently visited north-eastern states to study anti-landslide measures.

## Over 30 lakh join Keralam's Operation Toofan anti-drug campaign

**Palakkad.(Agency)**

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More than 30 lakh people have joined Keralam's anti-drug campaign as 'Toofan Warriors', Home Minister Ramesh Chennithala said on Thursday, according to news agency Press Trust of India. The government is seeking to expand its action against narcotics through public participation, prevention and rehabilitation.Addressing an anti-drug awareness gathering in Palakkad, Chennithala described 'Operation Toofan' as the UDF government's signature programme and said it had received an encouraging public response.The minister made the remarks after leading a Toofan Jagaran rally organised by a people's collective and attended by hundreds of people. He administered an anti-narcotics pledge to the gathering and declared the participants Toofan Warriors.Chennithala said superstar Mohanlal was the first person to be designated a Toofan Warrior. "Operation Toofan is the signature programme of the Keralam government. According to our estimates, more than 30 lakh people across the state have taken the pledge and become Toofan Warriors so far," he said.In a post on X, the minister said the campaign was not limited to arrests and enforcement but also focused on preventing drug abuse and helping those affected rebuild their lives.

## Andaman Lieutenant Governor flags connectivity, infra gaps at NITI Aayog meeting

**Vadodara.(Agency)**

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Andaman and Nicobar Islands Lieutenant Governor Dinesh Sharma has presented a roadmap for inclusive and sustainable growth of the Union territory at a high-level NITI Aayog meeting in New Delhi, news agency Press Trust of India reported, citing an official statement issued on Thursday.The roadmap covered connectivity, infrastructure, water supply, healthcare, renewable energy, tourism, fisheries, agriculture and employment. Sharma also sought flexibility in the rules for central schemes and time-bound decisions on pending proposals.

The meeting, held on Wednesday, was chaired by NITI Aayog Vice Chairman Ashok Kumar Lahiri. NITI Aayog member R Subrahmanyam, CEO Anurag Jain, Andaman and Nicobar Islands Chief Secretary Gyanesh Bharti and senior officials from various central ministries attended it, according to PTI.Highlighting the islands' strategic importance in the Indo-Pacific region, Sharma called for a development approach tailored to their needs. He cited the geographical challenges posed by 31 inhabited islands spread across 8,249 square kilometres.

# Money laundering: ED attaches Rs 24.60 crore assets in Rourkela Mall

**The ED said it was alleged that MTIL, in connivance with certain officials of PEC Limited, fraudulently obtained financial assistance of Rs 19.40 crore for procurement of iron ore by misrepresenting its financial position and concealing existing charges over its assets.**

**ROURKELA.(Agency)**

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The Bhubaneswar zonal office of the directorate of enforcement (ED) has provisionally attached immovable property worth Rs 24.60 crore in a money laundering case involving Maa Tarini Industries Limited (MTIL) and others.The ED in a statement on Tuesday said the attached property comprises the ground floor, first floor and a part of the second floor of the Pluto Plaza Mall at Chhend colony in Rourkela under the ownership of the Pluto Plaza Private Limited (PPPL), a company controlled by Hanuman Khedaria.The ED investigation was initiated following an FIR registered by CBI, ACB, Bhubaneswar, under various provisions and the Prevention of Corruption Act, 1988, against the MTIL at Kalunga near Rourkela, its directors, and officials of PEC Limited, a Government of India enterprise (its website states the company has not undertaken any business activity since September 2019).The ED said it was alleged that MTIL, in connivance with certain officials of PEC Limited, fraudulently obtained financial assistance of Rs 19.40 crore for procurement of iron ore by misrepresenting its financial position and concealing existing charges over its assets.Another corporate entity, Tathagat Exports Private Limited (TEPL), had also availed of financial assistance of Rs 16 crore from PEC Limited. The total outstanding liability towards PEC Limited was approximately Rs 56.89 crore, including interest at the time when the loan became NPA, the ED said.The investigation revealed that the funds obtained from PEC Limited were diverted through the bank accounts of MTIL and TEPL and utilised towards payment of share purchase consideration to the erstwhile shareholders of MTIL including Khedaria.Investigation also revealed that Khedaria and his associated entities received proceeds amounting to around Rs 15.31 crore, which along with the interest component.

# Cyclones Arnab, Murasu narrow Andhra Pradesh rainfall deficit

**According to the district-wise rainfall data, Andhra Pradesh received 583.42 mm rainfall against the normal 777.2 mm between June 1 and November 4.**

**VISAKHAPATNAM .(Agency)**

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Though the back-to-back cyclones Arnab and Murasu left a trail of destruction and loss across Andhra Pradesh, they have brought considerable rainfall to several parts of the State, helping it recover from a significant deficit recorded until the first half of October.Despite the substantial improvement, especially in coastal districts, the State still has a cumulative deficit of 24.93% as on November 4, with 12 districts remaining deficient.According to the district-wise rainfall data, Andhra Pradesh received 583.42 mm rainfall against the normal 777.2 mm between June 1 and November 4. The deficit had stood at 47% towards the end of October before Cyclone Arnab brought widespread rainfall, reducing it to 18% by October 30. Ten districts recorded surplus rainfall during October.



The district-wise figures for October in the latest rainfall assessment show that AP received 138.15 mm against the normal 168.44 mm, leaving an 18% deficit for the month. The rainfall during November 1-4, however, was significantly above normal, with several districts receiving multiple times their average rainfall for the period.The impact of the two cyclones is particularly evident in the coastal districts. During November 1-4, West Godavari received 238.42 mm against the normal 30.81 mm, registering nearly 674% excess rainfall.Konaseema recorded 192.58 mm against 46.74 mm, while East Godavari received 157.86 mm against 22.41 mm. Guntur recorded 169.03 mm against the normal 32 mm, and NTR district received 124.88 mm against 22.66 mm. Visakhapatnam also recorded 72.75 mm against the normal 45.01 mm.

**Rayalaseema registers 43.06% deficit rainfall**

The improvement is also reflected in the cumulative rainfall position of several northern and coastal districts. Visakhapatnam has received 945.17 mm against its normal 865.09 mm, registering a surplus of 9.26%. Vizianagaram recorded a 5.7% surplus with 935.05 mm against 884.65 mm, while Srikakulam received 953.84 mm against 941.66 mm.Guntur also moved into surplus territory, recording 768.72 mm against the normal 733.33 mm. However, the rainfall gains have not been uniform across the State.Of the 28 districts, 12 continue to fall in the deficient category. Markapuram recorded the highest deficit at 58.2%, with 230.26 mm rainfall against the normal 550.83 mm.

Prakasam followed with a 52.35% deficit, while Kurnool, YSR Kadapa, Nandyal and Sri Sathya Sai recorded deficits of 51.4%, 49.68%, 49.22% and 55.78% respectively. Annamayya, Anantapur, Chittoor, Tirupati and Palnadu also remained in the deficient category.

## ZPTC & MPTC polls today at 714 centres in Ongole: Collector P Rajababu

**ONGOLE.(Agency)**

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The district administration has completed arrangements for the ZPTC and MPTC elections to be held on Thursday. Of the 27 ZPTC seats, two have already been elected unanimously, while 151 of the 371 MPTC seats were decided uncontested.Addressing a press conference at the Collectorate Command and Control Centre on Wednesday, District Collector P Rajababu, along with Joint Collector Kalpana Kumari and ZP CEO Chiranjeevi, outlined the poll preparations.The Collector said polling will be conducted at 1,265 polling stations located in 714 centres across the district. A total of 10,70,902 voters, including 5,30,739 men, 5,40,137 women and 26 others, are eligible to cast their votes.As many as 8,908 polling personnel, including presiding officers, assistant presiding officers and other polling staff, have been deployed. The administration has appointed 81 special officers, comprising 27 returning officers and 54 assistant returning officers.Of the polling stations, 362 have been identified as sensitive and 379 as highly sensitive, while 524 fall under the normal category. Polling materials have been dispatched to the respective stations, and 414 micro-observers will report for duty on polling day.The Collector said webcasting and CCTV arrangements have been made at all polling stations, particularly at sensitive and highly sensitive centres. Officials, with technical support from IIIT students, will monitor polling activities from the Command and Control Centre. Strict action will be taken against anyone involved in illegal or violent activities, he warned.

Superintendent of Police V Harshavardhan Raju said 2,391 police personnel have been deployed to ensure peaceful and fair polling. Security arrangements include 34 striking force teams, two ASPs, six DSPs, 26 Circle Inspectors and a special force headed by 25 CIs. A total of 141 mobile patrol teams have also been deployed across Ongole, Darsi and Kandukur divisions.The SP said police booked 23 cases related to unlawful activities, registered 48 cases involving liquor, and seized 187.37 litres of liquor and `2.8 lakh in unaccounted cash. As a preventive measure, 739 rowdy-sheeters and 974 others were bound over.

## Why Emirates, Air France are not onboard Adani's Navi Mumbai airport plan

**Mumbai.(Agency)**

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As a standoff between airlines and Adani Group over shifting international flights to Navi Mumbai airport continues, foreign airlines such as Air France and Emirates have approached the Union Ministry of Civil Aviation (MoCA), opposing a proposal by Adani-owned Mumbai International Airport Limited (MIAL) to reduce capacity at Chhatrapati Shivaji Maharaj International Airport (CSMIA) and make the shift.In an email to MoCA Secretary Sameer Sinha earlier this week, the Airport Operators' Committee (AOC)-Mumbai termed MIAL's proposal to reduce Terminal 1's (T1) capacity by five million passengers per annum (mppa) a "unilateral decision" without adequate justification.It also questioned the operator's assessment of T1's operational capacity, claiming it was less than 10 mppa against the projected capacity of 15 mppa.Amid this, MIAL has proposed temporarily shifting international flights to 14 international destinations out of the Mumbai airport, citing airlines' failure to submit voluntary transition plans for these routes.Meanwhile, the AOC has urged the Centre to direct MIAL and the CSMIA slot coordinator to confirm the historical slots of all existing airlines for the Summer 2027 schedule, beginning in late March.

## 'Chaitar chose jail over BJP': AAP MLA's wives address rally in Gujarat capital

**Gandhinagar.(Agency)**

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"Vote in the 2027 elections to avenge the imprisonment of Chaitar Vasava because he chose jail for the sake of society, and he did not join the BJP," said Shakuntala Vasava, wife of jailed Aam Aadmi Party (AAP) MLA from Dediapada – a tribal constituency in central Gujarat.She shared the stage with Varsha, Chaitar's younger wife, at Adivasi Nyay Mahasammelan held in Gandhinagar on Wednesday.

Chaitar Vasava, who is also AAP's working president in Gujarat, is serving a seven-year sentence.A sessions court in Rajpipla in Narmada district on June 23 sentenced Chaitar to seven years' imprisonment in a case involving alleged threats and assault against forest department officials after the department removed crops said to have been cultivated on encroached forest land. The Gujarat High Court had rejected his plea to suspend the sentence on August 24.

The MLA's wives launched Adivasi Nyay Yatra on October 24 beginning from Umergam in South Gujarat to Ambaji in the north, covering the entire tribal belt. 'Adivasi Nyay Mahasammellan' was the concluding ceremony of the yatra.

**Poll pitch**

The meeting, attended by hundreds of people from tribal communities, turned into a pitch for the Gujarat assembly elections which are at least a year away.

## Keenan-Reuben murder: Convict's life term reduced, two others walk free

**Mumbai.(Agency)**

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The Bombay High Court on Thursday, November 5, reduced the life sentence of the key convict in the 2011 Keenan-Reuben murder case and also acquitted two others of murder charges, partly allowing the appeals by three men who challenged a May 2016 conviction by the sessions court. All three had been convicted and sentenced to life imprisonment in the murder case.During the hearing, the High Court upheld the conviction of key accused Jitendra Fakirchand Rana for murder under Section 302 of the IPC, it modified his sentence from life imprisonment till the remainder of his life to 20 years of rigorous imprisonment without statutory remission, "considering his age" and other factors.The HC, however, acquitted two other accused, Sunil Omprakash Both alias Chhota and Deepak Ishwar Omprakash Piwal, of murder charges as it "did not find any material against them" under Section 302 of the IPC, while maintaining their conviction and sentences for other charges.



The fourth accused, Satish Nafeshing Dulgaj, died pending appeal.A bench of Justices Makarand S Karnik and Sandesh S Patil passed a ruling on appeals by Rana, Sunil Both and Piwal, who were convicted on charges of murder. Rana and Dulgaj were also found guilty of molestation.Rana and Dulgaj, as per the case registered at D N Nagar Police station, passed lewd comments against one of the female friends of the deceased and inappropriately touched her, after which Keenan confronted the two men and one of their friends, Avinash Solanki (a key witness in the case who later died in 2018), and allegedly slapped Rana. After the scuffle, the four men initially left the spot but issued threats that they would return and kill them.

They returned 10 to 15 minutes later armed with knives stolen from a nearby coconut vendor, a cricket stump, and a big bamboo stick.

In the ensuing clash, Keenan was stabbed repeatedly in the stomach and succumbed to his injuries that night, while Reuben was attacked with a knife and died on October 31 that year. After a crowd gathered at the spot, the accused persons ran away.

## Arsenal edge stubborn Slavia in Champions League

**PRAGUE.(Agency)**

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Noni Madueke and Viktor Gyokeres scored in the first half to hand Arsenal a 2-1 win at Slavia Prague in the Champions League on Wednesday.

Arsenal got back to winning ways in Europe after a 2-2 draw at Bayern last month, reaching 10 points from four Champions League games so far, while Slavia have a single point in the standings."We have to value the fact that it's very difficult to win away from home. We've done it against a really tough opponent, as we expected," said Arsenal manager Mikel Arteta."Two very different halves. The first one where we played at a really high level in terms of tempo, intensity, quality and clarity in what we had to do," he added.The Premier



League champions were quick to take control of the game in chilly conditions in the Czech capital.

Madueke reaped the rewards on nine minutes.Gyokeres controlled David Raya's long clearance with his chest and passed the ball instinctively to Madueke sprinting behind him down the right flank.Madueke left the Slavia back four behind him with ease and beat diving Ukrainian teenager Nazar Domchak in the Slavia goal with a low shot.

Gyokeres, one of six changes in Mikel Arteta's starting line-up from Sunday's 1-0 win at Liverpool, made it 2-0 on 38 minutes.

## 'I knew he was going to make it big': Sachin Tendulkar breaks silence on Joe Root closing in on his all-time Test record

**New Delhi.(Agency)**

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Sachin Tendulkar has backed Joe Root's credentials as one of the finest batters of his generation, revealing that he had recognised the England star's potential during his very first Test appearance in 2012. Root is now closing in on Tendulkar's long-



standing record for the most runs in Test cricket.

During an Ask Me Anything (AMA) session on Reddit, the former India captain was asked about Root's pursuit of his record. Tendulkar responded with high praise for the English batter, recalling the impression he had made during his debut.

"I've always rated him very highly and it was evident to me in his first test match that he was going to make it big!" Tendulkar said.Root currently occupies second place on the all-time Test run-scoring list, with 14,278 runs from 169 matches and 309 innings. He needs another 1,643 runs to overtake Tendulkar, who retired from Test cricket with 15,921 runs in 200 matches and 329 innings. The Indian great's tally remains the highest in the format.

Interestingly, Tendulkar was part of the Indian team against which Root made his Test debut in Nagpur in December 2012. The young English batter made an immediate impression, scoring 73 off 229 deliveries in the first innings before remaining unbeaten on 20 in the second as the match ended in a draw.More than a decade later, Root has established himself as one of the finest Test batters of his generation and is within striking distance of one of cricket's most celebrated records.

# Goalkeeper speaks out after fatal collision, deactivates Insta over online abuse

**FC Andorra goalkeeper Jesus Owono has spoken for the first time after his collision with a Tenerife forward proved fatal, describing the loss as the most difficult period of his life. His teammate Lautaro Spatz has defended him amid online abuse directed at the goalkeeper.**

**New Delhi.(Agency)**

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FC Andorra goalkeeper Jesus Owono has described the death of Tenerife forward Jesus De Miguel as the most difficult period of his life, making his first public statement after the fatal on-field collision that has sent shockwaves through Spanish football.Owono, 25, was involved in a collision with De Miguel during a Spanish second-division match between FC Andorra and Tenerife on Monday. The Tenerife forward suffered a cardiac arrest following the incident and was rushed to hospital, where he was admitted to intensive care. He died on Tuesday morning, aged 30.In a statement released by FC Andorra on Wednesday, Owono spoke of his difficulty in coming to terms with the tragedy and said his thoughts remained with the deceased footballer and his family."These are the most difficult days of my life. I struggle to find the words, and it is very hard for me to process what has happened," Owono said."I feel an immense amount of pain over the loss of Jesus. My thoughts are with him, his family and everyone who loved him. I know there will be many questions to address, and I will face whatever comes with the utmost respect. But right now, honestly, I cannot think about anything other than Jesus and the pain we are experiencing. Rest in peace, Jesus."Owono's statement came a day after he deactivated his Instagram account amid a wave of online abuse following the incident. Some users had reportedly posted abusive comments, including calling the goalkeeper a



'murderer'.The Equatorial Guinea international, who has made 47 appearances for his country, was sent off following the collision. The incident occurred during stoppage time, with the two sides level at 2-2.

**NEVER INTENTIONALLY HURT ANYONE**

While Owono has largely stayed away from public platforms since the tragedy, his FC Andorra teammate Lautaro Spatz came out in his defence, describing the goalkeeper as a friend who was deeply affected by what had happened.Spatz, who paid tribute to De Miguel in a social media post, also spoke about the emotional toll the incident had taken on Owono and urged people to understand that the collision was never intentional."I also want to say a few words about my teammate, goalkeeper and friend, who is deeply affected by what has happened. Those of us who know him know the kind of person he is, how much he is suffering at this moment, and that he would never intentionally hurt anyone," Spatz wrote."In football, unfortunate incidents can happen, but no one could imagine that one of them might end with such tragic consequences."

## After matching Sania's milestone, Maaya wants to keep her feet on the ground

**New Delhi.(Agency)**

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The significance of her achievement is not lost on 17-year-old Maaya Rajeshwaran Revathi, but the teenager is in no hurry to get carried away, preferring to let her tennis do the talking after ending the 14-year wait for an Indian woman to reach a WTA Tour-level singles quarterfinal.The last Indian to achieve the feat was Sania Mirza in February 2012, while Indo-American Shikha Uberoi had also made the last



eight at the WTA level in 2005.Maaya's breakthrough at the Chennai Open has put her in an exclusive club after she beat Poland's Weronika Falkowska in straight sets on Wednesday night.For a young player suddenly finding herself in the spotlight, the attention that accompanies such a milestone can be both an opportunity and a distraction.Maaya, however, sees recognition as an important part of an athlete's journey, particularly in a country where women's tennis is looking for fresh role models."I think it is part of an athlete's career. There are certain things that need to be done and it is always nice to get help. It is always nice to get recognition. In a country like India, it is definitely really nice to actually have some recognition," said Maaya after advancing to the quarterfinals."But at the end of the day, I think it comes down to tennis. You do well, you learn and get what you want.The Coimbatore player was candid about not being at her best, particularly with her serve, and said her opponent's aggressive returning also made life difficult."I am happy to get the win. It was not as good as I wanted it to be, like yesterday (Tuesday), but I am happy that I found ways to win."She (Falkowska) was really hitting those returns, she was going for it, and that sort of made me think more. I think I was really hesitant at the start. But after some time I was like, no matter what, I am going to go for it. Holding back or being hesitant is not going to help. So, I was just trying to go for it, trying to hit the spots more and get a higher percentage," she saidPRO TITLE TARGET THIS YEAR

Maaya's rise has been built on a season of transition, balancing junior tennis with an increasing number of appearances on the professional circuit. She had set herself the target of winning a professional title this year and achieved that goal at an ITF event in Lagos. “I wanted to win a pro title this year and that started off with Lagos. So, I think that was a good start to my career," she said.Her immediate objective, she added, is to play as many matches as possible and finish the year strongly rather than get caught up in rankings or milestones."We do have short-term goals, but I will not put pressure on achieving those goals. You keep improving, you keep working on what you have to, and I think matches and wins are going to follow," she said.

## India have conquered all, but Japan eye silencing Mohali crowd in ACT final



**Mohali.(Agency)**

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Even before the Asian Champions Trophy got underway in Jalandhar and Mohali, there was a sense of inevitability surrounding India's campaign. The expectation was that the hosts would be playing the final on Thursday, November 5, against the best of the rest. And that is exactly how things have unfolded.

India will walk out at the Olympian Balbir Singh Senior Hockey Stadium in Mohali with another title within touching distance. But standing between Harmanpreet Singh and his men and another piece of silverware is a Japanese side that has quietly emerged as their biggest challenger in the tournament.For India, lifting the Asian Champions Trophy would be a fitting way to bring the 2026 season to a close. The Hockey Pro League campaign ended in disappointment once again, while their World Cup outing was far from satisfactory. However, there was one major target on the calendar: win gold at the Asian Games and secure direct qualification for the 2028 Olympics.They achieved that objective. The ACT now offers India an opportunity to end the year on another high and add yet another title to their growing collection.And there was little doubt about their place in the final.India's sheer dominance was on display throughout the round-robin stage. Under Harmanpreet's leadership, the hosts hammered in 34 goals in their first five matches while conceding just five. Opponents struggled to contain their attacking firepower, with India's superiority sometimes making the contest look almost one-sided.

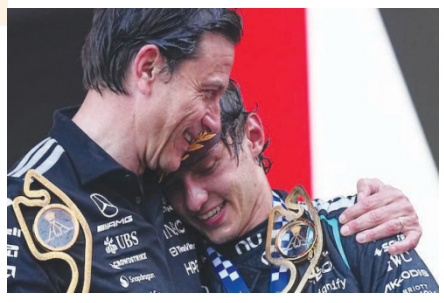
## Mercedes boss's email to staff after Antonelli's F1 title is a tribute to teamwork

**Mercedes team principal Toto Wolff wrote to employees after Kimi Antonelli's historic F1 title triumph, reflecting on the collective effort behind the achievement and the gamble of replacing Lewis Hamilton with a teenager.**

**New Delhi.(Agency)**

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Mercedes team principal Toto Wolff has reflected on the gamble of promoting an 18-year-old Kimi Antonelli to replace seven-time world champion Lewis Hamilton, recalling the criticism surrounding the decision and the difficult moments that followed, in an emotional email to the team's employees after the Italian's historic Formula 1 title triumph.Antonelli, 20, became the youngest-ever Formula 1 world champion after finishing third at the Mexico City Grand Prix on Sunday. The Italian surpassed Sebastian Vettel's previous record, set in 2010, by more than three years.In an email addressed to Mercedes employees, which was made public by deputy team principal Bradley Lord on LinkedIn, Wolff acknowledged that his decision to promote Antonelli had attracted considerable attention. However, he stressed that the achievement was the result of a collective effort and not something he could claim credit for alone."Success has many fathers. Failure is an orphan," Wolff wrote, before adding that he had been given "far too much credit for a story that belongs to so many people."Wolff recalled meeting Antonelli when he was just 11 and following his journey from karting to Formula 1. He said the decision to put the teenager in the seat vacated by Hamilton was never going to be straightforward, given the stature of the



seven-time champion and the expectations that came with driving for Mercedes."Replacing Lewis Hamilton, the most successful driver in Formula 1 history and arguably its most culturally significant figure, with a teenager was never going to be an easy decision," he wrote."There was plenty of criticism, both from within the sport and outside it, about putting an 18-year-old into a Mercedes. And when Kimi went through a difficult period, with several races without scoring points, those doubts understandably grew louder."

Antonelli's rookie campaign in 2025 was far from straightforward. After an encouraging start, which included a fourth-place finish in Australia, a Sprint pole in Miami and his maiden F1 podium in Canada, the Italian endured a difficult middle phase of the season. He struggled with consistency, suffered multiple retirements and went through a prolonged spell without scoring points.

Despite the difficult middle phase, Antonelli recovered towards the end of the season, finishing seventh in the Drivers' Championship with 150 points and three podiums.

**'WE KNEW THERE WOULD BE MISTAKES'**

However, Wolff insisted that Mercedes had never expected Antonelli's first season to be without mistakes.

"We knew there would be difficult weekends, mistakes and moments when people would question our judgement. That was always part of the journey we had committed to," he wrote."You cannot ask a young driver to learn and then punish him for making mistakes. The important thing was never where Kimi stood after one difficult race, but where he could be in the years to come."Wolff also acknowledged the role his wife, Susie, played in backing his decision to promote Antonelli, particularly when doubts began to emerge over the move."And on a personal level, I want to thank my wife Susie. She knows better than anyone what this job demands, and she understands motorsport and the pressures that come with it. When I was weighing up the decision to put Kimi in the car, she encouraged me to trust my instincts and have the courage to follow through on what I believed was right.

## 10 days in office, 626 runs: At 38, Virat Kohli is still the employee of the year

**New Delhi.(Agency)**

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There is something almost hypnotic about watching Virat Kohli bat these days. One fan had a simpler way



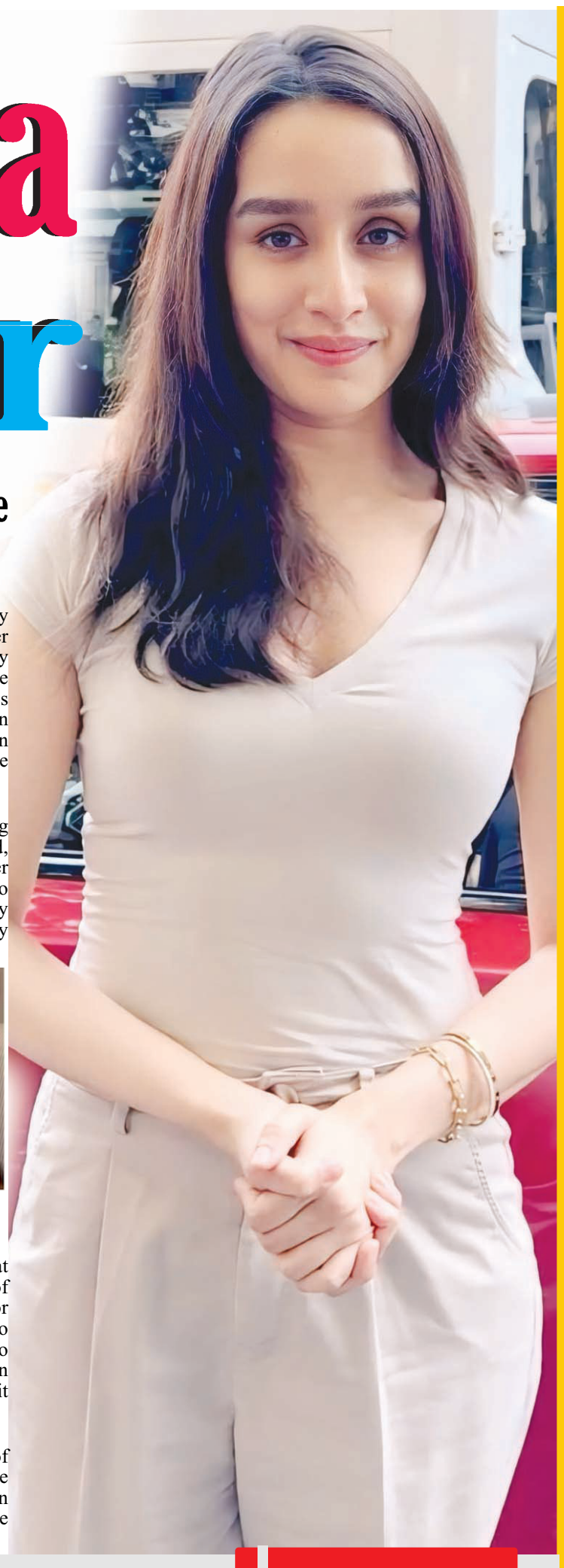
of putting it: “It's been a trance."

The former India captain walks in, takes a few deliveries to understand the conditions, finds his rhythm and then gets on with the job. The runs come, the opposition's plans begin to unravel and, before long, he is walking back to the dressing room, soaking the applause from the crowd.There is rarely a sense of struggle. Even when the conditions are difficult, he appears to have found a way around them. At 38, Kohli is making batting look remarkably uncomplicated, and his latest outing in Auckland on the eve of his birthday was another example of how he has perfected that art.

There was a particular challenge awaiting India at Eden Park on Wednesday. New Zealand had been bowled out for 185 on a surface that offered bounce and movement to the fast bowlers. The Indian quicks, a quartet of rookies, had exploited those conditions, but batting was not going to be straightforward either.Rohit Sharma departed for a six-ball duck. Shubman Gill had to work hard for his 37 off 56 deliveries, while Shreyas Iyer managed 15 after being made to look ugly against short-pitched bowling. Kohli, however, seemed to be operating on a different surface.He scored 74 off just 51 deliveries, striking 13 boundaries and a six. His innings was not an exhibition of reckless hitting.

# Shraddha Kapoor

## Reveals Why She Didn't Sign Films After Stree 2 Despite Big Offers: 'I Needed To Be Patient'



Bollywood actress Shraddha Kapoor was last seen in the 2024 horror-comedy film Stree 2 which emerged as a massive success and reportedly grossed over Rs 875 crore worldwide. While many actors prefer to capitalise on a hit film by quickly signing their next projects, Shraddha chose to take a different route. Despite receiving several film offers and lucrative paychecks after Stree 2, the actress decided to wait until she found a story she truly connected with. She will next be seen in Laxman Utekar's 'Eetha', over 2 years after her last film. In a recent AMA session on Instagram, Shraddha revealed why she didn't sign films despite the massive success of Stree 2.

**Shraddha Kapoor Recalls Being Offered Many Films After Stree 2**

During an AMA session on Instagram, a fan asked Shraddha, "Any advice for young girls who are trying to navigate their careers in the best way?" The actress replied, "Toh main mere baare mein share karti hu. Stree 2 ke baad mujhe bohot films offer hui thi. Bohot paise bhi offer hue. Lekin maine decide kar liya tha jab tak mujhe wo perfect kahaani nahi milti na, main kuch sign nahi karne wali hu. (Let me share my own experience. After Stree 2, I was offered a lot of films and some very good money too. But I had decided that I wouldn't sign anything until I found the right story)."



For Shraddha, it was more about finding the right script than simply adding another film to her lineup. She knew that waiting wouldn't always be easy, especially when there were exciting offers on the table, but she wanted to stick to her decision."Toh mere dil ne kaha ki patience mujhe rakhna padega. Aur maine wo kiya. (. My heart told me that I needed to be patient, and that's exactly what I did)," the actress continues.

**'I Feel Proud That I Decided To Wait', Says Shraddha Kapoor**

The actress admitted that waiting for something you really want can get difficult at times. However, looking back, she feels good about not giving in to the pressure of signing a project just because it came her way."Of course, it gets difficult to wait for something you really, really want. But right now, I feel so proud that I decided to wait," she shared.The actress also had a simple message for anyone struggling to make a similar decision. She believes it's important to listen to your instincts, even when the wait gets frustrating."Listen to that little voice in your heart. Sometimes it gets difficult, but it's totally worth it," Shraddha said.

**Shraddha Kapoor's Upcoming Film Eetha**

On October 30, Maddock Films and Kathputli Creations unveiled the grand trailer of Eetha, starring Shraddha Kapoor as Eetha Bai. An epic musical drama inspired by the life of a Lavani legend, the film brings to life the extraordinary journey of a woman who defied conventions, challenged the odds and rose above every obstacle to carve an unforgettable place in history.

## Anil Kapoor, Farah Khan Apologise As Stunt Director Alleges She Was Made To Wait 9 Hrs On India Ke Top 1% Set



Stunt director and body double Geeta Tandon has shared an unpleasant experience from the sets of Anil Kapoor-hosted reality show India Ke Top 1%. In an Instagram post, Geeta claimed that she and her son were left waiting for almost nine hours without any clear communication from the production team. She also pointed out that she had agreed to be part of the show without charging a fee, but felt that her time and efforts were not respected.Geeta revealed that the team had approached her several times to appear on the show. Although the appearance was unpaid, she agreed, hoping it would be a good opportunity to gain some visibility. However, making it to the shoot meant putting aside her professional commitments for the day. She also had to ask her son, who was in Goa at the time, to return specifically for the shoot.

**Geeta Tandon Shares Her Experience**

Recounting what happened, Geeta said she arrived at the venue at around 12:30 PM on November 4. She was initially informed that her segment would be filmed within a few hours. However, the wait kept getting longer, with no one providing a clear update on when she would be called.In her Instagram post, she wrote, "I reached the set at 12:30 PM. I was told that my segment would be shot in a few hours. A few hours turned into an entire day. My son and I were made to sit in a tent, with barely anyone available to even ask for tea or coffee. No proper communication. No updates. No clarity about when we would be called."She further expressed disappointment over the lack of basic communication, especially after making time for an appearance that she had agreed to do without payment."As the hours passed, I repeatedly tried to find out what was happening. All I heard was, "We'll get back to you." But nobody did. What hurt me wasn't just the waiting. It was the complete disregard for our time and the disrespectful way my son and I were treated by the production team," she added.Geeta further claimed that when she questioned the production team about the long wait, production manager Jaydeep allegedly told her, "If they want to leave, let them leave. But they can't leave without signing." She said she failed to understand why they were being made to stay despite the delay. Geeta eventually left the set with her son at 9:15 PM, after waiting for nearly nine hours.

## Ramayana: Badshah Reviews Ranbir Kapoor's Film, Says Every Frame Is 'Breathtaking'; 'It Made Me Cry'



Although Ranbir Kapoor and Yash's Ramayana: Part 1 is yet to hit theatres, first reactions are already out, with several attendees sharing their reviews after a special screening held in Mumbai on Tuesday. Rapper Badshah was among those who watched the film before its release, and he has now shared his review of the film directed by Nitesh Tiwari. The rapper was mighty impressed with the film, and called it a must-watch movie. He revealed that he was moved to tears, despite having known the story of Ramayana since childhood.

**Badshah Reviews Ramayana**

A video that is going viral on social media shows Badshah coming out of the theatre after watching Ramayana, and sharing his review of the film. "Ye movie aapko dekhni padegi. I think what Namit committed, he has surpassed it. You have to come and watch it. It is incredible. It is incredible," he says, clearly awestruck by the film.Now, a day later, Badshah also took to X (formerly Twitter) to share his thoughts about Ramayana. "You have to watch it. Namit has delivered. Every frame is breathtaking. The characters feel so real. It made me cry, even when we've known the story since our childhood," he wrote.Also Read: Allu Arjun Sends Best Wishes To Ramayana Team: 'It's An Attempt To Raise The Bar Of Indian Films'

**'Incredible Background Music', Says Badshah**

Badshah also praised the music by A.R. Rahman and Hans Zimmer, which has been one of the most eagerly awaited aspects of the film. "INCREDIBL BGM," he wrote.He further praised the entire cast of Ramayana, emphasising that he particularly loved the Jatayu scene. "Ranbir, Sai Pallavi, Ravi Dubey, Yash, Lara Dutta, Arun Govil, Rakul. Everyone nailed it. Jatayu scene is insane. And wait for the moment when the dharti amber theme comes. CLAPSSSS. PLEASE GO WATCH IT," he concluded.

# Kareena Kapoor



## Khan Recalls 'Screaming On The Road' As Saif Ali Khan Bled After Stabbing Incident

Saif Ali Khan and Kareena Kapoor Khan recently revisited one of the most frightening nights of their lives. The couple appeared on Koffee With Karan season 9 and spoke about the January 16, 2025, stabbing incident at their Bandra residence. From their children witnessing the aftermath to the frantic efforts to get Saif to the hospital, the conversation brought out several details that they had not spoken about publicly before.For the unversed, the attack took place when an intruder entered their home in the early hours of the morning and stabbed Saif multiple times. The actor suffered serious injuries, including one near his spine, and underwent emergency surgery at Lilavati Hospital. He was discharged five days later. Now, while looking back at the incident, Saif and Kareena have shared how their family dealt with the aftermath.



**Ibrahim Broke Down In Tears After Saif's Surgery**

While speaking with Karan Johar on KWK 9, Saif revealed that his children Sara Ali Khan and Ibrahim Ali Khan were there when he woke up after surgery. He particularly remembered Ibrahim's reaction, saying that he had never seen his son express himself in that manner before.Recalling the moment, Saif said Ibrahim was in tears and extremely angry. He wanted to find the person responsible and defend his father.Saif said it was difficult to see Ibrahim so upset, especially since he rarely expresses his emotions so openly.

**Kareena Recalls Taimur Asking, 'Abba, Are You Going To Die?'**

Kareena also spoke about the chaos that followed the attack and how the family rushed to get Saif medical help. She revealed that their nine-year-old son Taimur accompanied Saif to the hospital, along with their household help, Hari.Saif recalled that Kareena had managed to hail an auto-rickshaw during the emergency. Kareena then shared a rather frightening picture of what those moments were like. She said she was out on the road in her night T-shirt, desperately trying to find a rickshaw while Saif was bleeding.

She recalled running around and shouting, "Ruko, ruko," as she tried to stop a rickshaw. Kareena said she had no time to change and was simply focused on getting her husband to the hospital."In my night t-shirt. Luckily no one got that on video. I was screaming on the road. I was like 'ruko ruko' it was like a movie scene. Because I was in my night pyjamas and I didn't have time to put on my pyjamas. I have run on the road. Like nobody knows this. I am saying it for the first time. I was literally in my T-shirt. Running like a mad, crazy woman trying to get a rickshaw while he was bleeding," said Kareena.

NEWS BOX

## South Korea to deploy military mission to help keep Hormuz open

**WORLD.(Agency)**

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South Korea's defence ministry said Thursday it would deploy maritime patrol aircraft and an explosive ordnance disposal team to waters near the Strait of Hormuz as part of a mission to help keep the waterway open.The announcement comes as Seoul maintains it will not deploy troops to intervene militarily in the Iran war, while seeking to protect commercial shipping and energy supplies through one of the world's most important maritime chokepoints.The US-Iran war that began on February 28 has disrupted shipping through the Hormuz strait, a vital conduit for global energy supplies that normally carries about a fifth of the world's oil.The defence ministry confirmed reports that the government plans to expand the operational area of its Cheonghae anti-piracy naval unit, which protects commercial vessels in the Gulf of Aden off Somalia, to waters near the Strait of Hormuz, a defence ministry spokesperson said Thursday.

The deployment will include a destroyer, a P-8 maritime patrol aircraft, an explosive ordnance disposal (EOD) team, unmanned surface vessels, unmanned underwater vehicles and remotely operated vehicles (ROVs) for underwater exploration, Yonhap News Agency reported.Extending the deployment of the Cheonghae unit -- currently authorised until the end of this year -- will require parliamentary approval, Yonhap said."The enhancement of the Cheonghae unit's mission is to protect our citizens and safeguard our economic interests," a defence ministry official told reporters on condition of anonymity.

## 1 deputy dies and another not expected to survive after firefight with suspect at Washington home

**SPOKANE, Wash .(Agency)**

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One of two sheriff's deputies wounded in a firefight with a suspect in Washington state has died, and the other is not expected to survive, authorities said Wednesday.Deputies responded to a home in Spangle, a small farming community south of Spokane, on Tuesday afternoon after a woman told her neighbor that she had been shot by her brother, the Spokane County Sheriff's Office said.They determined the suspect had a felony warrant and that there might be other victims, and SWAT team members and deputies tried to breach the door.Gunfire erupted from the home, and the two deputies were struck. They were taken to a hospital in critical condition. One died that night, and the other was being kept on life support Wednesday, allowing for the donation of his organs, the sheriff's office said in a written statement.“He will continue to serve others with the gift of life,” the statement said.

Neither was identified, but Sheriff John Nowels described them as younger members of the SWAT team. The deputy who died had a wife and two children.“Although we know our Deputies knew the risks, they bravely moved toward danger to protect others they did not know,” the sheriff's office said. “They did this with honor and with an unwavering sense of duty."Other deputies returned fire and found the suspect dead inside, along with one other victim in the house and one in the yard, authorities said.The names of the victims and the suspect have not been released.

Authorities are investigating the shooting and what may have led to it.

# Once a teen activist, Hong Kong's Joshua Wong is spending years of his adult life in prison

**HONG KONG. (Agency)**

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Some 15 years ago, then-high school student Joshua Wong was a rising political star in Hong Kong's pro-democracy movement. Now 30, he has been sentenced for the second time under a Beijing-imposed national security law that effectively crushed the movement he once championed.Critics say Wong’s imprisonment reflects the authorities’ determination to keep prominent dissidents behind bars. But Beijing views him as an anti-China figure supporting Hong Kong independence.Here is what to know about the activist.

He won his first political fight as a high school studentWong became a household name in the city as a teenage activist in 2012 when he and his now-dissolved group, Scholarism, protested against the introduction of national education in schools. Thousands of people gathered outside the government headquarters, some launching hunger strikes.Wong, then 15, already spoke like an experienced politician.Louis Lee, a former Scholarism member, recalled sleeping on the streets for days as a high school student during their protests, fearing that their demonstrations might end like the deadly crackdown on the 1989 Tiananmen Square student-led movement in Beijing, which involved hunger strikes.But the Hong Kong government eventually shelved its plans, and Lee felt their efforts made things a little better.Lee described Wong as a demanding leader who kept a close eye on the group’s work. He still remembers Wong’s phone number because Wong had called him too often.Back then, the Scholarism members always joked that he was a merciless boss,” Lee said.Wong became the poster boy for a 2014 movementWong was a poster boy of the 2014 Umbrella Movement, in which protesters used umbrellas to fend off police pepper spray. During the protests, also known as Occupy Central, demonstrators occupied major thoroughfares for 79 days in an



ultimately unsuccessful push for direct election for the city’s leader.Scholar Chan Kin-man, a leader of the 2014 movement, had mixed feelings about Wong back then.Although he wasn’t a key decision-maker in the movement, Wong’s speeches stirred crowds with a political energy rare for his age, and his activism was viewed as “David taking on Goliath,” Chan said.

Chan also felt Wong acted on his beliefs, though sometimes without telling others in advance. Wong stormed into a fenced-off forecourt in front of government headquarters days before the planned start of the Occupy protest, without first informing Chan. The turnout swelled beyond what Chan had planned.Another student group was also caught off guard when Wong and other Scholarism members launched a hunger strike near the end of the movement, Chan said. Some were concerned at the time about Wong's political calculations, he said.Wong formed a party and advocated for sanctionsWhen Beijing didn't budge during the 2014 movement, some young activists began advocating for Hong Kong’s independence.

## Hong Kong activist Joshua Wong sentenced to 10 more years

**HONG KONG. (Agency)**

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One of Hong Kong's best-known democracy activists, Joshua Wong, was sentenced to 10 more years in jail on Thursday for collusion with foreign powers."The court... imposed a final sentence of 10 years' imprisonment" on Joshua Wong, a press summary released by court said.

Wong, who became internationally renowned during huge protests that convulsed the Chinese territory, has already spent almost six years behind bars and turned 30 last month.The former student leader was previously expected to be freed in January after serving four years and eight months for "subversion" under a Beijing-imposed national security law.But Hong Kong authorities used the same law to charge Wong again in June 2025, accusing him of asking other countries and entities to impose sanctions against the finance hub and China.Wong pleaded guilty in September.On Thursday morning, Wong entered the court looking calm in a blue shirt and black glasses,



nodding to supporters and scanning the public and reporters.After the sentencing, Wong thanked and waved at his supporters as he left. They were heard saying: “We'll be waiting for your release."Dozens of people waited in line for the hearing, while the police deployed heavily outside the court building."Beijing has identified Joshua as one of the key leaders of what they see as an open rebellion in 2019 -- despite Wong being one of the moderates -- and he will be made an example of," Steve Tsang, director of the China Institute at SOAS University of London, told AFP.His sentencing is set to show Beijing "is keeping a tight rein over Hong Kong and there's no scope for turning back to the more relaxed days before 2019", Tsang added before the sentence was announced.Rights groups have decried the collusion charge against Wong as a deliberate attempt by authorities to keep him incarcerated.Political starWong rose to prominence during Hong Kong's 2014 protests, known as the Umbrella Movement, and has been in and out of jail since 2017 due to protest-related prosecutions.Authorities said Wong started international lobbying as early as 2016, when he promoted a bill -- the Hong Kong Human Rights and Democracy Act -- that would allow the US President to impose sanctions in response to human rights violations in the city.

## Florida authorities say 2 dead at Tampa office complex, including gunman shot by security guard

**Washington.(Agency)**

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A gunman plowed a car into a courtyard on Citibank's sprawling Tampa business campus on Wednesday and opened fire with a rifle, killing a woman before a security guard fatally shot him, authorities said.The Hillsborough County Sheriff's Office did not give a motive for the shooting or say whether the gunman and his lone victim knew each other.

The attack sent workers scrambling as the suspect crashed his car among outdoor tables where people were eating lunch, then started shooting, said Chief Deputy Frank Losat of the sheriff’s office. He said 3,200 people were on the campus at work during the attack.The gunman fatally shot the woman before a security guard confronted him in a cafeteria, Losat said. The guard and the gunman exchanged fire, and the guard killed him, Losat said.“Was there a potential for further violence? Absolutely," Losat told a news conferenc. "So kudos to that security guard.”The names of the gunman and the woman killed were not immediately released.

Losat said four other people were taken to a hospital with non-life-threatening injuries. He didn't know whether any of them had been shot or struck by the gunman's vehicle.

Citibank VP heard ‘incredible clatter’ of gunfire, then screamingThe Citibank campus in suburban Tampa includes four three-story office buildings that house thousands of the banking giant’s employees.David Dzien, a Citibank vice president,told The Associated Press he was returning to work after lunch when he saw the shooter's sedan crash through a fence about 150 yards (137 meters) away from him, followed by an “incredible clatter” that he later realized was gunfire.People near the crashed car suddenly dispersed and others began to scream, Dzien said, as he sprinted back into the building and evacuated through a fire escape.“I can still hear the particular type of scream," he said, “and I’m still trying to process it, frankly.”The attack occurred on a day when “VIPs” who don’t normally work at the complex were present for a “quarterly review,” Dzien said.

## ‘You are either with us or against us’: US sanctions India-based couple over alleged Iran oil links

**WORLD.(Agency)**

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The United States has imposed sanctions on an India-based couple and several companies linked to them for their alleged role in helping Iran evade oil trade restrictions, with Treasury Secretary Scott Bessent warning that those supporting Tehran were “either with us or against us”.The US Department of the Treasury announced the measures on Wednesday (local time), accusing the couple of providing fraudulent maritime registrations and certifications to vessels transporting Iranian petroleum, including ships operating on behalf of Iran’s military and its proxies.The department identified the individuals as India-based Suniel Kumar Sharma and his spouse, Jaspreet Preeti Shahid. It alleged that they operated a network providing false flags and maritime certifications to sanctioned vessels, allowing them to continue transporting Iranian oil and circumvent international restrictions.“As we have said many times, under Operation Economic Outcast, you are either with us or against us. We know where you are, and we will sanction those who continue supporting the Iranian regime, whether by land, sea, or air,” Bessent said in a post on X.According to the Treasury, Sharma and Shahid established fraudulent maritime registries and classification societies through websites that purported to offer services on behalf of countries that had not authorised them.Their activities allegedly date back to at least 2014, when they attempted to impersonate the maritime flagging authority of the Caribbean nation of Dominica. The department said the network subsequently provided registration services to vessels transporting Iranian petroleum.Several India-based companies associated with the couple have also been designated. These include Oceaniek Technologies India, Aryavart Ship Management Private Limited, Precept Trends Private Limited, Polynesia Maritime Private Limited, Alexarya Finserv Private Limited, Alexarya Media and Entertainment Private Limited, Viharaboating Private Limited and Aryavart Maritime and Educational Trust.

The sanctions have been imposed under Executive Order 13902, which targets key sectors of the Iranian economy, including petroleum, petrochemicals and aviation.In a separate action, the US sanctioned Türkiye-based Fugo Ground Services Inc for allegedly providing ground-handling and other services to several US-designated Iranian airlines. These include Iran Air Tour, Saha Airlines, Sepehran Airlines, Varesh Airlines, Taban Airlines and Ata Airlines Company.

## What the US midterms mean for ties with China

**Beijing, China.(Agency)**

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A sweeping victory for Democrats in US midterm elections this week, giving them control of Congress, presents both an opportunity and challenge for top rival China, analysts say.Here is how the outcome of the vote, which offers the Democratic Party the power to stymie President Donald Trump's maverick foreign policy, could impact the thorny relationship between Washington and Beijing:

**Will tariffs be limited?**

Winning control of both houses in the US Congress puts Democrats in a position to limit Trump's liberal use of tariffs on Chinese products in the two years he has left in office, analysts say.That could be a potential blow to Trump, who has wielded duties throughout a frenzied US-China trade war before the two sides reached a truce, set to expire in January.If Democrats limit Trump, that means he "will be less able to leverage a tariff card in negotiations with China", said Wu Xinbo, dean at the Institute of International Studies at Fudan University in Shanghai.However, Democrats will also have to weigh their actions against the popularity of Trump's tariffs among US businesses.

Congress will "take every opportunity to thwart (Trump's policies) over the next two years", said Drew Thompson, a senior fellow at the S. Rajaratnam School of International Studies at Singapore's Nanyang Technological University.

But Democrats will still have to tread carefully on further restricting tariffs that "are popular with unions, blue-collar workers and small businesses... who have historically been a base constituency for the Democrats", Thompson said.

Congress will be "less inclined to support measures that would sharply escalate pressure on China if doing so risks raising costs for American consumers and businesses or increasing the likelihood of conflict", said Patricia Kim, a foreign policy fellow at the Brookings Institution in Washington.

**Taiwan a 'game changer'?**

The issue of Taiwan, the US-backed democratic island claimed by Beijing, could be a "game changer", said Neil Shearing, group chief economist at Capital Economics.Washington is Taipei's most important security backer and has sold billions of dollars' worth of arms to Taiwan that the island would use to fend off a potential Chinese attack.

## Trump's midterm defeat dims hopes of North Korea meeting

**SEOUL.(Agency)**

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A meeting between Donald Trump and North Korean leader Kim Jong Un appears increasingly unlikely when the US president travels to Asia in November, analysts say, after he suffered a crushing midterm election defeat.Trump had said he "may" meet Kim this month and that it "would be exciting", but appeared to backtrack in October, saying, "I don't know... I'm not sure that anybody's asking for a meeting," while adding that his "relationship with Kim Jong Un is very good."Trump's focus on Kim and his scaling back of joint US-South Korean military drills have alarmed Asian allies, while sparking speculation that he is seeking a foreign policy win as his war with Iran stalls.But Kim's powerful sister Kim Yo Jong signalled on Wednesday that there was little appetite for renewed dialogue with Washington, saying Pyongyang had "no need to sit face to face with such unreliable and hostile persons".

"The choice for peace includes dialogue of course, but this is not surely equated with national interests for us," she said.Kim Yo Jong's comments came after the FBI accused North Korea of a $6 billion heist from cryptocurrency exchange Binance -- allegations she had previously slammed as "a grave political provocation".Kim's statement marked "a shift from defence to offence", said Lim Eul-chul, a professor at Kyungnam University's Institute for Far Eastern Studies in South Korea."The latest statement uses the (cyberattack) issue as an opportunity to condemn the entire US policy of pressure



against North Korea," he told AFP.In 2019, North Korea's Kim Jong Un made a 60-hour train journey home from Hanoi empty-handed after a summit with Trump collapsed.Now, the dynamic has reversed. Trump is making repeated overtures, only to be met with reluctance from Pyongyang.

"For Kim Jong Un, maintaining the status quo is the best option right now," Lim said.Weakened TrumpAnalysts say the North Korean leader has even less incentive to meet Trump after his Republican party suffered a thumping defeat in the US midterm elections on November 3.Voters handed control of Congress to the Democrats in a stunning rebuke to Trump, leaving him as a lame duck president for the remaining two years of his term."Trump is expected to continue pursuing top-down dialogue with North Korea", said Yang Moo-jin, former president of the South's University of North Korean Studies.But Washington's "divided government and Trump's lame-duck status will be an important variable for North Korea".Pyongyang will be sceptical of Washington's ability to deliver lasting concessions, said Michael Bosack, founding director of the Parley Policy Institute and a former UN Command official."The Kim regime is looking for substantial and durable changes in US policy towards North Korea. Right now, nothing Trump offers comes with a guarantee that it will last beyond January 2029," Bosack told AFP, referring to the date when the US president's second term ends.im's deepening ties with Russia and China have also strengthened his position and reduced his incentive to engage with Washington.North Korea's economy grew more than three percent for a third straight year in 2025, Seoul's central bank estimated in July, citing Pyongyang's "expansion of economic cooperation with Russia" as its major driver.