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Reacting to Israel's attack, Iran's Supreme leader Ayatollah Ali Khamenei says, 'The evil of the Zionist regime two nights ago should neither be magnified nor belittled... They should understand the strength, will of Iranian nation & country's youth', P 18

Trump is claiming that Google CEO Sundar Pichai called him to praise his visit to McDonald's, amid reports that big-tech CEOs are 'seeing the writing on the wall' in the prez elections and therefore folding before Trump to avoid retribution, P 18

Wicketkeeper-batter Muhammad Rizwan has been named Pakistan's ODI and T20 captain, replacing Babar Azam, as the selectors announce the squads for the white-ball tours of Australia and Zimbabwe beginning Nov 4, P 21

Tesla and SpaceX honcho Elon Musk is laughing off reports that he began his tech career illegally in the US after dropping out of college, even as he rails against illegal immigration, P 18

Fresh violence in Manipur, drones sighted

Fresh violence erupted on Saturday night in Manipur's Imphal West and Bishnupur districts, with reports of suspected militants using sophisticated firearms and bombs. No fatalities were reported at the time of going to press. Militants launched an attack around 7pm in Koutruk Ching Leikai village in Imphal West, promoting retaliatory action from security forces. Residents of nearby villages reported sightings of drones. Around 9pm, militants struck Tronglaobi village in Bishnupur. P 9

Trainer held for killing woman

Gym trainer Vimal Soni, on the run since being linked to a married woman reported missing by her husband, was arrested on Saturday from Punjab and charged with murdering her four months ago and burying the body on the premises of Officers' Club, near the Kanpur DM's bungalow. P 15

₹72L SMA drug can be produced at ₹3k

Drug to treat Spinal Muscular Atrophy, costing about ₹72 lakh per year due to patent protection and absence of local production, could be produced for ₹3,000 a year if India allows local manufacture, an affidavit filed in Kerala HC says. P 20

WEATHER

Max 31.0°C (-0.7) Min 25.8°C (+2.8) Sunrise: Tue 5:39am. Sunset: Mon 5:01pm. Partly cloudy sky. Possibility of light rain in some areas. Max & min temp may be around 32°C & 26°C. Max humidity 90% min 66% Rain: Nil

India's value huge, Modi can impact end of war: Zelensky

'Must Go Beyond Just Saying It Is Against War'

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PM Modi can influence the end of the Ukraine war. This is the huge value of him in any conflict. This is the huge value of India," said

Ukraine's President Volodymyr Zelensky in an exclusive interview to TOI.

Asked about the possibility of PM Modi holding negotiations between Ukraine and Russia, Zelensky gave his strongest signal yet. "Undoubtedly it can be in India and PM Modi can really do that... (but) only

"You cannot be neutral because it would mean you are on the side of Russia. Between the aggressor and the victim, there cannot be neutrality. I consider this a hidden support for Russia..."

...Those at the (Brics) summit saying they would like to help solve the conflict, in my opinion, look more pro-Russia

Modi is PM of a really huge country, from perspective of population, economy, influence and impact. Such a country cannot just say we're interested in end of war...

Blocking of Russian economy, blocking of cheap energy resource, blocking of defence-industrial complex of Russia will lead to the decrease in capacity of Moscow to wage wars against us

- VOLODYMYR ZELENSKY | UKRAINE PRESIDENT

according to our format because the war is in our land... we have the platform which is the peace summit."

Ukrainian forces have been under pressure in recent months with Russia making advances in the Donbas region. Add to this the uncertainty posed by the upcoming

presidential elections in US where a Trump victory might see Kyiv lose vital American support. Washington is Kyiv's biggest source of military aid and any cut in this support will be a huge setback for Ukraine. Kyiv already faces restrictions in using American supplied long-range weapons

to hit Russian military targets deep inside Russia. "This is the third hard winter for Ukraine and the Ukrainian people... We are step-by-step strengthening our energy systems and aren't just going to allow Russia to kill our people," said Zelensky.

On Modi's statement that he is ready to work to bring peace in Ukraine, Zelensky said a country like India "cannot just

► FULL Q&A: P 8
► EDIT PAGE: Zelensky's New Peace Formula

say we are interested in the end of the war..." Specifically, he asked Modi for help to bring back Ukrainian children forcibly deported to Russia. "PM Modi can use his influence and tell Putin just give me 1,000 Ukrainian children... Let PM Modi bring back at least 1,000 Ukrainian children," he said.

PM flags 'digital arrests', says no govt body issues phone threats

'Investigating Agencies Working To Combat Scam'

TIMES NEWS NETWORK

New Delhi: In a recognition of the rampant threat of cybercrime, PM Narendra Modi on Sunday flagged the issue of fraudsters targeting

people through 'digital arrests' as he clarified that no govt agency threatened individuals over phone or demanded money.

In his 15th episode of 'Mann Ki Baat', the PM detailed the modus operandi of the scam and explained how to handle it in case someone was cheated.

Modi suggested that anyone who receives such a call needn't be afraid. "The three steps to digital security are: stop, think and act. If possible, take a screenshot or record the call," he said, adding investigating agencies were working in partnership with state govts to combat the scam. However, he said, awareness was essential in protecting oneself from fraudsters. He said there was no system like digital arrest in the law and this was just a fraud.

► 'Preserve evidence', P 12

Call drop saves techie from 30-hour 'arrest'

A Hyderabad techie on Sunday narrowly escaped a 30-hour digital arrest, which forced him to drive from home and check into a lodge. A call drop allowed him to reach out to cybercrime cops. P 15

Modi suggested that anyone who receives such a call needn't be afraid. "The three steps to digital security are: stop, think and act. If possible, take a screenshot or record the call," he said, adding investigating agencies were working in partnership with state govts to combat the scam. However, he said, awareness was essential in protecting oneself from fraudsters. He said there was no system like digital arrest in the law and this was just a fraud.

► 'Preserve evidence', P 12

Will mark Birsa Munda anniv nationally: PM

The 150th birth anniversary year of Sardar Patel will be celebrated nationally from Oct 31 and that of iconic tribal leader Birsa Munda from Nov 15, PM Modi said in his Mann Ki Baat address.

"Both these great souls faced different challenges but their vision was the same, one that of 'unity of the country'," he said. He also spoke about his visit to Jharkhand's Ulihatu village, the birthplace of Birsa Munda, last year on Nov 15. He said it was one of the most memorable moments of his life: "This visit had a great impact on me."

Interestingly, he mentions in PM's monthly radio broadcast comes at a time when Jharkhand is set to go to polls in Nov. P 12

Discounts come as Diwali gift as auto makers try to drive sales

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New Delhi: The sudden slowdown in the car industry has meant that the discounts are not just in the thousands, but hitting multiple lakhs of rupees on models ranging from companies like Maruti Suzuki, Honda, JSW MG, Mahindra & Mahindra, Tata Motors to luxury carmakers like Audi, Mercedes-Benz and BMW.

So, while the mighty luxury Audi Q8 e-tron will fetch you a discount of Rs 10 lakh (over the ex-showroom price) and Kia EV6 Rs 12 lakh, the diminutive but powerful Suzuki Jimmy will get you a discount of roughly Rs 2.3 lakh. Suzuki's much-touted 'mini powerhouse' has failed to fire up for the country's biggest car-

DISCOUNTS COULD GO UP POST-DIWALI

► Car industry is facing a demand issue this year as buyers don't appear to be excited about new purchases as they were earlier

► Inventory level is currently estimated at a high of nearly 80 days, which is more than double of what a normal scenario would be like

► Among those offering heavy discounts are Maruti Baleno (₹1.1 lakh), Toyota Fortuner (₹2 lakh), Jeep Compass

(₹2.5 lakh), Mahindra's XUV400 electric (₹3 lakh), BMW X5 (₹7-10 lakh), Audi A4 (₹8 lakh), Merc S-Class (₹9 lakh) & Kia EV6 (₹12 lakh)

► Discounts are expected to increase after Diwali when dealers and companies look to clear up idle inventories, according to industry analysts

► Heavy discounts usually have riders like promotional period timing, credit score requirements, selected models

maker, making the company resort to heavy discounting.

► Rising inventory, P 19

TMC counter to Amit Shah's infiltration barb

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Peace could be established in Bengal only when infiltration stops, Union home minister Amit Shah said on Sunday, adding that BJP had set itself a target of winning the 2026 Bengal assembly polls with a two-thirds majority. Shah said infiltration and corruption would be rooted out when BJP forms govt in Bengal. Former TMC Rajya Sabha MP Kunal Ghosh claimed Shah's mention of infiltration was proof of the Centre's failure, as "infiltration takes place at international borders; to guard them is his responsibility." P 9

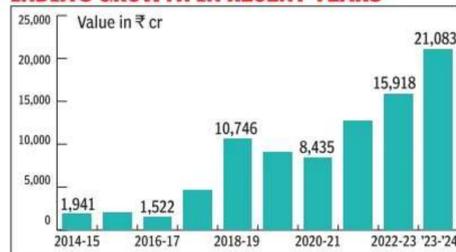
US, France & Armenia top three buyers of Indian defence exports

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New Delhi: With India shedding its hesitations in exporting lethal arms to other countries, Armenia has emerged as its biggest client of 'finished' weapon systems like Akash air defence missile systems, Pinaka multi-launch rocket systems and 155mm artillery guns, among others.

The US, France and Armenia ranked as the top three destinations for defence exports by India, which chalked up military sales worth Rs 21,083 crore (\$2.6 billion) to other countries in 2023-24, official sources said on Sunday.

INDIA'S GROWTH IN RECENT YEARS

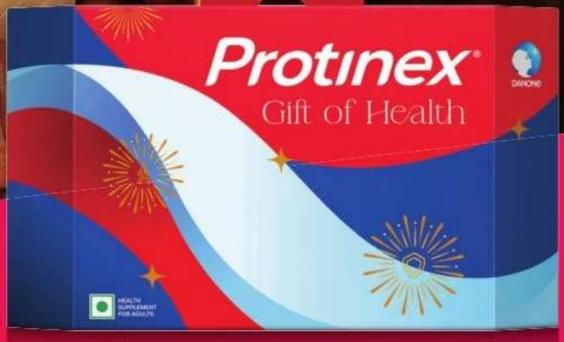


Indian public and private sector firms are exporting a wide range of arms, ammunition and fuses to 100 countries, which also include some complete weapon systems. ► Interest in BrahMos, P 14

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NORTH KOLKATA FAMILIES KEEP PHANUSH TRADITION FLOATING | 4

HIGH-MAST LEDS TO LIGHT UP NEW TOWN PERIPHERY SOON | 6

After Cyclone Dana, 5 vegetables hit double-century mark in Kol markets

Beans, Capsicum, Onion Stalks, Chillies & Green Peas Pinch Pockets

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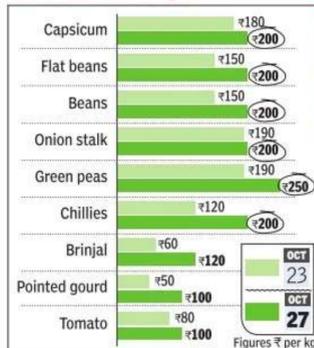
Kolkata: Prices of beans, capsicum, onion stalks, chillies and green peas galloped past the Rs 200-mark on Sunday due to the impact of a recent cyclonic circulation, heavy rainfall, and a surge in high tides which created disruptions in the vegetable supply chain, driving up prices in markets across the city.

Related report: P 6

Tomato, pointed gourd and brinjal were also hovering around the Rs 100 per kg mark under its impact.

In some cases the price rise has been sharp. As on Oct 27, wholesale prices showed a substantial rise. Key items like brinjal jumped from Rs 60 to Rs 120 per kg, pointed gourd from Rs 50 to Rs 100 per kg, and

RIPPLE EFFECT



Dana whiplash stokes paddy, fish and veggie price rise concerns
Flower mkt wary of supply crunch
TOI | OCT 26, 2024
TOI | OCT 27, 2024
About 80% of my capsicum, cabbage, cauliflower, okra, brinjal and spinach plants were damaged
Ali Murtaza | A BHANGAR FARMER

chillies from Rs 120 to Rs 200 per kg. Prices of capsicum, flat beans and green peas from other states have also increased due to dip in local supply.

While some areas saw a quicker recovery due to fast-draining water and sunny weather, farmers in coastal districts like South 24 Parganas and East Midnapore fa-

ced significant crop loss. These regions, which cultivate seasonal crops taking up to 90 days to yield, were especially affected as flooded fields caused rotting and decay of standing plants.

Other major agricultural hubs, including Hooghly, North 24 Parganas, Nadia and Burdwan, reported milder impacts

and lesser crop damage.

Kamal De, president of the West Bengal Vendors' Association, said although the immediate impact on vegetable prices was limited, supply issues in Howrah, Hooghly and East Midnapore could drive further price hikes if waterlogging persists.

Gopal Sonkar, a wholesale trader at Koley Market, said though produce from other states is still arriving, quantities are lower. "With local crops affected, vendors are trying to meet demand, but the risk of spoilage is high, so prices are likely to continue rising." Authorities are working to assist farmers with drainage solutions and pest control measures.

Gouri Dasgupta, a teacher, said rising prices forced her to make adjustments to family meals.

The cyclone damaged vegetable farms across Bhangar, Baruipur, Deganga and Basirhat, creating a supply chain gap. With many seedbeds for winter crops damaged, prices of vegetables like tomato, cauliflower, cabbage, brinjal and chillies may continue to rise. Safikul Hasnat, assistant director of agriculture in Bhangar I, said fields where water has drained are less affected, while those that remain waterlogged face crop loss and increased disease risk.

Bacteria-virus double whammy lays Kolkatans low

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Kolkata: A twin attack of bacterial and viral infections has laid hundreds low in Kolkata over the last few weeks. While scores of kids and adults across the city were affected by mycoplasma pneumoniae, a bacterial infection that affects the upper respiratory tract but often spreads to the lower tract causing pneumonia, respiratory syncytial virus (RSV) – a common infection that causes nose, throat, and lung infections – has been steadily affecting many since Aug.

What is worse is an outbreak of high fever with severe joint pain and body rashes affecting many over the last 10-12 days. Most of these patients tested negative for vector-borne diseases like dengue and chikungunya, though the symptoms were often similar.

At least a dozen children and around 10 adults were affected by mycoplasma and admitted to three private hospitals over the last seven days. Many of them ended up in ICU with pneumonia, doctors said. The latter fear that this could flag off a chain of respiratory infections – both viral and bacterial – as the season changes.

Mycoplasma causes 'atypical pneumonia' with mild symptoms that can't be detected with a conventional test. It requires a biofire panel test, which is expensive and not widely done, to identify the bacteria. This has been leading to delayed detection and treatment.

"We have come across at least eight to ten cases in the last one week, both children and adults. For most, it started with a mild cough and cold but deteriorated to severe lung infection and finally pneumonia as the lower respiratory tract was affected," said Manipal Hospital infectious diseases physician Sayan Chakrabarty.

"The issue with mycoplasma is that it causes atypical pneumonia which is hard to gauge. While the patient has mild symptoms, it suddenly deteriorates and turns into pneumonia," said Peerless Hospital chief microbiologist Bhaskar Narayan Chaudhury.

As many as 61 cases of respiratory infection have been reported at BP Poddar Hospital chest clinic, including mycoplasma and RSV, during the post-pu-

DISEASE WATCH

► Scores of children and adults affected by mycoplasma pneumoniae, a bacterial infection that affects the upper respiratory tract but spreads to the lower tract causing pneumonia

► Respiratory syncytial virus (RSV) – a common infection causing nose, throat, and lung infections – has been affecting many since Aug

► Common symptoms for all lung infections are sneezing, runny nose, fever, cough, body pain, and decrease in appetite. This virus directly affects the lungs, inviting secondary bacterial infection

► Mycoplasma pneumoniae in around 10% of cases or in combination with a viral infection can develop into pneumonia affecting the lungs

ja period. The sudden surge can be attributed to the significant temperature fluctuation during the day and night, which makes it a conducive environment for respiratory infections of both viral and bacterial origin, said Samaradashi Dutta, consultant pulmonologist at BP Poddar.

A range of viral infections along with mycoplasma cases have been reported at Charnock Hospital. "We have got patients with RSV consistently since Aug, other than those with rhinovirus and mycoplasma. This year, there has been no respite from these lung infection-triggering viruses and bacteria since there was no dengue or malaria outbreak. Etiologically, if one group of viruses dominates, then others stay away. We have had patients with repeat attacks of lung infections which points at quick mutation of these viruses and bacteria," said Charnock pulmonologist Soumya Sengupta.

"We haven't seen a slide in respiratory illnesses since July. We have also seen a spurt in metapneumovirus which triggers similar symptoms as mycoplasma," said CMRI director of pulmonology Raja Dhar. It could be a new virus or an altered strain that's triggering high fever, said Arindam Biswas, internal medicine consultant.

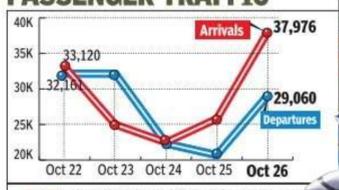
Cyclone backlog, Kali Puja homecomings: Daily arrivals at city airport hit 38k peak

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Kolkata: With 38,000 passengers, the city airport recorded the highest single-day arrivals this year on Saturday. Airport officials said the festival break, along with additional passengers on rescheduled flights due to Cyclone Dana, led to the sudden rush of flyers heading back to Kolkata.

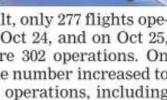
On Saturday, 33,687 passengers arrived in Kolkata on 197 domestic flights. There were another 4,289 passengers arriving from abroad on 24 international flights, making it a total of 37,976 passenger arrivals in a day. Even during Durga Puja, the highest number of passengers arriving

PASSENGER TRAFFIC



“We called for additional manpower and took extensive measures to ensure the passengers had a smooth transit A SENIOR AIRPORT OFFICIAL.”

in a day was 35,618 on Sashthi. The airport was shut for 13.5 hours from 7 pm on Oct 24 to 8.30 am on Oct 25 as a precautionary measure against Cyclone Dana.



197 domestic arrivals and another 24 international arrivals.

"Several flights were cancelled and rescheduled because of the airport closure on those two days. As a result, there was an increased rush of passengers on Saturday as well as Sunday. Plus, there was the additional rush of passengers returning home for Diwali. We called for additional manpower and took extensive measures to ensure the passengers had a smooth transit," said a senior airport official.

Chitpore resident Mrinmoy Mukherjee, who works at a tech firm in Bengaluru, said, "My family of three were booked on a later evening flight to Kolkata from Bengaluru on Thursday, which was cancelled, and we were

rescheduled on another flight on Saturday."

The additional rush of passengers also led to a shortage of cabs on the road outside the airport. "Huge chaos at Kolkata Airport. No public transport, no cabs... Nothing," wrote a flyer Pramit Chatterjee, on X.

Officials said a higher number of CISF personnel and airport staff were deployed for the weekend, and more cleaning staff were deployed to increase the cleanup and maintenance of washrooms in the arrival area of the airport.

"To handle the huge load of inbound passengers, we also deployed additional men around the conveyor belts," said another airport official.



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Local fireworks set to take on Sivakasi cousins this Kali Puja

50 Licensed Makers Offer 200 Varieties

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Kolkata: Fifty local manufacturers with nearly 200 varieties of green fireworks will take on the Sivakasi (a city in Tamil Nadu) imports this Kali Puja and Diwali season in Bengal.

Certified green fireworks are marked with the CSIR-NEERI logo and a QR code, which can be scanned to verify certification, the manufacturer's details, and the exact emission reduction levels. The green fireworks are designed to emit 30% less particulate matter than the traditional ones.

Despite the environmental benefits, green fireworks remain a challenge in terms of accessibility, awareness, and affordability for both

HOW TO IDENTIFY GREEN CRACKERS

- Look for the CSIR-NEERI logo
- Quick response (QR) code appears on the packaging
- The code can be scanned with the CSIR-NEERI Green QR Code app to check authenticity
- Digital certificate is generated by the QR code, citing details about the manufacturer, chemical composition and percentage of emission reduction
- If no certificate appears, the fireworks may be illegal
- **Environmental benefit** | The green fireworks are designed to emit 30% less particulate matter than the traditional ones



A baji bazaar, which will only sell green fireworks, being set up in the city

producers and consumers. Doubts have arisen about the emission levels of green fireworks due to limited compliance with testing standards. The local manufacturers had shown reluctance for mandatory testing. Many manufacturers reportedly avoided emission testing by CSIR-NEERI, which certifies green

fireworks at a cost of Rs 8,260 per sample.

Amid such developments, only a fraction of the licensed producers complied with certification requirements. Of the 273 NEERI-certified manufacturers, only 50 are licensed to produce green fireworks.

According to Sukdeb Nas-

kar, secretary of the Pradesh Atabaji Byabasyee Samiti, the govt had issued short-term licences for green fireworks sales.

However, the promised manufacturing clusters intended to promote green fireworks production are yet to be established, adding to the sector's challenges. Under

the new restrictions, short-term licenses allow vendors to sell up to 50 kg of eco-friendly fireworks. District magistrates are required to thoroughly inspect all applications to minimize accident risks before issuing such permits. The fewer local manufacturers have also not completely wiped out the concerns over emission levels.

For a seasonal market stretching primarily from Nov to year-end, manufacturers say the high testing cost is burdensome, despite the fact that this period coincides with elevated pollution levels.

In Bengal, the govt has banned non-green fireworks only. It has allowed green fireworks, with strict guidelines on usage, during Durga Puja, Diwali, Chhath, and Christmas celebrations. Nevertheless, enforcing curbs remains a concern as roughly 1,00,000 rely on fireworks industry for income, and a complete ban could risk employment without an alternative, said a senior officer.

North Kol families keep phanush tradition floating

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A phanush with images of Sukumar Ray's characters

Successful release of my phanush on the centenary year will give me a feeling of fulfilment

Ajoy Dutt | BEADON ST RESIDENT

'phanush' from his Metiabruz residence, and locals enjoyed watching those flying above the Hooghly river. History has it, Zamindar Latu Babu gave 'borat' (purchasing requisition) for a few 'phanush' to Orient Goldmann, a French fire-

100-YR JOURNEY

cracker seller, between 1885 and 1886.

"The tradition is dying also due to the lack of interest among the city's Bengali youth," said Mallick, a Peary Mohan Sur Lane resident, who took to the craft at the age of 11.

There are no written records about the tradition's origin in Kolkata. It was probably made for the first time by Gourishankar Dey — a former

mathematics professor of Scottish Church College — in 1912, according to oral history.

In 1920, Pal Bari of Chidam Mudi Lane started making 'phanush' of different patterns and created five-armed stars. The grandfather clock 'phanush' was made by Jawhar Pal. The tradition was continued by Udayshankar Pal of Nilmoni Mitra Lane. During that time, many north Kolkata houses released home-made phanush. Mitra Bari on Beadon Street, Banerjee Bari, Dutta Bari of Nayan Chand Dutta Street and Gobinda Dey of Ramdul Sarkar Street were some key connoisseurs of phanush. Manick Lal Dutt deviated from the traditional shapes and made pentagonal football 'phanush' during 1970s.

"The modern high-rises hardly have any space to prepare these oversized phanush," rued Dutt, who — like Mallick — had trained several youngsters. But, many of their students have either left the city for jobs or hardly have time to carry on the legacy.

High-rises plan Diwali dinner & musical events, advise residents against bursting illegal crackers

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Kolkata: From fireworks shows on the complex premises to gala dinners and musical evenings, gated communities in the city are gearing up to celebrate a grand Diwali and Kali Puja this weekend. Office bearers of Resident Welfare Associations (RWAs) across gated enclaves in Kolkata and New Town said they had meticulously planned an array of events, including a variety of entertainment options catering to the diverse interests of the complex residents.

At New Town Heights, Kali Puja and Diwali will be celebrated over consecutive days, following which a grand dinner alongside a musical night will be organised the weekend after Diwali. "We will kick off the festivities by distributing sweet packets to every household in the complex and will light up the complex from Monday. The celebrations will begin on Thursday. On Diwali, we will have a firecrackers show following the govt protocols and a high-tea and snacks counter for all residents. The next



Arrangements being made for the celebrations at high-rises in (top) New Town and near a mall in south Kolkata (above)

weekend, we will host a gala dinner where multiple bands and eminent singers will perform," said Sameer Sharma, a senior member of the RWA.

The organisers at South City complex have modified the Durga Puja pandal to host Kali Puja and asked residents not to burn any illegal

Police commissioner's cyber fraud alert for citizens this festive season

Commissioner of police, Manoj Verma, cautioned citizens citing apprehensions that online fraud might spike during Diwali, when online purchases and transactions increase. He warned the public while speaking during the Kali Puja coordination meeting at Dhono Dhanyo auditorium recently.

"It will be my request that whenever you make an online payment, please verify and then cross-verify before you make the final payment. Also importantly, if someone becomes a victim of cyber fraud, they must report immediately to the police," Verma said. Police claimed that some shoppers were cheated while making online purchases in the past. In most cases, victims were made to pay on fake websites. There were also instances of items missing from the delivered parcels. TNN

crackers. "We are organising a musical evening and bumper lucky draw for all residents. We have formed a designated zone to burn only green crackers," said Manoj Gupta, a complex resident.

At Silver Spring, there will be no Kali Puja, but they have earmarked a spot for residents to burn green crackers. "There will be food and snack counters along with multiple cultural programmes," said Rajesh Kumar, the RWA president.

An emergency meeting among residents and RWA

members was held at Siddha Pines complex in Rajarhat, where residents were reminded not to burn illegal crackers following an accident within the complex last year. "The puja pandal is almost ready and the complex will be decked up with lights from Tuesday. The terrace will be out of bounds for residents as per police instruction. We will have cultural functions and snacks counters during the puja days, and on Nov 9 we will organise a grand musical evening," said Manav Mehra, the secretary.

Sood was a warm & generous person, remember friends

Continued from P 1

Among those who expressed shock at designer Ratul Sood's sudden passing was actor Rukmini Maitra, who has known him since her adolescence. "Ratul was an incredibly warm and generous person. I have never witnessed him refusing anyone. No words of condolence can adequately express the loss," she said.

Designer Indroneel Mukherjee portrayed Sood as the quintessential "life of the party." "He was an absolute party animal," he said, adding, "He refrained from excessive experimentation, finding contentment in his work and the loyal clientele he had cultivated." Designer Abh-



Relatives and friends at Sood's Hazra Road house

ishek Ray hailed him as an "iconic" figure in the realm of bespoke men's suits in Kolkata. "Every acquaintance of mine, when in need of a suit or blazer for any momentous occasion, would invariably gravitate towards Burlington's (the former name of Sood, the establishment)," he

said. Yudhajit B Dutta, managing director of Kolkata Fashion Week that was held between 2009 and 2012, said, "He was always supportive and even gave suggestions so that our fashion week parties became the talk of the town. The news is hard to digest."

Dad: Her docus carried a profound social message

Continued from P 1

Sriyanka Ray's film 'Home-room Dreams', in just a little over 13 minutes, reveals how disadvantaged kids in New York City often do not attend school because they lack clean uniforms, books, or even basic necessities. Her sister Sanjana said, "The film exposes how New York City, despite its status as a thriving metropolis, grapples with a monumental housing problem for people living below the poverty line." "My sister engaged in heartfelt conversations with the principal and administrator of the school, as well as the kids who yearn for education but are compelled to drop out. One of the boys told



Sriyanka Ray

her that if he possessed superhero powers, he would choose superspeed so that he could reach school on time."

Thrilled with a Kolkata's first Emmy National Award-winning filmmaker Farha

Khatun, a member of the Bitchitra Collective: Indian Women in Documentary, said: "Sriyanka was a tremendous force in bridging Indian filmmakers with the West. Her demise has left an immense void."

Ray's father, cardiologist Raja Ray, said: "Emmies are the Oscars of television. She used to produce documentaries that were not mere entertainment but carried a profound social message in New York," he said. "It is such a joyous moment. Our daughter should have been there to receive this award," said mother Ishita Ray. "We broke down in tears. On Sunday, we screened her film and raised a toast to her," Sanjana added.

One more schism in RG Kar stir as another doc body enters protest pitch

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Kolkata: A day after a new platform of junior doctors — the West Bengal Junior Doctors' Association — was introduced, another schism in the RG Kar protest by the medical fraternity came to the fore on Sunday. This was highlighted by the Tilottama Trust, made up of 14 doctors.

The trust organised a march from College Square to Esplanade on Sunday afternoon, raising their voices against the "politicisation of an apolitical protest that demands justice for Abhaya". Over 100 senior doctors and other people participated in the rally.

Madhusudan Pal, a retired professor of Medical College Hospital who participated in the protest, said, "All of us want justice for Abhaya. We are all waiting for this."

Biman Bihari Das, president of the trust, said, "There was an attempt to link our trust with the newly formed WBJDA, and we condemn this. We will continue to lend our support to the West Bengal Junior Doctors' Front (WBJDF). Since the WBJDF representatives, not even in a single instance, demanded the resignation of the health minister, we are laying down our demands separately."

However, both WBJDF and WBJDA members claimed that the trust owes allegiance to BJP. Ankush Ghosh, a junior doctor of Calcutta National Medical College, said, "The doctors who formed Tilottama Trust are all backed by BJP."



WBJDF members (top) during a torch rally at RG Kar on Saturday night; (above) Tilottama Trust members take out a protest rally on Sunday

borty, an intern of RG Kar Hospital and a representative of WBJDA, said, "This is a false allegation. We formed the association as an apolitical body as WBJDF, backed by Left, is deviating from the main demand for justice. We will call a convention soon."

The WBJDA claimed that Ashfaqullah Naliya, a representative of WBJDF and a junior doctor of RG Kar, was

TOI | Sukhomoy Sen

general secretary of the TMCP unit at CNMC when Sandip Ghosh was its MSVP. Naliya, however, rubbished the claim and said, "I never had any link with the TMCP unit at CNMC. This is false propaganda against me."

On Sunday, a non-medical group, Raat Dokhol Koro, Din Bodol Koro, organised a protest at Jadavpur by exhibiting women's garments.

Civic volunteers' training from Nov 4

Civic volunteers will undergo 21 days of non-residential training at police training school in the city, Kolkata Police sources said. According to them, 160 existing civic volunteers will undergo the training in the first phase from Nov 4. The list of the 160 civic volunteers will be submitted before the cops by Monday. The role of civic volunteers came under lens after the arrest of Sanjay Roy for the rape-murder of a PGT doctor at RG Kar Medical College and Hospital. TNN

Rights body seeks report from top cop

The state human rights commission has sought a report from Kolkata Police commissioner for not allowing installation of bio-toilets during the junior doctors' hunger strike. The commission took this step based on a complaint by APDR. The commissioner has been asked to respond by Nov 5. "No civilised govt can allow this. This is a violation of human rights," APDR wrote to the chairman of the commission. TNN

No meeting of victim's family with Shah

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Kolkata: The RG Kar victim's parents could not meet Union home minister Amit Shah on Sunday. Bengal BJP sources said meeting the parents was not on his itinerary.

But Shah did refer to RG Kar in his speech. He alleged that women's honour is at stake in Bengal. "Women are being tortured across Bengal. Whether it is Sandeshkhal or RG Kar, women are not safe here. You have to vote for BJP to put an end to this," he said.

Earlier last week, parents of the 31-year-old sought an appointment with Shah.

But legal sources close to BJP indicated that the case is sub judice and being monitored by Supreme Court. "It wo-

'NOT ON ITINERARY'

Related report: P 22

uld not have been prudent for Shah to meet them at this juncture as the CBI is probing the case. It could also be construed as the minister trying to influence the case," said a lawyer close to the BJP.

"We have always demanded justice for the victim. But Shah came for the party's membership drive and inauguration of a passenger terminal at Petrappole. None from BJP ever mentioned any probable meeting with the parents," said a BJP neta. Sources said Shah was keeping close tabs on the developments. "Why didn't Shah meet them? We have tried to draw his attention to the issue a number of times. Is BJP's concern restricted to its lip service to the family?" TMC ex-Rajya Sabha MP Kunal Ghosh said.

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HC: Undertrial's right to personal liberty, speedy trial is paramount

Bail For Man Accused Of Killing Wife

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Kolkata: The fundamental right of an undertrial to personal liberty and a speedy trial is paramount and must override all other considerations, the Calcutta High Court stated while granting bail to a man accused of murdering his wife.

"The prosecution may have an excellent case to secure the conviction of the petitioner. Nobody stands in the

way of the prosecution doing so. However, we must keep in mind that the fundamental right of an undertrial to personal liberty and a speedy trial is paramount and must override all other considerations," the division bench of Justice Arijit Banerjee and Justice Apurba Sinha Ray ordered on Oct 7.

Solely on the ground of inordinate delay in the progress of the trial, the accused was granted bail.

Justice Banerjee sought a report regarding the delay of the trial. The state submitted that the witness action has not yet begun.

"That's not the petitioner's headache," Justice Banerjee said while adding that the accused will stay far

CASE DETAILS

➤ Accused in custody for 2 years and 6 months

➤ Charges under 498A (cruelty to a married woman by her husband or his relatives) and 302 (murder) of the Indian Penal Code (IPC)

➤ Married the victim around 19 years ago

➤ Granted bail by Calcutta HC on Oct 7

away and not enter the concerned district.

The accused was in custody for two years and six

months. He was arrested in 2022, and it was after almost two years and four months that the charges against him were framed on Sept 10, 2024. He was booked under sections 498A (cruelty to a married woman by her husband or his relatives) and 302 (murder) of the Indian Penal Code (IPC).

He prayed for bail on the ground of delay.

His lawyer stated that the charge sheet was submitted on May 5, 2022, and charges were framed on Aug 6, 2024. No witness has been examined, it was submitted. However, the state submitted that the charges were framed on Sept 10.

The state advocate opposed the bail plea, stating that

witness action is yet to take place. There are 17 witnesses in the case, out of which nine are "vulnerable witnesses", including the daughter, who has implicated the father.

The complaint was filed by the father of the deceased woman in Ashokenagar PS in North 24 Parganas in April 2022.

It was stated that the victim married the accused 19 years ago. It was alleged that for two years, the accused had been torturing her and forcing her to sell their house, but the victim opposed that.

On April 2, 2022, around 1.30 pm, the accused allegedly murdered the wife and ran away. The accused denied the claims.

'Digi-arrest' fraud emerges as Kol's top cyber menace

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Kolkata: "Digital arrest fraud", which PM Narendra Modi spoke about in his 115th episode of 'Mann Ki Baat' on Sunday, has outpaced all cyber fraud complaints in Kolkata in the past six months. According to the Lalbazar Cyber Cell, the last six months witnessed 291 cases of "digital arrest" fraud complaints — 114 cases being reported between Sept and Oct, an increase considered "normal" during the festival season.

Police raided at least 17 locations across the country in pursuit of the culprits, securing crucial arrests not just in Bengal, but also in Gujarat, Madhya Pradesh and Maharashtra, as well as some areas further south. Around 65 individuals were questioned, detained or arrested in connection with these cases over the past six months.

The Bengal Police was no exception. Of the Rs 1 crore fraud money returned to victims in the past two months, at least Rs 15 lakh was extorted through this modus operandi.

"Digital arrest frauds began last year when threat calls in the name of central agencies reached potential victims. This included fake calls in the name of CBI, NCB, or NIA. It also included calls from fake Delhi and Mumbai cops. But it turned sinister from early this year as the modus operandi changed — from threatening the arrest of the targets' children studying outside the city to sending recorded IVRS calls and using fake court orders," said a senior officer.

COMPLAINT COUNT THIS YEAR



'Three steps to digital security are stop, think & act'

Under digital arrest fraud, callers pose as officials from the police, CBI, RBI, or narcotics departments, speaking with great confidence. If you ever receive such a call, don't be afraid. Be aware that no investigative agency conducts such interrogations over the phone or video call. The three steps to digital security are — stop, think and act. If possible, take a screenshot or record the call. No govt agency issues threats over the phone or demands money — PM Narendra Modi on 'Mann Ki Baat'



May and June saw 49 and 52 complaints, respectively. The police launched a massive campaign and managed to reduce the numbers to 37 and 39 in July and Aug. However, the criminals began improvising, and Sept and Oct saw 60 and 54 complaints.

"It is important not to panic and to remember that no agency will call to settle disputes. Verify caller identity. Always confirm the identity of individuals claiming to be from official agencies. Do not transfer money based on unsolicited calls or video requests. Contact the police, local authorities or trusted individuals if you receive suspicious communication," said DC (Cyber) Abhishek Modi.

Police shared an example

from Sinterh, where an elderly woman fell victim to the scam spanning two months.

"To convince her, the fraudsters sent a fake order copy with the SC logo. The woman was then asked to join a video call. When she joined, a man sitting under a board with a fake CBI logo introduced himself as a senior officer. A few minutes later, several people, including two women, joined and began asking questions. They requested her Aadhaar card details, which she provided. The man posing as a CBI officer informed her that she would not be arrested if she paid the money. She continued to deposit money into the accounts provided by the scammer for two months," the officer said.

HC rejects hubby's torture claim, overturns divorce

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Kolkata: The Calcutta High Court overturned a divorce granted by a trial court on grounds of cruelty, in which the husband alleged that he was beaten by the wife with a broom. The wife proved in the high court that contrary to the claim, they were living a "cordial" married life.

On grounds of cruelty and desertion, the husband filed for a divorce plea. The conclusion of the trial court that cruelty was made out was based on the case filed by the wife under Section 406 of Indian Penal Code (IPC), which culminated in acquittal prior to the decision in the matrimonial case. However, the high court stated that this cannot be considered in isolation to arrive at the finding of cruelty.

The wife, in the high court, submitted that she had been driven out of the matrimonial house and, since she had no income, she initiated a case for maintenance against the husband as well as criminal proceedings under Section 406 to recover her "streedhan".

Considering the consistent stand of the wife that she wanted to continue her conjugal relationship with the husband, the bench set aside the divorce.

Moreover, the division bench of Justice Harish Tandon and Justice Madhuresh Prasad noted that no specific date, time, and manner of subjugation to torture by the wife was mentioned by the husband in the petition filed for divorce.

Apart from that, the high court

pointed out that 11 photographs showing the couple touring places like Shillong, Kamakhya, and Kaziranga suggested that there was a "cordial" relationship between the husband and wife.

"Such photographs cannot lead to a conclusion that the petitioner (husband) was being subjected to cruelty. Rather than considering whether the photographs would support the plea of divorce, the court (trial court) proceeded to conclude on the basis of these photographs that the respondent wife happily toured the petitioner husband and that her desire of touring with the husband was fulfilled," the judgement delivered on Oct 7 specified.

The couple got married on April 19, 2006. The husband alleged that

two days after marriage, the wife threatened to file a complaint under Section 498A of IPC with the help of her advocate boyfriend. Meanwhile, the wife alleged that the husband was having a relationship with a woman, who was later claimed to be his distant cousin.

The high court, in the judgment, highlighted that the trial court, while considering the divorce plea, recorded that Rs 1 lakh was received not by way of dowry but as a loan for house construction to provide suitable accommodation to the wife.

"By resorting to a hypothesis, the court (trial court) concluded that since the petitioner (husband) was an educated person in a govt job having average intelligence, he would never dare to accept dowry by an account payee cheque," the judgement stated.

DSP gen manager, missing for 16 hrs, found dead in plant



Mohammad Asif | TNN

Durgapur: A 54-year-old general manager of the Raw Material Handling Plant (RMHP) at Durgapur

Steel Plant (DSP), Samit Bhattacharya, was found dead on Saturday morning, after being missing for 16 hours. His body was discovered below a lift inside the plant.

According to DSP officials, Bhattacharya was last seen during his general shift on Saturday morning. On Saturday, Bhattacharya arrived at his office but went missing shortly after. Despite his bag and car being found on the office campus, he was untraceable and his phone, which was active, went unanswered. RMHP officials filed a 'missing person' report at the

Warrior police outpost and a search was conducted by DSP officials, police, CISF personnel and a sniffer dog, without any result. Around 2.30 am on Sunday, his body was found under the lift area. Cops sent it for postmortem. DSP employees demanded a proper investigation into the matter.

The victim's elder brother, Pinak Pani Bhattacharya, told TOI, "I live in Kolkata. Samit's wife called me around 5 pm on Saturday and informed me that he had gone missing. Around 3.30 am, a cop informed me that Samit's body had been found. Samit's son Surjyayan then lodged a written complaint at the Durgapur police station, requesting a proper investigation into the matter and to find out the actual cause of death."

DCP Abhishek Gupta told TOI, "The body was sent for post-mortem to ascertain the actual cause of death."

17 RBU VC applicants appear for interview

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Kolkata: The first phase of the selection process vice-chancellors for state universities will conclude on Monday. Candidates for Rabindra Bharati University's permanent VC post appeared for the interview on Sunday. Three universities — Gour Banga, Kalyani and RBU — were slotted on Sunday. In all, around 100 candidates applied for RBU and around 17 were shortlisted for the interview.

At present, RBU is being run by the officiating VC, Subhro Kamal Mukherjee, a retired Justice of the High Court of Karnataka. However, the criteria mentioned in the advertisement published in July clearly stated that applicants should be distinguished academics with a minimum of 10 years' experience as a professor in a university or 10 years' experience in a reputable research or academic administrative organisation.

The current officiating VC was appointed by chancellor C V Ananda Bose in July 2023.



Mukherjee told TOI, "I didn't know that interviews were going on today. I only have the information that an expert panel was appointed by the Supreme Court for the VC selection. However, I am not interested in being appointed as permanent VC. I will leave after the permanent VC's appointment."

Two universities — Baba Saheb Ambedkar Education and Harichand and Guruchand — are slotted on Monday. The last phase of the interview, when universities like including Jadavpur, Burdwan and Maulana Abul Kalam Azad are slotted, will be from Nov 6 to 10.

5 Kol flights get hoax bomb threats

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Kolkata: Five flights operating from Kolkata fell prey to bomb-threat hoax again on Sunday. A threat was sent through an X profile but turned out to be a hoax like the five messages sent over the past eight days.

Sunday's threat came at 12.43 pm. By 1 pm, the city airport was put on high alert.

The aircraft mentioned in one of the messages included two IndiGo flights from Kolkata flying to Pune and Bengaluru

and two IndiGo carriers flying into the city from Mumbai and Bengaluru. A separate threat message was sent via X for a Vistara flight headed to Delhi from Kolkata.

Heightened security measures were enforced — anti-sabotage check was carried out by CISF and airlines carried out 100% ladder-point check before boarding. A senior airport official said all necessary SOP was followed and security screening was beefed up. However, passengers were not harassed at any point of time.

Over the past two weeks, more than 350 flights across the country have received similar bomb threats that turned out to be hoaxes, with most of these issued through social media.

Two days after Dana, 'faulty drainage' keeps Hwh flooded

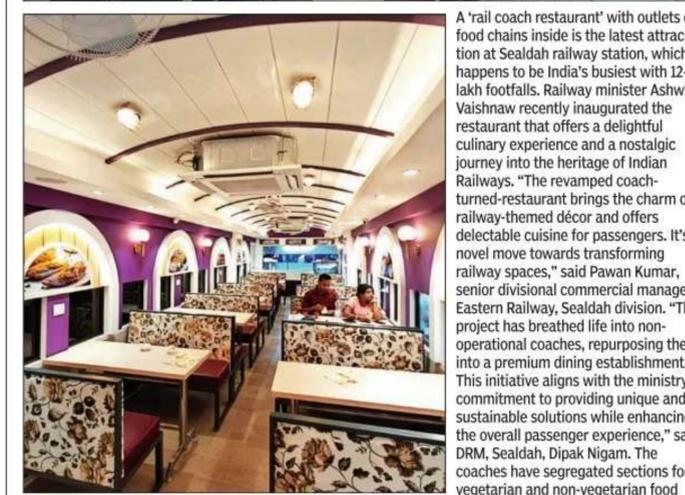
Rupak Banerjee | TNN

Howrah: Although water receded almost everywhere after Cyclone Dana, large parts of Howrah were waterlogged on Sunday, including Ramrajatala, parts of Dumurjola, East-West Bypass, Drainage Canal Road, Bellisuri Road, Jagacha, Kona Expressway, North Howrah Bamungachi, Belgachhia, Ghosuri, Badhaghat, Shalimar, Botanic Garden, Nazirganj and Belur, despite 68 pumps working round the clock.

Sujoy Chakraborty, Howrah Municipal Corporation chairperson, alleged that a section of citizens has turned drains into dumping spots for items like pillows, mattresses, gas ovens, small idols, napkins and polythene, which block water flow and cause waterlogging. Some areas have knee-deep water, while others have waist-deep water, disrupting normal life and transport.

RTI activist and former

SEALDAH GETS RAKE RESTAURANT



A 'rail coach restaurant' with outlets of food chains inside is the latest attraction at Sealdah railway station, which happens to be India's busiest with 12-15 lakh footfalls. Railway minister Ashwini Vaishnaw recently inaugurated the restaurant that offers a delightful culinary experience and a nostalgic journey into the heritage of Indian Railways. "The revamped coach-turned-restaurant brings the charm of railway-themed décor and offers delectable cuisine for passengers. It's a novel move towards transforming railway spaces," said Pawan Kumar, senior divisional commercial manager, Eastern Railway, Sealdah division. "The project has breathed life into non-operational coaches, repurposing them into a premium dining establishment. This initiative aligns with the ministry's commitment to providing unique and sustainable solutions while enhancing the overall passenger experience," said DRM, Sealdah, Dipak Nigam. The coaches have segregated sections for vegetarian and non-vegetarian food

Cop transfer pleas to go online in Dec

Debashis Konar
& Sujoy Khanra | TNN



A waterlogged road in Howrah on Sunday

BJP president of Howrah Ambooj Sharma has also blamed Howrah's disrupted drainage system for the issue. Howrah resident and green activist Subhash Dutta, social worker Masood Alam Khan and engineer and CREDAI (Howrah-Hooghly) chairman Ramratan Chowdhary have highlighted a lack of public awareness.

Dutta said half of Howrah's 500-km drainage system consists of open drains, providing an opportunity for

people to dump waste. He urged HMC and the state to adopt a planned drainage system policy for the city.

Sharma said the corporation is not properly desilting the drains and waste removed from drains is often left at the spot, leading to further clogging during rain.

Khan said 36 awareness camps were conducted this year and Sharma said that desilting, which used to start in Jan-Feb, is now done in May-June, exacerbating the problem.

Cop transfer pleas to go online in Dec

Kolkata/Midnapore: The police have done away with the process of physical transfer applications to superiors, which were often kept pending for months without reason. The Bengal govt has mandated that such transfer requests be submitted online in Dec. The portal will be open for 30 days that month and the superiors will have to decide in a time-bound manner. The state will make decisions on these transfer requests every March.

Female constables can apply for transfer to home districts after eight years of service while male constables can apply after 15 years. Officers senior to them, like ASI and SI, can also apply for transfers to home districts in the last four years of their service. However, no transfer is possible in assembly segments where the police personnel are voters themselves, although this can be within the same district where they reside.

NEWS DIGEST

Murder whiff in couple death

The bodies of a couple were found — one with a head wound and another hanging — in their house in Bangar on Sunday. The deceased were identified as Mosharaf Piyada (42) and his wife Sahana Bibi (38). Prima facie, cops think it could be a double murder or murder-suicide. The couple's four children claim their parents were murdered. "A blood-stained axe was found on the floor at the scene of the crime," said additional CP (II) Murlidhar Sharma. Cops are awaiting the postmortem report to determine cause of death.

Fire at Chinar Park bldg

A fire broke out inside a commercial establishment in a multi-storey building at Chinar Park in the early hours of Sunday. None was injured. Three fire tenders brought the flames under control in about 30 minutes. The cause of the fire is yet to be ascertained. Locals said the fire broke out at the third-floor establish-

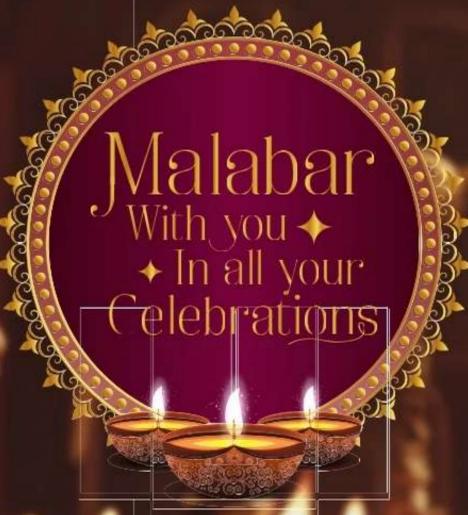
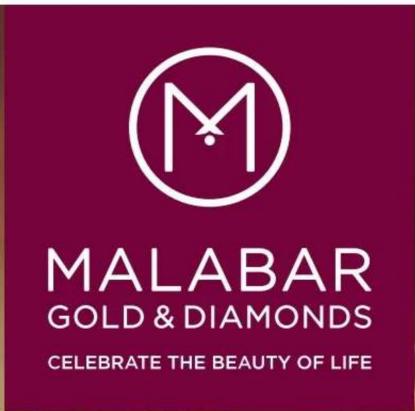


ment around 1 am. There are restaurants and other commercial establishments on the ground floor of the building. Forensic experts have collected samples to ascertain the cause of the fire. Local Trinamula MLA Tapas Chatterjee visited the spot.

Mandarmani sex racket

Cops busted a prostitution racket in Mandarmani. Raids on three hotels on Saturday led to 13 arrests, including hotel managers, staff and several tourists. Six women suspected of being involved in the prostitution ring were also apprehended. On Sunday, the detainees were presented in Contai Sub-Divisional Court and sent to 14 days' judicial custody. The rescued women were instructed to be sent to a shelter.

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Har Tyohaar ke sang Malabar





'There can't be neutrality between aggressor & victim. It only means you're with Russia'

PM Modi can influence the end of the war... He should also bring back at least 1,000 Ukrainian children kidnapped by Russia... Brics summit was a failure... Not everything depends on US elections... Russia is advancing but facing huge losses, we are trying to save our people... We want invitation to Nato not quick membership
- Ukrainian President Volodymyr Zelensky speaks exclusively to TOI's Rudroneel Ghosh

What did you think about the Brics summit in Russia and PM Modi saying he is ready to work for peace in Ukraine at the summit?

Zelensky: First and foremost the Brics summit in Russia failed. It was a total failure. Not everyone was there, even looking at today's composition of Brics, we couldn't see many leaders whom Russia was relying upon within Brics besides the guests. Saudi Arabia wasn't there at the level of the leader and there was no unity within Brics. I think Brics is divided by Putin himself by his policy of war. And I think Putin's aim for the summit was to polarise the world and he did not achieve this. He will subvert the Brics' purpose and use the platform for his own policy of war. That's why he wants to divide the world into so-called West-plus and Brics-plus. But as of today he has failed to do that for many reasons. First, I think everyone understands that he is a murderer and a terrorist. That today Russia is just a cheap energy resource, and some of the states are using that. But even the states that understand that they can help their economy in this manner, don't want to spoil the process for themselves with Putin. Plus, Putin is not consistent, and even the proposals of Brazil and China, which were more political and not very specific, were not acceptable to Putin from the perspective of territorial integrity. And for China, I would say, this was a slap on the face. For Brazil too, and that's why Brazil was not present at the summit at the level of the leader. So Brics in effect did not take place.

Europe is a powerful continent on its own. India and China shouldn't forget that in spite of the fact that India and China are great economies, still Europe is five times bigger than Russia by population and dozens of times bigger economically. Hence, Europe is a more attractive market

As for the presence of the UN secretary general, I think that altogether this is a kind of a surrealistic thing. It's not only about the UN but many other countries. I think that you cannot just say that you are neutral in the war between Russia and Ukraine. You cannot be neutral because it would mean you are on the side of Russia. Neutrality really helps just Russia. And between the aggressor and the victim, there cannot be neutrality. I consider this a hidden support for Russia, and the ones who were present there at the summit and speaking about their neutrality and saying they would like to help to solve the conflict, in my opinion, they look more pro-Russia. And that means it's not about peace because Russia started this war and continues to wage it. And whether they want it or not, or understand it or not, that is not important. This is the fact: neutrality in this war means support for Russia. After all of the victims, after all of the tortures and deportation of Ukrainian children, this is how it looks.

As for the position of PM Modi, I think that any assertions today should not end with words only. Modi is the PM of a really huge country from the perspective of population, economy, influence and impact. Such a country cannot just say we are interested in the end of the war - we are all interested in that. All of the leaders would tell you that they would like to end the war, even the enemy of peace, Putin, will say that even he wants peace. This is a common thing. Especially for such a huge country like India, PM Modi can influence the end of the war. This is the huge value of him in any conflict. This is a huge value of India. Blocking of Russian economy, blocking of cheap energy resource, blocking of defence-industrial complex of Russia will lead to the decrease in capacity of Moscow to wage wars against us. Then the G20; the G20 is considered the 'Great 20' because they are main economies of the world. And the whole world is looking to them. That's why the 20 great economies can just easily put Putin in his place and end the war. Not just incentivise but the opposite, slow down all of Putin's desires. And you don't need to say we would like peace, you need to act. Because the daily war is killing people.

Many would argue that sanctions haven't stopped Russia and more sanctions would cripple the global economy. So how do you convince more countries to your point of view?

Sanctions are working. Sanctions have led to effect. If the great economies of the world like India, China, Turkey and others, which did not impose sanctions on Russia, if they would not help Russia survive in the war economically - they actually helped Russia earn money, sometimes even with the under-

standing that the energy resource they are buying is helping fuel the war - if they re-evaluated their values, then the sanctions would be functioning fully. Now they are working only partially because the world is implementing them partially.

Everyone is looking to the US elections and there is a belief that a ceasefire could be reached after the elections. Do you think that's possible?

So many things depend on the policies of US. But it's not a deep analysis to say everything depends on US. Many things depend, but not everything. In the beginning of war in Ukraine our nation stood together against the enemy, let me remind you, without the support of allies, including US. The unity of people of Ukraine, our population and society, this is what in fact repelled the attack of the Russians, stopped them. But the occupation, of course, we wouldn't be able to respond to without the support, or at least it would be very hard because of human losses. And that's why we are very grateful to our allies for their help and support. But still, not everything depends on US elections. US policies change not only because of the leader. We don't know who will become the US president, but undoubtedly the bipartisan support for Ukraine will stay. And the US Congress, in any case which we are cooperating with and have developed strong connections, will have his personal impact on this war. The US president will definitely shape the foreign policy because it's his or her constitutional obligation. And undoubtedly if US policy changes and it says we don't support Ukraine in its sovereign and just protection of its territories, it will be really hard for us. This is if the policy totally changes. Then we will think what we will do with that. Definitely not now, we will think on that only then.

Another argument is that we shouldn't forget that Europe is a powerful continent on its own. In fact, India and China shouldn't forget about that in spite of the fact that India and China are great economies, still Europe is five times bigger than Russia by population and dozens of times bigger economically. Hence, Europe is a more attractive market. So we need to understand that US population is half the population of Europe. And we need to understand that Europe as it is, when it is not divided, is powerful. It is important for us to preserve this unity in Europe, and not to change the policy of Europe about this war. This is the second aspect. And the third about the ceasefire, we need to understand that we are against a frozen conflict, we don't want the third war. Because in 2014, one war started, and our territories were occupied. In 2022, the full-scale war started, though before 2022 we used to have a frozen conflict. There was a ceasefire already. There were Normandy and Minsk processes where there were dozens of negotiations with Russia and other partners in different platforms. And then we had the full-scale war. So if we now freeze the conflict without a proper understanding of what will happen tomorrow, which guarantees of security the Ukrainian people will have, our children will have, then I think it is a huge risk, a very high risk. Everything should be done on paper and should be comprehensible. How this war ends, and who and how much will bear responsibility for it? Definitely the aggressor will do that.



Sanctions are working. If the great economies like India, China, Turkey and others, which did not impose sanctions on Russia, if they would not help Russia survive in the war economically - they actually helped Russia earn money - if they re-evaluated their values, then the sanctions would be functioning fully. Now they are working partially because the world is implementing them partially

You recently revealed your Victory Plan which includes quick Nato membership for Ukraine. But many countries are divided about your plan. Do you think the plan is practical or is it just a bargaining chip?

The Victory Plan is not a bargaining chip or a topic of negotiations with Russia. Let's not confuse this. The Victory Plan is not a platform for response for all of the countries of the world. The Victory Plan is the plan for strengthening Ukraine today. Strengthening of Ukraine before heading into those diplomatic formats of negotiations, peace summits, so that Ukraine could be strong. That's why the Victory Plan is given to countries who are ready to



strengthen Ukraine. It's not about talks with Russia, because Russia is not making us stronger, it's making us weaker. It's not a proposal for negotiations. This is a request, very specific one. I shouldn't 'ask' in my Victory Plan. As for the invitation to Nato - I would like that people don't misunderstand this - the first point is not Nato membership or quick membership of Nato. The first point is invitation to Nato so that in the future nobody can change their opinion. Everything shouldn't be just in words, but documented in papers, fundamentally and legally. We are talking about invitation, not membership, because during the war we cannot become Nato member obviously. And this point is only for the Nato countries because we would like to be invited to Nato.

The second point of the Victory Plan is strengthening the Ukrainian army with weapons today at the battlefield, not tomorrow. We are not talking with Putin about that or the countries of the Global South who do not strengthen us with weapons today. We speak about this with the Ramstein countries which helped Ukraine with weapons during this conflict. Point three is about the package of deterrence against Russia. It does not mean the use of missiles. However, this would be just because Russia is using missiles against us. But we are saying that it's not about the use of missiles but deterrence of Russia. This is the package of long-range weapons which Ukraine will not use if Russia stops the war against us. Stops the aggression against us. Stops killing our people. That is why this package of long-range weapons should be in Ukraine. This is the prevention measure of weapons. This is the warn-

army as part of the security of Europe. And it is exclusively about Europe. So it is not the plan that will end the war where we unite the whole world. This is the plan of victory that leads us to the plan to end the war. This is the plan of strengthening of Ukraine.

What is the position of the war as of now? Because Russia has been making some gains on the battlefield, and with winter coming many believe you will face a tough few months.

Well, this is the third hard winter for Ukraine and the Ukrainian people. Russia is doing the same thing every year of this war. We are studying how to protect ourselves. Russia attacked our energy centres since the very beginning to breed chaos in Ukraine, so that our people would starve, so that our people will be ill without having the opportunity to provide insulation and winterisation of their houses. So that the people would die. We as a state started to oppose that. We restored our energy systems. We are step-by-step strengthening the protection of our energy systems. And we aren't just allowing Russia to kill our people. Gradually we have begun to cope with their attacks on our energy systems. We know how to retaliate to their strikes, but we do that very cautiously. We never target the people, we never target the schools and universities - which Russia does. So they have felt that Ukraine can respond. And in those operations none of our partners have helped us. This is what we have done alone in our response, unfortunately.

As for the battlefield, you are right, Russia has more people and more weapons. In many directions, technologically, we are better than them already. Many partners agree with that, especially in long-range drones, systems of electronic warfare etc. But it's not enough because the most important thing is to save the people. So we look at the battlefield from the perspective of how to save our people. We can lose equipment, we can lose technologies, but we should minimise human losses. Sometimes by the price of metres or few kilometres of land. Yes, the human being is more important than the land, though this is our land. But our land will be brought back later; but we will not be able to bring back the human being. And we live according to this law. It is hard to be at war with Russia by this law because they have a different law - if they are not attacking, if their soldiers are not on the offensive, they are shot by the Russians themselves. Russians are killed by Russians. The Russians have killed many of their own mobilised soldiers just because these soldiers were afraid to attack, to perish under the bullet or to be wounded. So they retreated and this is where they were killed by their own army. This is their law of war. They don't quantify, they don't calculate the numbers. They have approximately 650,000 victims already who were killed or wounded in Russia. Just imagine, that's a lot.

And you know what's really scary? The same is continuing and they don't even retrieve the bodies. The bodies are just rotting on the battlefield, they don't take them back. This is the face of today's Russia, today's Putin. And what's more interesting, yes they are having gains in Ukraine's east because of this strategy, because of this meat-grinder, because they are throwing bodies onto us. But when we came to Kursk region and had a preventive attack against their territory, because they wanted to have a separate operation and occupy our north, we can see that they are attacking their own territory. They are themselves killing their own civilians in Kursk. And our people are giving them food and water because they are civilians not soldiers. Our soldiers are giving away and sharing what they have. And we can see the bodies of Russian civilians, civilians who were shot by Russian artillery. This is the war.

... just one mechanism, just one ICC cannot fully correct the situation. It cannot fully influence Putin and his allies. But all of them together, the ICC, the leaders, international law, UN, G20, altogether can definitely end this war

When PM Modi was in Kyiv he along with you visited the Martyrologist Exposition dedicated to the fallen children of this war. Can you detail the overall impact of the war on Ukrainian children?

First of all I thank PM Modi who joined me and commemorated the perished children. You know the real number of Ukrainian children who have been killed in the war is unknown. Nobody knows the real number, unfortunately. We can definitely state that dozens of thousands of children were deported and kidnapped by Russia. But how many of them were killed, we will only get to know after the war. Dozens of thousands of deported children. Thousands with changed names and surnames. They have been forced to speak a different language. Many of them who were teens, they have been forced to the battlefield to fight against their own country. This is just horrible. Their relatives don't have their children back. And unfortunately, with dozens of thousands having been kidnapped, less than 1,000 have been brought back. That's why it's very important that many countries join the coalition to bring back Ukrainian children. We would really like India to help with this.

Today, the coalition is working with more than 40 countries. But unfortunately, not many countries have managed to bring back our children. Besides this, many children have been affected by the war in Ukraine. Schools have been hit, universities have been hit. Many children have been wounded, many have lost their limbs, and many children have been killed. Many children have left Ukraine with their parents. You know that more than 7 million

We know how to retaliate to their strikes, but we do that very cautiously. We never target the schools and universities - which Russia does. So they have felt we can respond. And in those operations none of our partners have helped us. This is what we have done alone, unfortunately

Ukrainians are now abroad. A big number of them are children. Their parents are staying sometimes here. For instance, the men in the family are left here or they are on the frontline of the war. And their children are being deprived of their childhood. Some of those fathers are dying in the war. This is the situation about the children.

What can India do specifically to bring back the forcibly deported Ukrainian children?

You can join the coalition to bring back Ukrainian children. You can support the joint communique of the Peace Summit because the third point was about bringing back the children, you can call Putin and ask him who he is, you can force him to bring the children back, PM Modi can do that because he really has huge influence, he can just say specifically how many Ukrainian children will be given to me so that I could bring them back to Ukraine, just say that directly, just give me 1,000 Ukrainian children who will be brought back to Ukraine. This is the real step. Putin took dozens of thousands. Let PM Modi bring back only 1,000 at least. And if every such influential person as PM Modi is able to bring back 1,000, we will be able to bring back the majority of our children. That's what is needed to be done. You need to raise this issue at the meeting of G20. India can invite us to this meeting as well together with Brazil. So the G20 can divide the obligations. If 20,000 of Ukrainian children are deported, every leader should take the responsibility to bring back 1,000 children. It's not just to sit at the table during this summit but to really help the children. The world should be helping.

ICC issued arrest warrants for the forcible deportation of Ukrainian children. But those were not implemented as we saw recently with Mongolia. Do you still have faith in international mechanisms to bring back the children?

We believe just in the international influence of the leaders. We believe in the international mechanism. You are right, just one mechanism, just one international criminal court cannot fully correct the situation. It cannot fully influence Putin and his allies. But all of them together, the ICC, the leaders, international law, UN, G20, altogether can definitely end this war. But the results of the ICC are still felt. Putin is not travelling to the majority of world countries. We can see that. The majority of the leaders who acknowledged and approved the Rome Statute, and still acknowledge the verdict of the ICC, the majority of them try not to visit Putin. Remember, this (the deportation of children) is only the first case of war crimes. There will be many more cases for which more evidence will be provided. As for Mongolia, unfortunately it showed that it is not an independent country.

The Brics summit was a total failure... I think Brics is divided by Putin himself by his policy of war. And I think Putin's aim for the summit was to polarise the world and he did not achieve this. He will subvert the Brics' purpose and use the platform for his own policy of war. That's why he wants to divide the world into so-called West-plus and Brics-plus

Do you think there's any possibility that PM Modi can host negotiations between Ukraine and Russia?

As for PM Modi, we have the platform which is the Peace Summit. The second Peace Summit could be conducted in any respected capital and we communicated that it could be held in New Delhi. Undoubtedly it can be in India and PM Modi can really do that if he can organise a certain summit. But for that we need to prepare ourselves in terms of the proposals on which any number of countries could be heard - the proposals of India, EU, the African continent etc. So if Brazil and China would like to see us as well and they have proposals, please by all means, but only according to our format because the war is in our land. So I think that such a summit can be hosted in India.

Thanks, Mr President, for speaking to The Times of India.
Thank you and I wish the people of India peace. This is really important.

Har Tyohaar ke sang Malabar





EX-CM DIGVIJAYA SINGH, MP CONG CHIEF BOOKED FOR FOR POLL CODE VIOLATION



'NITISH KUMAR ALWAYS AN INSPIRATION': CRICKETER ISHAN KISHAN'S FATHER PK PANDEY JOINS JD(U)

Shah unveils infiltration as key 2026 assembly poll plank

'Only BJP Can End Smuggling, Corruption'

RohitKhanna@timesofindia.com

Kolkata: Peace can be established in Bengal only when infiltration stops, said Union home minister Amit Shah on Sunday, adding that BJP had set itself a target of winning the 2026 Bengal assembly polls with a two-thirds majority. Urging voters to give BJP a chance, Shah said that infiltration and corruption would be rooted out from the state when the saffron party forms govt in Bengal.

"Bengal is witnessing state-sponsored infiltration. To stop this, you have to vote BJP to power. Rabindrasangeet has been replaced by bomb blasts here. Only BJP can put an end to cattle smuggling, coal smuggling, corruption and syndicate raj," he said.

Present at the inauguration of BJP's membership drive at the Eastern Zonal Cultural Centre (EZCC), Shah said, "2026 will be a milestone in the assembly polls of Bengal. BJP will win the election with two-thirds majority." Referring to BJP's dismal performance in the state in recent elections, he added: "Mamata didi is happy seeing a lower seat tally for BJP. She thinks that BJP has slackened pace in Bengal. Her happiness is not going to last long."



Amit Shah inaugurated a new passenger terminal at Petrapole on Sunday. The terminal can handle nearly 25,000 passengers each day, making it the largest land customs port in South Asia. The terminal has been built with an investment of nearly Rs 500 crore and will handle almost 70% of the trade between India and Bangladesh. Shah said there were plans for 23 more land ports all of which will be digitised

Earlier, opening a new passenger terminal at Petrapole, Shah said that people in Bengal were not getting benefits of central schemes. "If voted to power, BJP will roll out all central schemes in Bengal. *Aap ke achche din dur nahin* (good days are not far off)," he said. He added that if voted to power, MGNREGA workers would get their pay. Giving his party colleague a target of enrolling 1 crore members in the next 20 days, Shah said in Kolkata: "We do not aim to make *bhaipoa* CM. When we enter the political arena with renewed vigour, BJP can't be stopped. Workers

have been our strength, and BJP swept the polls in MP, Rajasthan and Odisha. Our govt was formed in Haryana for the third term, and I can assure BJP govt in Maharashtra and Jharkhand. Our next big target is Bengal."

Shah added: "Modiji officially recognised Bangla as one of the classical languages of India, fulfilling the dream of cultural icons such as Jai-dev, Mahakavi Chandidas, Rabindranath Tagore, Bankimchandra Chattopadhyay, and Saratchandra Chattopadhyay. Mamata Banerjee did not even express gratitude to him for granting Bangla classical language status."

Referring to the RG Kar rape-murder, the home minister said: "Women are being tortured across Bengal. Whether it is Sandeshkhali or RG Kar, women are not safe here. You have to vote BJP to power to put an end to this. We will bring *Sonar Bangla* under the leadership of PM Narendra Modi."

Critical of the INDIA bloc, Shah said that despite claims by "Rahul Baba & Co", BJP bagged 240 seats in the Lok Sabha polls.

Border Centre's responsibility: TMC in 'own goal' barb

Kolkata: Raising the infiltration bogey in Bengal, which Centre is supposed to stop, was akin to scoring an own goal, said Trinamool spokesperson Kunal Ghosh on Sunday. Ghosh's reaction came after Union home minister Amit Shah's statements on infiltration.

Speaking to reporters, Ghosh said: "If he (Shah) speaks on infiltration, he is giving his own report card. Infiltration takes place at international borders, to guard them is his responsibility. It is not the job of Kolkata Police or West Bengal Police." Ghosh added, "So if it is said that there is infiltration, then we have to accept that Centre, the Union home minister, the home ministry, BSF and the agencies working on the border to ensure its security have all failed. It is their failure. It is, at best, a self-criticism."

"They (BSF) have increased their jurisdiction from 15 km to 50 km, and despite this, if he has to scream about infiltration, then it is a same-side goal... he just kicked the football into his own net," Ghosh said.

The Trinamool नेता also called Shah a "political tourist". "Amit Shahji was a frequent dai-



ly passenger to Bengal ahead of the 2021 assembly polls and in the 2024 Lok Sabha polls. Trinamool won both convincingly. He may come to Bengal as many times as he wants...but his visits have failed to make any political impact. His chair has an importance, but he is now merely a political tourist. He says many things but people don't give any value to it," Ghosh told reporters.

The ex-MP said, "If they (BJP) talk about corruption, they should also shed some light on the long list of BJP netas accused of corruption. In Bengal, BJP has been deliberately trying to block funds and deny people their legitimate dues in the 100-day work scheme and Awas Yojana. They are quick to collect their share of taxes from Bengal, but Bengal's dues amounting to Rs 1.7 lakh crore remain unpaid. Instead of making political statements, BJP should take up Abhishek Banerjee's challenge and publish a white paper on central allocations in the last four to five years to Bengal vis-a-vis other states." **TNN**

CM shares World Bank praise for Bengal's e-Suvidha at Petrapole

Kolkata: Bengal CM Mamata Banerjee highlighted the World Bank's recognition of Bengal's efforts to streamline border trade at the Petrapole check post, at a time when Union home minister Amit Shah was visiting the check post on Sunday.



Banerjee shared a video featuring Cecile Fruman, World Bank's director of regional integration and engagement for South Asia, who praised the success of the state's initiative and its potential to be replicated across Integrated Check Points (ICPs) in India and South Asia.

Banerjee posted on X, "While there's some buzz at the Petrapole border check post today, the reality is that West Bengal's Suvidha Vehicle Facilitation System at the Land Port has revolutionised Indo-Bangladesh border trade. It has reduced delays from 45 days to zero, benefiting over 8 lakh vehicles." She also said that Centre had recognised this achievement for 'e-Governance excellence' and it had garnered praise from the World Bank and various stakeholders. "Our government's initiative has truly been a game-changer in cross-border trade between the two countries," she added.

The CM further said, "The Yatri Suvidha initiative at the Petrapole passenger terminal has simplified the entry process for around 1 lakh travellers, addressing long queues and enhancing their experience."

In the video shared by Banerjee, Fruman said, "I had the extreme pleasure of visiting Petrapole in March 2023, where I witnessed the new e-Suvidha program first-hand and saw the significant benefits it brings to regional trade. Previously, trucks had to wait over 40 days to enter the Integrated Check Points, followed by another 110 hours to clear; but now this has been reduced to just 14 hours."

"This is remarkable and represents future of trade in South Asia. At the World Bank, we are looking to support the implementation of this model at other ICPs in India and around the world. This is what will drive efficiency in the region's future trade," Fruman said in the video. **TNN**

Fresh violence hits Manipur; high alert over drone sightings

Guwahati: Fresh violence erupted on Saturday night in Manipur's Imphal West and Bishnupur districts, with reports of suspected militants using firearms and bombs in both attacks. No fatalities were reported at the time of filing this report, reports **Kangkan Kalita**.

Militants launched an attack around 7pm in Koutruk Ching Leikai village in Imphal West district, promoting retaliatory action from security forces stationed in the area. "The militants also triggered explosions in Koutruk," a security source said.

Adding to the tension, residents of nearby Meitei-populated villages situated 5km to 7km from Koutruk reported sightings of drones in the evening. Security agencies are on high alert over the use of drones in and around the area. Koutruk has remained one of the flashpoints since ethnic violence broke out in Manipur on May 3, 2023.

In the second attack, militants targeted Tronglaobi village in Bishnupur district, opening fire from Molngat and Molshang areas around 9pm.

3-yr-old girl dead, 6 injured in Assam boat collision

Guwahati: A three-year-old girl died in a boat collision in Assam's Dhubri district Saturday evening. Six persons injured in the accident that took place in the Tipkai river were hospitalised, reports **Kangkan Kalita**. They were reported to be out of danger.

"The child could not be located even as State Disaster Response Force (SDRF) conducted search operation until 1am on Sunday. Her body was later found floating about 100m from the accident site," an official said. Several people also went missing, but

were rescued by SDRF, with locals' help. Others managed to swim to the riverbank. One of the boats was reportedly carrying passengers to attend a wedding. It collided with two other boats that were jointly transporting a piece of heavy machinery. "According to witnesses, the vessel with passengers was trying to send signals using lights but the two boats jointly carrying an excavator were unable to stop due to the substantial weight. Consequently, a collision occurred," the official said.

'Touched several times while I tried to ignore him'

Continued from P 1

The journalist, who works for an online news portal, went live on Facebook on Sunday afternoon to announce that she was supposed to take an interview of Tanmoy Bhattacharya at his home, over which she had reached out to him. She, however, alleged that even before starting the interview, Bhattacharya sat on her lap. "He first sat very close to me and touched me inappropriately several times while I tried to ignore him repeatedly. Though I could not take such beha-

While Bhattacharya smelt conspiracy in the complaint, Trinamool and BJP have both attacked CPM. TMC's Kunal Ghosh demanded an investigation into the matter

viour any more, he continued to molest me. Later, crossing all limits, he sat on my lap," she said. She also said that Bhattacharya, on earlier occasions, frequently made jokes that "crossed boundaries".

Bhattacharya smelt conspiracy in this complaint. "I know her well, as the young journalist of a YouTube channel came to me at least 15 times previously to take

my interview. I always joke around. Today, while I saw her making such accusations in a live session, I was shocked. She even called me a potential rapist. I interact with many people and joke around with so many. No one has ever said anything like this. I even call her 'journalist ma'. I will also investigate the matter myself to find out the masterminds of such a nasty conspiracy," Bhattacharya told TOI.

Trinamool Congress demanded an inquiry. Former Rajya Sabha MP Kunal Ghosh, tagging the police in a post on X, said: "Let there be a probe. And, if proven, let this CPM leader be arrested. Why is the CPM mute on this?" BJP MLA Agnimitra Paul also attacked CPM. "Veteran CPM leader Tanmoy Bhattacharya, the self-proclaimed moral compass of the party, allegedly decides to sit on a young woman journalist's lap — without her consent, no less. Is this the 'morality' they preach?" Paul wrote on X.

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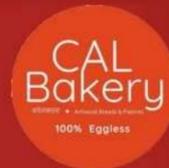
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Date: 28.10.2024 | **Venue:** Divinity Banquet, Lake Town, Kolkata
5:30 PM Onwards

Entry by Invitation Only
RSVP: +91-98300-65916

Welcome By: **Dharmendra Jain** | **Sumit Kothari**
Chairman, JITO Kolkata | Chief Secretary, JITO Kolkata

Courtesy : **CAL BAKERY**

26, Sarat Bose Road, Ground Floor, Basundhara Apartment, Near Bank Of India, Kolkata-700020, For order call : 87778 14101

Two labourers 'electrocuted' at Raniganj factory

Mohammad Asif | TNN

Raniganj: Two contractual labourers were allegedly electrocuted at a private factory in the Mangalpur area of Raniganj in West Burdwan, on Saturday midnight, during heavy rains. The deceased have been identified as Dev Jyoti Sarkar (20) from Bankura's Mejia and Rakesh Singh (49) from Bihar's Chapra.

Police said that the bodies have been sent for postmortem to determine the exact cause of death on Sunday.

An INTUC नेता stated that during the heavy rain, the labourers were unloading goods when they came into contact with a live electric wire. He alleged negligence on the part of the factory management, citing the absence of safety measures.

Centre-state cooperation not only way to up federalism, says CJI

'Doesn't Entail Only Convenient Outcomes, Welcomes Contests Too'

Dhananjay Mahapatra
@timesofindia.com

New Delhi: Amid constant tension between the Centre and opposition-governed states over many issues, including revenue sharing, CJI D Y Chandrachud has said the concept of cooperative federalism, which is at the core of India's democratic governance, does not mandate states to toe the Centre's line of policy.

Speaking at the Lok Sabha series of lectures in Mumbai on Saturday, the CJI said federalism is not a monolithic concept and is inherently multi-faceted, with those facets having innumerable concepts. He said in 1977, the SC for the first time had ruled that the federalism model of India is predominantly cooperative, where states and the Centre iron out their differences through deliberations to achieve the common goal



"In a nation as diverse and plural as ours, it is impossible to put all the states in a box and treat them alike vis-a-vis the Union. The easy-going conversations must not be viewed as the 'good', and the friction, as the 'bad'"

D Y CHANDRACHUD
Chief Justice of India

of development.

Citing his own judgment in the 2022 Union of India vs Mohit Minerals case, the CJI said, "It is not necessary that 'cooperation' between states and the Union is the only way to uphold federal principles. It is necessary to view Indian federalism as a dialogue in which states and the Union engage in conversations. Just like the conversations that we engage in on an everyday basis,

it could either be easy-going or it could cause friction between the units."

He said, "The easy-going conversations must not be viewed as the 'good', and the friction, as the 'bad'. The dialogues between the Union and states must be placed on two ends of the spectrum."

"Collaborative discussions that cooperative federalism fosters are at the end of one spectrum and interstitial

contests are at the other hand. Both forms of dialogue are equally important for federalism to flourish. Federalism does not therefore entail only convenient outcomes but is equally welcoming of some contest," he said.

He said what India is experiencing at present is 'asymmetric federalism', which could be understood at two levels—one, Union and states are independent at their respective spheres; and two, the unique asymmetric relationship that each state shares with the Centre.

"In a nation as diverse and plural as ours, it is impossible to put all the states in a box and treat them alike vis-a-vis the Union. The constitutional integration of various states to form the nation of 'India', if anything, indicates the unique considerations for the integration of each state," he said.

'Talks with executive focus on judicial infrastructure'

► Continued from P 1

The protocol is so strict that judicial matters are never ever discussed with heads of the political executive," he said.

"We know our duties in the democratic system of governance and the political executive know theirs. No judge, least of them the CJI or CJs, can even remotely invite any threat, actual or perceived, to the independence of judiciary," he added.

CJI Chandrachud said whenever the CJI or CJs meet the head of the Union or state govts, the discussions centre around the inadequacy of infrastructure for the judiciary, which faces a huge backlog of cases. "After a CJ of HC or CJI takes oath, there is a formal meeting between him and the head of the political executive centred around making good the deficiencies in judicial infrastructure, the issues and allocation of funds and related administrative issues," he said.

'No judge, least of them the CJI or CJs, can even remotely invite any threat, actual or perceived, to independence of the judiciary,' said CJI Chandrachud

He said: "If the CJI or CJ does not discuss administrative issues faced by judiciary with the head of executive, how does one solve the problems faced by the judiciary? How could judicial infrastructure projects be expedited without funds made available by the executive?"

Justice Chandrachud

said he was given charge of overseeing the eCourts project during the tenure of CJI N V Ramana. It required massive funding to make courts future-ready. The parliamentary committee on the department of justice, comprising MPs cutting across party lines, had visited SC to have first-hand information on the funds required for the project.

"CJI Ramana had graciously allowed me to give an extensive presentation on the eCourts project. The parliamentary committee members heard me and gave a recommendation to govt, which on the basis of the report sanctioned an unprecedented Rs 7,000 crore budget for eCourts, which helped liberal infusion of information technology into the hearing and adjudication mechanism of the courts," he said. Apart from this, the CJI and judges of SC meet the PM and ministers during the swearing-in of the new CJI and during several official functions.

GOVERNMENT OF WEST BENGAL
E-Tender Notice for Laptop etc. repair (2nd Call)
E-tenders is invited for on spot Repair of Laptops, Printer, Refilling of Toner & supply of IT equipment etc. vide NIT No-11/2024 dt. 24.10.24 (Last date 11.11.24). For detail, please visit the website: [www.wbenders.gov.in](http://wbenders.gov.in) or www.wbhealth.gov.in Sd/- CMOH, Basirhat Health District. ICA-119381(2)/2024

GOVERNMENT OF WEST BENGAL
E-TENDER NOTICE
N.I.E.T. No. 07 of 2024-25
Executive Engineer, Electrical Division, PHE Dte. has invited an open e-Tender for "Operation and guarding of pumping machinery at different water supply scheme under Electrical Division, PHE" (1). Tender Reference No. WPHED/EE/EO/07/2024-25 (1) 20.11.2024 (iii) Details of NIT available in website: [www.wbenders.gov.in](http://wbenders.gov.in) and www.wbphed.gov.in Sd/- Executive Engineer, Electrical Division, P.H.E. Dte. ICA-119428(3)/2024

GOVERNMENT OF WEST BENGAL
NOTICE INVITING TENDER
Tender Ref. No. WBTPD/Conv. Centre/Commissioning/2024/27
Tender ID- 2024_WBIDC_764462_1
The CEO, WBTPD invites bids from experienced agencies towards providing Internet Leased Line of 500 Mbps(1:1) internet bandwidth with Cloud based DDoS Mitigation (second call) at WBTPD Office at Biswa Bangla Mela Prangan, 3 BBS Haldane avenue, Kolkata-700046. Details are available in e-tender portal (www.wbenders.gov.in) and WBIDC's website. By Order CEO, WBTPD. ICA-119384(3)/2024

GOVERNMENT OF WEST BENGAL
WRIDDD. e-NIT
On behalf of the Governor of West Bengal the Executive Engineer (A-I), Chinsurah (A-I) Division, Chinsurah, Hooghly invites e-tender for the work of "Annual preventive & routine maintenance of the electrical installation including Corridor lift of entire New Office Complex Building, Bhambani Bhawan, Alipore, Kol-700027 (for the period of 03 year)" eNIT No.-WBPPWD/EE-ECDE-NIT-23(2nd Call)/2024-25 Tender ID: 2024_WBPPWD_764679_1. Bid submission start date(online): 31.10.2024, from 01:00 P.M. Bid submission closing date (online): 12.11.2024 upto 01.00 P.M. Corrigendum if any will be published in website only. Details of N.I.Q. and Tender documents may be downloaded from: <http://wbenders.gov.in> Sd/- S.Karmakar Executive Engineer, P.W.Dte. Electrical Construction Division. ICA-119407(3)/2024

GOVERNMENT OF WEST BENGAL
WRIDDD. e-NIT
On behalf of the Governor of West Bengal the Executive Engineer (A-I), Chinsurah (A-I) Division, Chinsurah, Hooghly invites e-tender for the work of "Annual preventive & routine maintenance of the electrical installation including Corridor lift of entire New Office Complex Building, Bhambani Bhawan, Alipore, Kol-700027 (for the period of 03 year)" eNIT No.-WBPPWD/EE-ECDE-NIT-23(2nd Call)/2024-25 Tender ID: 2024_WBPPWD_764679_1. Bid submission start date(online): 31.10.2024, from 01:00 P.M. Bid submission closing date (online): 12.11.2024 upto 01.00 P.M. Corrigendum if any will be published in website only. Details of N.I.Q. and Tender documents may be downloaded from: <http://wbenders.gov.in> Sd/- S.Karmakar Executive Engineer, P.W.Dte. Electrical Construction Division. ICA-119407(3)/2024

GOVERNMENT OF WEST BENGAL
KMDA TENDER NOTICE
e-NIT No: 10/SEC/CI/IR&B/KMDA/W-28 (Part-VII) of 2024-2025 (2nd Call)
Online Bids are invited by the Superintendent Engineer, Circle-II, R&B Sector, KMDA, 7th floor, Block-A, Unnayan Bhawan, Salt Lake, Kolkata-700091, from bonafide, reliable, experienced & resourceful firms/individuals contractors, joint ventures / consortium, for the work, Name of the Work, Value of the work, Earnest Money, Time of Completion, Replacement of 12 nos. of damaged Expansion Joint at different location on Samprity Flyover. Rs.18,55,776/-, Rs.37,116/-, 120 days, Last date & time of Online Bid submission: 12.11.2024 time 14.30 hrs., for details contact the above office or visit both websites. www.kmda.wb.gov.in (KMDA-682) www.wbenders.gov.in ICA-119395(3)/2024

GOVERNMENT OF WEST BENGAL
PWD TENDER NOTICE
Executive Engineer, PWD, Malda Division, Malda Notice Inviting e-Tender for the work of - (1) Renovation of Old 5th Court to convert new POSCO Court at Malda under Malda Division, PWD (Civil + Electrical). Tender ID: 2024_WBPPWD_764383_1. Estimated Amount: Rs. 29,74,261.00 (2) construction of Office Building Samabhy Bhawan for Malda range under Malda Division, P.W.D- False Ceiling to the DRCS room, Floor tiles at Common Spaces, Officers's rooms, Stair case and compartmentalisation of different rooms under Malda Division, P.W.D. during the year 2024-2025. Tender ID: 2024_WBPPWD_764383_2. Estimated Amount: Rs. 18,94,087.00 e-NIT No. 17 of 2024-25 of the EE, PWD, Malda Division, Malda. Bid submission start date & time (online): 28.10.2024 from 11.00a.m. Bid submission closing date & time (online) : 11.11.2024 upto 04.00p.m. Corrigendum if any will be published in website only. Details of e-NIT and tender documents may be downloaded from: <http://wbenders.gov.in> Sd/- Executive Engineer, PWD Malda Division, Malda. ICA-119419(4)/2024

GOVERNMENT OF WEST BENGAL
NOTICE INVITING TENDER
Bid ref. no.- WBMSCL/NIT-626/2024; Dated-24/10/2024
INSTALLATION TESTING AND COMMISSIONING OF Fire Push Button System at CMSHD, Kolkata. Last date of submission of bid (online)- 11/11/2024 at 04:00 P.M. The tender document can be downloaded from www.wbenders.gov.in or after 25.10.2024 at 10:00 A.M. Clarification requests, if any may be sent to mit.wbmscl@gmail.com Sd/- General Manager, WBMSCL ICA-119387(2)/2024

GOVERNMENT OF WEST BENGAL
NOTICE INVITING e-TENDER
Name of the work: "Repair Maintenance & Renovation of Ground Floor with outside (full) colouring of Kishan Bhawan (Guest House) at Principal Market Yard under Nadia Zilla Regulated Market Committee e-Tender ID: 2024_WBSMB_758931_1. Tender Amount- 2234762, Vide NIT No. N2RMC/ET/SECY/08/2024-25, Dated-27.09.2024. The last date for submission of Tender is on: 25.11.2024 upto 12.00 p.m. The detail information regarding e-NIT will be available on the <http://wbenders.gov.in> Sd/- Secretary, Nadia Zilla Regulated Market Committee ICA-119370(3)/2024

GOVERNMENT OF WEST BENGAL
Tender Notice
Executive Engineer, Kolkata South-II Division, Housing Directorate, Inviting Sealed Tender for & on behalf of Governor of West Bengal, Ref: e-NIT-10 of 2024-25 of E.E. KS-II Div. Tender ID. is 2024_HSD_765062_1. Last Date of submission 20.11.2024 Up to 3.00 P.M. For details please visit wbenders.gov.in or contact in the Office of the Executive Engineer in any working day, S/D - Executive Engineer, Kolkata South-II Division, Housing Directorate. ICA-119425(3)/2024

GOVERNMENT OF WEST BENGAL
WRIDDD. e-NIT
Executive Engineer (A-M), Berhampore-1 (A-M) Division Invites e-tender for Installation of Kathalla - Arkragher Major RLI Scheme at Kathalla Mouza under Berhampore (A-M) Sub-Division under Berhampore-1 (A-M) Division in the District of Murshidabad under Core Sector-2024-25 Programme. e-NIT No: EE(A-M)/BER-1/CS/eNIT-12/24-25 Tender ID-2024_WRDO_764907_1 Last dropping date is 11.11.2024 upto 2.00 PM. Intending bidders are requested to visit the website <http://wbenders.gov.in> for details. Sd/- Executive Engineer (A-M) Berhampore-1 (A-M) Division ICA-119427(3)/2024

GOVERNMENT OF WEST BENGAL
PWD TENDER NOTICE
Executive Engineer, P.W.Dte. Electrical Construction Division invites online e-Tender for the work of "Annual preventive & routine maintenance of the electrical installation including Corridor lift of entire New Office Complex Building, Bhambani Bhawan, Alipore, Kol-700027 (for the period of 03 year)" eNIT No.-WBPPWD/EE-ECDE-NIT-23(2nd Call)/2024-25 Tender ID: 2024_WBPPWD_764679_1. Bid submission start date(online): 31.10.2024, from 01:00 P.M. Bid submission closing date (online): 12.11.2024 upto 01.00 P.M. Corrigendum if any will be published in website only. Details of N.I.Q. and Tender documents may be downloaded from: <http://wbenders.gov.in> Sd/- S.Karmakar Executive Engineer, P.W.Dte. Electrical Construction Division. ICA-119407(3)/2024

GOVERNMENT OF WEST BENGAL
SRINIKETAN SANTINIKETAN DEVELOPMENT AUTHORITY
BOLPUR, DIST. BIRBHUM.
NOTICE INVITING TENDER
NIT No. 01 of 2024-25
Online tender in two bid system is hereby invited for (1) "Development of Road with paver block from H/O Badhan Das to Adibashi para at ward no-01 under Bolpur Municipality." Estimated cost for work: Rs. 43,42,896/-, Tender ID No. 2024_SSDA_760756_1 and (2) "Development of Road with paver block at Idghah, Bhubandanga, Bolpur, Birbhum, under SSDA. Estimated cost for work: Rs. 17,84,312/-, Tender ID No. 2024_SSDA_760913_1. Bid submission start date (online): 28.10.2024 at 11 AM. Bid submission closing date (online) 14/11/2024 at 01:30 PM. Details are available visit the website <https://wbenders.gov.in> Sd/- Executive Officer, Sriniketan Santiniketan Development Authority ICA-119375(3)/2024

GOVERNMENT OF WEST BENGAL
NOTICE INVITING e-TENDER
A1. Construction of an Onion Storing Unit by Hanging Process (Capacity-40 MT) at Nowda Krishak Bazar, Dist-Murshidabad vide NIT No. WBSAMB/CEO/66/2024-25, Dated 23.10.2024 bearing Tender ID- 2024_WBSMB_764390_1. The last date for submission of Tender is on 12-11-2024 upto 12:00 Noon. A2. Construction of an Onion Storing Unit by Hanging Process (Capacity-40 MT) at Sagaridighi Krishak Bazar, Dist-Murshidabad vide NIT No. WBSAMB/CEO/67/2024-25, Dated 23-10-2024 bearing Tender ID- 2024_WBSMB_764404_1. The last date for submission of Tender is on 12.11.2024 upto 12:00 Noon. A3. Construction of an Onion Storing Unit by Hanging Process (Capacity-40 MT) at Hanskhali Krishak Bazar, Dist-Nadia vide NIT No. WBSAMB/CEO/68/2024-25, Dated 23.10.2024 bearing Tender ID- 2024_WBSMB_764417_1. The last date for submission of Tender is on 12.11.2024 upto 12:00 Noon. The detail information regarding e-NIT will be available on the <https://wbenders.gov.in> Sd/- Chief Executive Officer, West Bengal State Agricultural Marketing Board. ICA-119386(3)/2024

GOVERNMENT OF WEST BENGAL
WRIDDD. e-NIT
Executive Engineer, DPMU, WBADMIP, Purulia WRDD invites e-tender for Const. of 18 Nos. WDS in the District of Purulia under WBADMIP vide eNIT No. 12/24-25 to 38/24-25, Tender ID: 2024_WRDD_764605_1, 2024_WRDD_764605_1, 2024_WRDD_764607_1, 2024_WRDD_764610_1, 2024_WRDD_764614_1, 2024_WRDD_764617_1, 2024_WRDD_764620_1, 2024_WRDD_764623_1, 2024_WRDD_764627_1, 2024_WRDD_764633_1, 2024_WRDD_764641_1, 2024_WRDD_764658_1, 2024_WRDD_764663_1, 2024_WRDD_764673_1, 2024_WRDD_764680_1, 2024_WRDD_764683_1, 2024_WRDD_764690_1, 2024_WRDD_764697_1. Last date of bid submission is 02.12.2024, 18.00 Hours. Intending bidders are requested to visit the website <http://wbenders.gov.in> from 29.10.2024, 09.00 Hours onwards for further details. Sd/- Executive Engineer DPMU, WBADMIP ICA-119400(3)/2024

GOVERNMENT OF WEST BENGAL
NOTICE INVITING TENDER
On-line Tender is being invited by E.E. Birbhum Electrical Division, P.W.D for Annual Preventive Breakdown maintenance of complete Electrical Installation including Sub-station at Bolpur Sub-Division, Bolpur, Birbhum, During the period for 365 days, including holidays. Tender No: BIREO/114/E-NIC (1st call) of 2024-25 Tender ID-2024_WBPPWD_764751_1. Bid submission closing Date- 11.11.2024 upto 03.00pm. For more information visit <https://wbenders.gov.in> Sd/- S.K Mallick Executive Engineer, PWD Birbhum Electrical Division ICA-119409(3)/2024

GOVERNMENT OF WEST BENGAL
ABRIDGED TENDER NOTICE
Enit-14/2024-2025/EE/DWS/D/PHE DTE & Tender Publication Date- 28/10/2024 at 18:30 Hrs. Bid submission dated online on- 14/11/2024 upto 18:30 P.M. For any kind of details are available in website- wbenders.gov.in and wbphed.gov.in Sd/- Executive Engineer, Durgapur W/S Division, PHE Dte. ICA-119404(3)/2024

GOVERNMENT OF WEST BENGAL
CORRIGENDUM NOTICE
1st Corrigendum notice of the undersigned is being invited e-quotation No. 02/2024-25/EE/HHD-II from bonafide outsiders/Reputed Engineering Institution for "Condition Survey as well as Health Check-up by conducting tests in Dankuni R.O.B from 1.00kmp to 1.64kmp of T.N. Mukherjee Road under Hooghly Highway Division No.-II, in the district of Hooghly Tender ID- 2024_WBPM_764679_1. Details will be obtained from the PWD website & <https://wbenders.gov.in> and office notice board. Bid Submission end date (Online) 02.11.2024 upto 2.00p.m. Sd/- S.K. Sarkar, Executive Engineer, Hooghly Hwy. Divn.-II P.W. (Roads) Direct. ICA-119409(3)/2024

GOVERNMENT OF WEST BENGAL
NOTICE INVITING e-TENDER
A1. Construction of an Onion Storing Unit by Hanging Process (Capacity-40 MT) AT Purbasthali, Krishak Bazar at Purbasthali, Dist-Purba Brahman vide NIT No. WBSAMB/CEO/63/2024-25, Dated 22.10.2024 bearing Tender ID- 2024_WBSMB_764243_1. The last date for submission of Tender is on 12.11.2024 upto 12:00 Noon. A2. Construction of an Onion Storing Unit by Hanging Process (Capacity-40 MT) at Balagah Krishak Bazar, Dist- Hooghly vide NIT No. WBSAMB/CEO/64/2024-25, Dated 22.10.2024 bearing Tender ID- 2024_WBSMB_764255_1. The last date for submission of Tender is on 12.11.2024 upto 12:00 Noon. A3. Construction of an Onion Storing Unit by Hanging Process (Capacity-40 MT) at Kalna-II, Krishak Bazar, Dist- Purba Bardhaman vide NIT No. WBSAMB/CEO/65/2024-25, Dated 22.10.2024 bearing Tender ID- 2024_WBSMB_764264_1. The last date for submission of Tender is on 12.11.2024 upto 12:00 Noon. The detail information regarding e-NIT will be available on the <https://wbenders.gov.in> Sd/- Chief Executive Officer, West Bengal State Agricultural Marketing Board. ICA-119385(3)/2024

GOVERNMENT OF WEST BENGAL
e-TENDER NOTICE
The Director, IPGME&R, Kolkata, having its office at 244, A.J.C Bose Road, Kolkata-700020 is inviting e-tender for purchase for Different Equipment (4 types) for Department of Pulmonary Medicine (2nd call) from the bonafide bidders. Tender ID: 2024_HFW_763704_1, 2024_HFW_763689_1, 2024_HFW_763719_1, 2024_HFW_763725_1. For details log on to www.wbenders.gov.in Sd/- Director IPGME&R, Kol-20 ICA-119371(3)/2024

GOVERNMENT OF WEST BENGAL
Tender Notice
Executive Engineer, Kolkata South-I Division, Housing Directorate, Inviting Sealed Tender for & on behalf of Governor of West Bengal, Ref: e-NIT-09 of 2024-25 of E.E.KS-I Div. Tender ID. is 2024_HSD_764941_1 To 2. Last Date of submission 18.11.2024 Up to 02.00 P.M. For details please visit wbenders.gov.in or contact in the Office of the Executive Engineer in any working day, Sd/- Executive Engineer, Kolkata South-I Division, Housing Directorate. ICA-119424(3)/2024

GOVERNMENT OF WEST BENGAL
NOTICE INVITING e-TENDER
E-Tender Notice Vide Memo No-DH/HGL/36/74 Date: 25/10/2024. One E-Tender is invited by the Superintendent, Imambara District Hospital, Hooghly for the Purchase of "BIO-MEDICAL WASTE BINS FOR USE OF HOSPITAL SERVICES, publish on 25/10/2024. For Detail, Please visit the website www.wbenders.gov.in & www.wbhealth.gov.in or the Office of the Undersigned. Sd/- The Superintendent, Imambara District Hospital, Chinsurah, Hooghly. ICA-119397(3)/2024

GOVERNMENT OF WEST BENGAL
NOTICE INVITING TENDER
NIT No. SDB/AGHIL/MS AND PD/ NIT-05(e) of 2024-25
E-tender is hereby invited by the Deputy Director of Agriculture, Sundarban Development Board for the supply of 36 L capacity Battery operated Knapsack Sprayers from bonafide and resourceful organizations for distribution to the small & marginal farmers of Sundarban region of West Bengal. The documents download start date is 28.10.24 from 11:00 A.M.; last date for submission of online tender is 18.11.2024 upto 05:00 P.M. Details available at the website: <https://www.wbenders.gov.in> Sd/- Dy.D.A, Sundarban Dev. Board. ICA-119381(3)/2024

BANGALORE WATER SUPPLY AND SEWERAGE BOARD
Office of The Chief Engineer (West), 6th Floor, Cauvery Bhavan, KG Road, Bangalore-560009.
INVITATION FOR TENDER- 2nd Call (Through KPP Portal Only)
BWSSB, invites item rate e-Tenders in Two Stage Tender system from eligible contractors through KPP Portal for the following work:

Sl. No.	Name of Work	Amount Put to Tender
		EMD
No: BWSSB/EIC/CE(W)/ACE(W)-1/DCE(M)-2/TA(W)/6523/2024-25	Date: 25.10.2024	
1)	Providing and laying of various dia DI feeder main distribution pipeline to replace the existing old leaky mains to water Remco layout DMA coming under Hosahalli service station of AEEW-1-1 sub division.	Rs. 199.03 Lakhs
		Rs. 2.99 Lakhs
No: BWSSB/EIC/CE(W)/ACE(W)-1/DCE(M)-2/TA(W)/6517/2024-25	Date: 25.10.2024	
2)	Providing and laying various dia DI Water supply lines in lieu of existing CI lines in BCC layout & Gangonahalli layout DMA (part-1) coming under Chandra Layout Service Station, area of AEEW1-2 Sub Division.	Rs. 159.97 Lakhs
		Rs. 2.40 Lakhs
No: BWSSB/EIC/CE(W)/ACE(W)-1/DCE(M)-2/TA(W)/6516/2024-25	Date: 25.10.2024	
3)	Providing and laying various dia Water supply lines in lieu of existing DI lines in Cauverypura, coming under Vijayanagar OHT Service Station, area of AEEW1-2 Sub Division.	Rs. 142.70 Lakhs
		Rs. 2.15 Lakhs

For the above works Last date and time for Receipt of tenders will be on 13.11.2024 upto 16.00 hrs. The bids will be opened on: 14.11.2024 after 17.00 hrs.
Sd/- Chief Engineer (West)
The detail regarding the tender & participation in the e-procurement portal process can be obtained by logging on to <https://kppp.karnataka.gov.in>. For further details contact the below signed office during working hours.
DIPR/CP/2788/Zen/2024-25

THE GREAT FOOD FACE-OFF. WHAT'S HEALTHIER?

When it comes to choosing between everyday food items, the answer isn't always clear. Is jaggery a healthier option than sugar? Should you be reaching for Greek yogurt over traditional curd? And what about peanuts vs. cashews—which's the healthier snack?

Every Wednesday, get answers to more such thought-provoking questions and gain nutritional insights about your daily food choices in **The Times of India Health+ section** - your credible go-to source for anything to do with health and wellness. Receive a weekly round-up of in-depth articles researched by a team of experts.

To know more, visit toi.in/healthPlus

TOI HEALTH+

To get started with your copy of The Times of India, please call 1800 1200 004 or visit subscribetimesofindia.com CHANGE Begins Here
VML 5783 2024

Preserve evidence by recording fraud calls: Modi

► Continued from P 1

Be aware that no investigating agency conducts interrogations over the phone or video call. The three steps to digital security are: stop, think and act. If possible, take a screenshot or record the call. No govt agency issues threats over phone or demands money," PM Narendra Modi said.

"The fraudsters of digital arrest phone calls, at times impersonate as police, CBI, narcotics, at times RBI... using such various labels, they converse as fake officers with a lot of confidence. Many listeners of 'Mann Ki Baat' have wished that we must discuss that," Modi said. He reiterated that there was no system like digital arrest in the law and this was just a fraud, deceit and a lie. The gang of criminals and those who doing this are enemies of society, the PM added.

Modi also said the effort for an 'Aatmanirbhar Bharat' was making strides in every sector, noting that the country was exporting its defence products to over 85 countries now.

PM call to celebrate 150th birth anniv of Birsa Munda

TIMES NEWS NETWORK

New Delhi: Prime Minister Narendra Modi in his Mann Ki Baat on Sunday said the 150th birth anniversary year of 'Iron Man of India' Sardar Vallabhbhai Patel will be celebrated from Oct 31 and that of iconic tribal leader Birsa Munda from Nov 15.

"Both these great souls faced different challenges but their vision was the

Birth anniversary of Sardar Patel will be celebrated from Oct 31 and that of Birsa Munda from Nov 15

same, one that of 'unity of the country'," the PM said. He also spoke about his visit to Jharkhand's Ulihatu village, the birthplace of Birsa Munda, last year on Nov 15.

The PM said it was one of the most memorable moments of his life. "This visit had a great impact on me," he said. Since 2021, the govt has been observing Munda's birth anniversary as 'Janjatiya Gaurav Diwas'.

Modi urged people to join the 150th anniversary celebrations and share their thoughts and work related to Patel with #Sardar150, and inspirations of Dharti-Aaba Birsa Munda with #BirsaMunda150.

Interestingly, the mentions in the PM's monthly radio broadcast—Mann Ki Baat—comes at a time when Jharkhand is all set to go to polls along with Maharashtra in Nov.

The PM highlighted that in the past few years, the country has celebrated the birth anniversaries of great heroes. He recalled how special events materialised when the 150th birth anniversary of Mahatma Gandhi was celebrated. "From Times Square, New York to the smallest village in Africa, people across the world understood and lived India's message of truth and non-violence," he said.

Hoax threats hit 50 more flights, govt seeks IB help

TIMES NEWS NETWORK

New Delhi/Panaji: The deluge of anonymous online hoax threats causing turbulence in airline operations since mid-Oct continued Sunday, affecting over 50 flights operated by various carriers amid futile attempts by the govt to get social media platforms to filter such messages.

IndiGo alone received "security-related alerts" for 18 flights through the day, of which two — Pune-Jodhpur (6E 133) and Kozhikode-Dammam (6E 87) — had to be diverted to Ahmedabad and Mumbai, respectively. Vistara and Akasa were among the other airlines whose schedule was disrupted by the mandatory requirement of putting their aircraft through protocol checks. In the past 14 days, 350-odd flights have been caught in the mayhem of hoax messages, resulting in thousands of passengers being delayed and the airlines suffering financial losses running into hundreds of crores of rupees.

A Goa-Vadodara flight was diverted to Surat late Sunday evening after a bomb threat minutes before it was to land at its destination. The alert came hours before PM Narendra Modi's scheduled visit to Vadodara on Monday. As of 9.30pm Sunday, the flight was grounded at Surat.



TURBULENT TIMES

Govt has asked social media intermediaries like X and Meta to curb the misinformation and warned them of strict action if they failed to do so. "We are also taking the support of international agencies, law enforcement agencies, the Intelligence Bureau to prevent these. We are planning to bring changes to two civil aviation laws. Those who resort to these kinds of activities will be punished severely and imposed a penalty," aviation minister Rammohan Naidu said. Airlines

and passengers are in a quandary over the string of threats. "Safety and security of our customers and crew remain our highest priority. We regret any inconvenience caused to our customers and appreciate their understanding during this time," IndiGo said.

'Human bomb on plane': Man makes call to target aunt

Bareilly: A 42-year-old prisoner lodged in Bareilly's district jail allegedly hanged himself with his shoelaces inside the toilet on Saturday. Shyam Veer, a farmer from Gurgaon village in the Sirauli police station area, had been in jail since July 1 for allegedly causing injury to his friend Prashant Kumar in a drunken brawl. His wife Pushpa Devi has alleged that he was murdered. Jailor Sanjay Singh said on Sunday, "Shyam was denied bail by high court on Thursday, and he was depressed ever since."

Jail superintendent Vipin Kumar Mishra said: "For the past 23 days, he had not received any visitors from his family, even though up to nine meetings were allowed. On Saturday, he took his life by hanging himself with his shoelaces. The circumstantial evidence suggests that denial of bail may have driven him to take the extreme step."

Kin cry 'murder' as undertrial found hanging in prison toilet

Kanwardeep.Singh
@timesofindia.com

Officials of Sahar police station, where a case was registered on Friday said that the caller has been identified as the nephew of the woman. The hoax caller claimed that a woman was flying from Mumbai to Delhi and board a flight from Delhi to Uzbekistan to meet her boyfriend. The caller said: "She is carrying Rs 90 lakh and is a human bomb."

Officials of Sahar police station, where a case was registered on Friday said that the caller has been identified as the nephew of the woman. The hoax caller claimed that a woman was flying from Mumbai to Delhi and board a flight from Delhi to Uzbekistan to meet her boyfriend. The caller said: "She is carrying Rs 90 lakh and is a human bomb."

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Lankan navy arrests 12 TN fishermen

Trichy: Sri Lankan navy arrested 12 Tamil Nadu fishermen and seized their trawler on charges of poaching in Sri Lankan waters off Paruthithurai (Point Pedro) on Sunday. The fishermen, who had set out to sea from Nagapattinam district on Saturday, were taken to Sri Lanka's Kankesanthurai harbour and handed over to Mailadi fisheries inspector for legal proceedings, Coastal Security Group said. TNN

DEAR WEEKLY LOTTERY ₹1 CRORE WON BY NAGPUR RESIDENT



Smt. SMITA DIPAK

SONTAKKE FROM NAGPUR, MAHARASHTRA has won Rs. 1 Crore as first prize in Dear Weekly Lottery in the draw held on 10.07.2024. Her winning ticket number is 88D 66307. She has submitted her prize-winning ticket along with the prize claim form to Sikkim State Lotteries. "Dear Lottery has increased my financial strength by making me a Crorepati. I am in search of words to express my gratitude to Dear Lottery and to Sikkim State Lotteries. This has been an energy booster for me and to my family members at this time," said the winner.

10 hurt in stampede at Bandra Terminus amid festive rush

Manthan K Mehta, Somit Sen & Eshan Kalynikar | TNN

Mumbai: Ten people were injured, with two of them in critical condition, after a stampede broke out at Bandra Terminus in the wee hours of Sunday when scores of passengers bound for their hometowns in Uttar Pradesh for Diwali and Chhath Puja festivals attempted to board the unreserved 22921 Bandra-Gorakhpur Antyodaya Express.



Six to eight sacks of footwear and clothes were collected from the tracks after the early-morning stampede at Bandra Terminus

While the unreserved Antyodaya Express has a seating capacity of 2,037, an estimated 2,540 tickets were issued, creating heavy overcrowding on the platform. Sources from Government Railway Police (GRP) said that another Gorakhpur-bound train, delayed by 16 hours, had led some unreserved passengers to linger on the platform, further increasing crowd density to 2,500-3,000 people.

Western Railway's divisional railway manager, Nee-raj Verma, who later inspected the site, said: "Passengers tried to board the train despite closed doors, leading to this unfortunate incident." Railway Protection Force (RPF) and GRP teams acted swiftly, transferring injured passengers to Bhabha Hospital in Bandra and KEM Hospital in Parel.

According to eyewitnesses, as the unreserved 22-coach festival special train slowly approached platform number 1 from the yard around 2.45am, passengers rushed to board it, breaking queues, and creating disorder. But as the doors were still locked, many people fell between the coaches, sparking panic on the platform and

others got injured in the melee. A video of the stampede has gone viral on social media.

Six to eight sacks of footwear and clothes were collected from the tracks after the incident.

Even as Western Railway (WR) has launched an inquiry into the stampede, the Maha Vikas Aghadi (MVA) called the incident a "govt failure" to ensure smooth transportation during the

Accident claims 4 lives near Digha

Suman Mondal | TNN

Tamluk: Four persons died in an accident on National Highway 116 near Bhandarberia between Mecheda and Digha on Saturday night.



The crash killed the car's driver, a woman passenger and two cyclists on NH116 on Saturday

The incident occurred around 10.30pm when a car, with a woman passenger and a driver travelling from Ghatal to Digha, lost control near Nimtouri.

Locals said that the car collided with another vehicle, causing it to veer off course. Three cyclists were riding along the roadside when the car swerved, hitting them before crashing into a roadside tree and overturning into a canal. The impact was so intense that the car's engine flung some distance away, and parts of the vehicle were scattered across the scene.

The driver and the woman in the car died on the spot, as did two of the cyclists. The third cyclist was injured and rushed to a hospital in Tamluk. "The private car was speeding towards Digha. Suddenly, it lost control, collided with another car, and skidded

off the road. It hit three people, including Prashanta Roy and Rajendra Samanta. The car hit a tree and overturned, trapping the woman and the driver inside. The woman's body was recovered and the police took the car along with the driver's body to Tamluk Police Station," said Bholanath Ghosh, a local.

According to police, the deceased driver was identified as Bhaskar Modak from Konnagar Kayettala Maath area. His family confirmed that he had left for Digha around 6.30pm on Saturday. However, the identity of the woman remains unknown.

The dead cyclists have been identified as Prashanta Roy and Rajendra Samanta.

4 held for violence over UP Durga idol immersion

Lucknow: Uttar Pradesh police on Sunday arrested four persons in connection with violence that broke out in Maharajganj area of Bahraich during Durga idol immersion on Oct 13. Two were arrested for murder of Ram Gopal Mishra, and two others were held for arson and vandalism that occurred after Mishra was shot.

Police said a review of CCTV camera footage and intelligence gathering showed accused Maruf and Nankau were on the rooftop from where Sarfaraz allegedly opened fire at Mishra. Police detained the two near a bridge. Sarfaraz, his brother Talim, and three others, were arrested on Oct 17. In the second case, Sushil Kumar Dwivedi & Mannu were held for indulging in arson and vandalism on Oct 14. So far, police have arrested 100 people in this connection. TNN

Bullets in bag, NC MLA detained at airport

Srinagar: CISF and J&K police detained and questioned NC's Srigufwara-Bijbehara MLA Bashir Ahmad Veeri at Srinagar airport after security staff recovered two live pistol bullets from the legislator's baggage during X-ray scan on Sunday, reports Saileem Pandit.

Veeri, traveling to Jammu on an IndiGo flight, was later released after he claimed the bullets belonged to his licensed pistol, for which he produced documents.

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Punjab, Hry saw maximum groundwater depletion: Study

Ipsita.Pati@timesofindia.com

Gurgaon: Punjab and Haryana have lost a staggering 64.6 billion cubic metres of groundwater in the 17 years between 2003 to 2020, a study has found, underscoring the possible effect of urbanisation on this rapidly depleting resource. To put it into perspective, this volume of groundwater could fill around 25 million Olympic-sized swimming pools, researchers said. The study, titled 'Detection and Social Economic Attribution of Groundwater Depletion in India', was published on Oct 14 in the Hydrogeology Journal.

The paper cited other research to note that "substantial groundwater depletion" was observed in Gurgaon and Faridabad, where water-inten-



Punjab and Haryana have lost a staggering 64.6 billion cubic metres of groundwater in the 17 years between 2003 to 2020

sive paddy cultivation is minimal - indicating that much of the resource in these areas was likely because of the urban sprawl.

"Long-term implications of groundwater loss include reduced agricultural productivity and degraded soil quality. This will have societal implications for an agriculture-dominated state," Manabendra Saharia, assistant professor in the department of civil engineering at IIT-Delhi, said. Saharia is one of the co-authors of the study. Asked how Haryana could slow down this plunder, Saharia said rainwa-

ter harvesting and precision agriculture were key to recharge aquifers. Researchers relied on data from the Central Ground Water Board (CGWB), at-site inspections, satellite data and hydrological models to analyse groundwater levels across the country.

These figures were then correlated with socio-economic parameters of regions. For instance, data from India Meteorological Department (IMD) was studied to examine any change in rainfall patterns over the same period.

Based on its analysis, the paper shortlisted five hotspots with highest levels of groundwater depletion in India - Punjab and Haryana topped the list, followed by UP, West Bengal, Chhattisgarh and Kerala.

While irrigation for agriculture was a common reason for groundwater extraction in all five hotspots, other possible reasons in Punjab and Haryana include expansion of industries, population growth and urbanisation, the study noted. Data showed that

groundwater level declined 8-10% in Punjab and Haryana from 2000 to 2015. In the two states, the growth rate of factories was 69% in FY 2004-2005 and this went up to 170% in FY 2018-2019. Similarly, urbanisation growth was 10% in 2001, and this went up to 20% by 2011.

"During this decade (2001 to 2011), the level of urbanisation, i.e., percentage of urban population, has increased by 10%-20%, representing one of the highest increases in urban population across the country... In addition, groundwater demands for domestic and industrial use show a significant increase of 26%-228%. Thus, despite government interventions and no perceptible decline in precipitation, groundwater demand has accelerated leading to depletion," the study said. Other studies corroborate the paper's findings.

Groundwater levels in Gurgaon have been classified as 'overexploited' since 2013 by the Central Ground Water Authority (CGWA).

Lynched man didn't eat beef; TMC slams BJP's 'political bankruptcy'

Monotosh Chakraborty | TNN

Kolkata: Trinamool on Sunday criticised BJP's "political bankruptcy" after Haryana police stated that the meat consumed by lynched migrant



labourer Shabbir Malik was not beef. Shabbir was lynched on Aug 27 on the suspicion of consuming beef.

In party mouthpiece 'Jago Bangla', TMC argued in the editorial: "Ahead of the Haryana assembly polls, BJP used this incident to create fear among minorities. But the rioters aided by them seem to have been nailed by their own govt now. This attack on the minorities only proves BJP's political bankruptcy, an attempt to hoodwink people, something which people will teach them about appropriately." On Aug 27, Malik was called

'Haryana police's statement will not bring back my brother-in-law. My sister asks everyday why she lost her husband. Why was he killed barbarically,' asked Allauddin

to a shop to sell empty plastic bottles where he was allegedly beaten by ten accused. When some bystanders attempted to intervene, the attackers took Malik to another location and assaulted him, after which he died. Ten persons have been arrested in the case.

Badhra (Charkhi Dadri) DSP Bharat Bhushan said, "Meat sample from his shanty was taken and sent for testing in Faridabad. The report confirmed it was not beef. Soon, we will submit the challan in the court with the

report." Speaking to reporters as news broke of the discovery, Shabbir's wife Sakina questioned why her husband had to lose his life. Sakina said she was yet to receive her husband's death certificate and hence, could not join in the job offered to her by Bengal govt.

CM Mamata Banerjee had met Sakina and her two-year-old daughter and had arranged for a job for the widow. Sakina's brother Allauddin said, "Haryana police's statement will not bring back my brother-in-law. My sister asks everyday why she lost her husband. Why was he killed barbarically? I have no answer to these. My sister has been offered a job by Bengal govt as a Group D staff in BLLRO office in Basanti. But she also needs to submit her husband's death certificate and PM report for official purposes. Haryana police has not provided any such document."

FIR against 18 Tripura med college students for ragging

Manash.Gohain | timesofindia.com

New Delhi: Following complaints made by the college administration about a serious incident of ragging at the Tripura Medical College in Agartala, an FIR has been registered against 18 students and a collective fine of 10 lakh has been imposed on the accused, along with a one-year suspension from the hostels.

Additionally, the mobile phones of the students will be

monitored for six months.

The senior students have been accused of forcing juniors to shave their heads, and pressuring female students to propose to their seniors, among other things.

The victims were shown photos showing how they were to have their heads shaved. It's worth mentioning that mass head shaving has become a ritual of ragging in medical colleges across India, with reports and pictures of groups of shaven-headed students appearing

in the media every year.

In complete violation of women's rights and liberties, most female students were instructed via WhatsApp to propose to their seniors and sing songs to entertain them.

Upon conducting an internal investigation, the college found that the accused students repeatedly abused, threatened and humiliated the newly admitted MBBS students of the 2024 batch, especially ST students, forcing them to do demeaning activities through WhatsApp

messages.

The Society Against Violence in Education, an anti-ragging NGO, filed complaints with the college and the UGC anti-ragging helpline after receiving reports from the victims.

Rupesh Kumar Jha, the anti-ragging activist who led the operation from the NGO's side, said, "This should serve as an example for the entire country. Mass human rights violation cannot be allowed in our educational institutions."

After Buch row, appt of Sebi chief to pose biggest dilemma for govt

Continued from P 1

Das, a former civil servant, was given a three-year term in Dec 2018 after Urjit Patel's sudden resignation following a bitter tussle with govt.

Das was given a second term three years ago and is widely seen to have managed the financial sector well and has had a smooth relationship with the Centre, something his two predecessors could not manage.

A month after the RBI appointment, govt will be faced

with the same question on whether to continue with chief economic adviser V Anantha Nageswaran.

Given that the budget exercise kicks off in the next few weeks, govt may decide earlier if its top economist is likely to get a fresh term. The CEA provides crucial technical inputs for the budget and also authors the Economic Survey along with his colleagues in the finance ministry's economic division.

The fourth job, that of Sebi chief, is likely to pose the biggest dilemma for the govt

given the controversy around Madhabi Puri Buch, the first woman and the first from the private sector to head the regulatory agency.

Buch has faced allegations of impropriety and conflict of interest, charges she has denied, amid chatter over how civil servants are best suited to take up such regulatory assignments. In 2022, she was named Sebi chief for three years and is eligible for a fresh term. At least three of her predecessors G N Bajpai, M Damodaran and C B Bhav have had three-year stints.

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Asean countries, Gulf nations interested in acquiring BrahMos

Continued from P 1

France, in turn, is importing a lot of software and electronic equipment, a source said. The former Soviet Republic of Armenia, on its part, has inked a flurry of deals with India over the last four years for import of 'finished products' like missiles, artillery guns, rocket systems, weapon-locating radars, bullet-proof vests, and night-vision equipment as well as a wide variety of ammunition and artillery shells.

Some of these deals were inked even during Armenia's clash with Azerbaijan - which has close ties with Turkey and Pakistan - over Nagorno-Karabakh, as reported by TOI earlier. Armenia has become the first foreign customer for the indigenously-developed Akash air defence missiles, which have an interception range of 25km, while other countries like Brazil are even keen on co-production and co-development of advanced versions of the system.

"Brazil wants an inter-governmental agreement on it... talks are underway," another source said. Similarly, after India clinched the \$375-million contract in Jan 2022 for export of three BrahMos anti-ship missiles with coastal missile batteries to Phi-



Armenia is 1st foreign customer for Akash air defence missiles

lippines, other Asean countries as well as some Gulf nations are increasingly showing interest in acquiring the precision-strike missiles that India has co-developed with Russia.

India, of course, continues to remain in the strategically-vulnerable position of being the world's largest arms importer, accounting for 9.8% of the total global imports in the 2019-2023 time-frame.

The country is now progressively expanding its domestic defence-industrial base (DIB) and banning import of some weapon systems under 'Aatmanirbharta' or 'Make in India', while aggressively pushing arms exports. With India's annual defence production reaching a record high of Rs 1.2 lakh crore in 2023-24, govt has set an ambitious target of Rs 3 lakh crore by 2028-29, along with arms exports of Rs 50,000 crore.

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Kanpur gym trainer held for killing, burying woman

TIMES NEWS NETWORK

Kanpur: A gym trainer on the run since being linked to a married woman reported missing by her businessman husband was arrested Saturday and charged with murdering her four months ago and burying the body on the premises of the Officers' Club adjacent to the Kanpur district magistrate's bungalow.

Vimal Soni, absconding since June, was traced to Punjab. He had been working in a hotel there all this while.



Cops outside Officers' Club adjacent to the bungalow of Kanpur DM

a relationship with the woman. On June 24, they allegedly had a heated exchange in his car after she came to know that Vimal's marriage had been fixed. The gym trainer said he strangled her in a fit of rage and buried her body in the Officers' Club. Joint police commissioner (law and order) Harish Chander said.

DCP Shrawan Kumar said police took time confirming Vimal's coordinates because he had stopped using his phone and didn't make financial transactions through his known banking accounts and digital wallets. A few days ago, Vimal contacted his family, which gave police a whiff

of his presence in Punjab. "Multiple teams travelled to Delhi, Pune, Agra, Gwalior, and Punjab. We found out that Vimal stayed in UP's Mahoba for some time before moving to Punjab, where he got a hotel job," the DCP said. "He had minimal interaction with the hotel owner and other staff." Vimal said initially that he threw the woman's body in the Ganga, but confessed after sustained interrogation about burying her on the Officers' Club grounds on Kanpur's VIP Road. Police aim to file the chargesheet soon and expedite Vimal's trial in a fast-track court.

Man gets life for raping 14-yr-old Dalit girl; 20yrs for co-accused

Deepak Lavania
@timesofindia.com

Agra: A special Pcoo court in Agra has sentenced a man to life in prison for raping a 14-year-old Dalit girl in 2022, while a co-accused, who is suffering from HIV/AIDS which confirmed during medical tests in jail, was sentenced to 20 years. Police said the survivor "also got infected" by him. Special prosecution officer (SPO), Madhav Sharma, told TOI on Sunday: "Both

the men, Ram Sharma and the co-accused, were sentenced 20 years under Pcoo Act, and Sharma was given a life term under the SC/ST Act. The court imposed a fine of Rs 1,65,000 and Rs 1,15,000 on Sharma and the co-accused, respectively, and stated the entire amount must be paid to the survivor."

"It further ordered that a copy of the decision be sent to district legal services authority to pursue with the state govt for a compensation of Rs 5

lakh to the girl," said Sharma. While delivering the verdict, the court of additional district and sessions judge, Parvez Akhtar, observed that the kind of crime committed by the convicts against the minor "not only reveals their foul mindset but also highlights lack of humanity in them". "Such kind of crimes is not just a constraint to an individual, but creates a fear in the entire society over the safety of children," the verdict stated.

SC panel seeks permanent halt of bus service in Corbett

Shivani Azad
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Dehradun: A committee appointed by the Supreme Court has advised the permanent discontinuation of a bus service that runs along the Pakhro-Moreghatti-Kalagarh-Ramnagar forest route, traversing the core zone of the Corbett tiger reserve, to protect the area's rich biodiversity. The Central Empowered Committee (CEC) evaluated the potential impact of resuming the bus service, which has been inactive for some years.

The CEC report said, "The better and only legal option is to stop this bus service forever... the state govt may find an alternative mode of transport for the local populace to avoid their hardship." It also noted that wildlife, including endangered and threatened species, would face significant disruption from bus service.

Hyd techie trapped in 30-hr 'digital arrest' saved by call drop

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Hyderabad: A 44-year-old software professional from Hyderabad narrowly escaped from the clutches of cyber criminals Sunday, albeit after a 30-hour-long digital arrest. The ordeal that started Friday night saw the victim ride 15km from his home and check into a lodge — all the while being on video call with the perpetrators. It ended Sunday when the victim's call abruptly dropped, and he managed to reach out to cyber crime cops for help.

Initially, the IT professional received a series of suspicious text messages, which he ignored as spam. The torment began Saturday, when the victim received a call from the fraudsters who said his Aadhaar number was linked to a money laundering case. This time,

Man held for ₹3cr 'digital arrest' con

Uttarakhand STF and state cyber police arrested a 27-year-old man from Bahraich, UP, in a joint operation Sunday for allegedly defrauding a man of Rs 3 crore by placing him under "digital arrest" at the latter's house in Dehradun's Rajpur area, reports Kalyan Das. Victim had alleged that Kumar called him on May 20, claiming that security agencies had seized a parcel in his name containing drugs and passports.

the victim believed it to be genuine. The victim was on the video call even while riding to a lodge in Ameerpet as the scammers threatened him with arrest & legal trouble for his family, if he didn't obey.

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उत्तर मध्य क्षेत्र सांस्कृतिक केन्द्र, प्रयागराज द्वारा राष्ट्रीय शिल्प मेला-2024 के लिये पूर्व प्रकाशित विज्ञापन के क्रम में सूचित किया जाता है कि राष्ट्रीय शिल्प मेले की परिवर्तित तिथि दिनांक 01 से 12 दिसम्बर, 2024 होगी। अन्य नियम व शर्तें यथावत रहेंगी।
निदेशक
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SBI STRESSED ASSETS MANAGEMENT BRANCH II, KOLKATA E-AUCTION NOTICE

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Authorised Officer's Details : Name: Kumar Arun Prakash, e-mail ID : cl04_samb2kol@sbi.co.in, Mobile No. 9138052101

[See Rule 6 Proviso to Rule 8(6) & Rule 9(1)]
SALE NOTICE FOR SALE OF IMMOVABLE PROPERTIES

E-Auction Sale Notice for Sale of Immovable Assets under the Securitisation and Reconstruction of Financial Assets and Enforcement of Security Interest Act, 2002 read with see rule 6 proviso to Rule 8(6) & Rule 9(1) of the Security Interest (Enforcement) Rules, 2002

DATE & TIME OF E-AUCTION : DATE : 18.11.2024
TIME : 120 MINUTES FROM 11.00 A.M. TO 4.00 P.M. WITH UNLIMITED EXTENSIONS OF 10 MINUTES FOR EACH BID

Notice is hereby given to the public in general and in particular to the Borrower(s) and Guarantor(s) that the below described immovable properties mortgaged/charged to the Secured Creditor, the Symbiotic/Constructive possession of which has been taken by the Authorised Officer of State Bank of India, the Secured Creditor, will be sold on "As is Where is", "As is What is" and "Whatever there is" basis on 18.11.2024, for recovery of **Rs.12,02,39,280.41** (Rupees Twelve Crore Two Lakh Thirty Nine Thousand Two Hundred Eighty and Forty One paise Only) and interest from 27.09.2018 due to the secured creditor from the Borrower **Anadi Rice Mill Pvt Ltd**, having its Registered Office at Village: Lauriadam, Bamunara, P.O. Rajabasa, Jhargram Midnapore - 721513 and Corporate Office at D-303, City Centre Block - DC, Kolkata - 700064 and **Guarantors (i) Shri Anadi Duhewala Residing at Block-AD, 6/A, Salt Lake City, Tank No. 3 Sector - 1, Bidhannagar, Kolkata - 700064 (ii) Shri Shankar Prasad Duhewala, Residing at Block-AD, 6/A, Salt Lake City, Tank No. 3 Sector - 1, Bidhannagar, Kolkata - 700064 (iii) Smt Manjari Duhewala, Residing at Block-AD, 6/A, Salt Lake City, Tank No. 3 Sector - 1, Bidhannagar, Kolkata - 700064, (iv) Anadi Concrete Industries (Bricks & Block), Prop: Shri Anadi Duhewala AD-6A, Salt Lake City Sector - 1, Kolkata - 700064.**

Date & Time of Property Inspection : Date : 11.11.2024, Time : 11.00 a.m. To 4.00 p.m.

Short description of the immovable properties with known encumbrances, if any	Reserve Price	Earnest Money Deposit (EMD)
Property No. 1: 2.10 Acre of Land at Mouza-Bamunara, J.L. No. 675, Dag No. 30, 31 Khatian No. 148, 161/1, 174/2, Rajabasa, Jhargram, District - West Midnapore, West Bengal in the name of Anadi Rice Mill against Deed No. 330 of 2005.	Rs. 31,00,000.00	Rs. 3,10,000.00
Property No. 2: 2.10 Acre of Land at Mouza-Bamunara, J.L. No. 675, Dag No. 30, 31 Khatian No. 148, 174/3, Rajabasa, Jhargram, District - West Midnapore, West Bengal in the name of Anadi Concrete Industries (Bricks and Block) against Deed No. 331 of 2005.	Rs. 31,00,000.00	Rs. 3,10,000.00

Note: Both the properties will be sold together as the properties are closely adjacent.

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a) For detailed terms and conditions of the sale, please refer to the link provided in State Bank of India, the Secured Creditor's website www.sbi.co.in and specific link created for the particular e-Auction : <https://ebkraj.in>. For registration as a bidder please follow the path <https://ebkraj.in/eauction-psb> > bidder-registration.

b) Intending bidder/s should transfer his EMD amount by means of challan generated on his bidder account maintained with eKraj/PSB Alliance Pvt. Ltd. (e-mail id: support.ebkray@psballiance.com) at <https://ebkraj.in> by means of NEFT/RTGS transfer from his bank account well before the auction date.

DATE : 28.10.2024 **PLACE : KOLKATA** In case of any dispute the English version shall prevail **AUTHORISED OFFICER STATE BANK OF INDIA**

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Education TIMES

THE PATH TO EXCELLENCE

Advertorial, Education Promotional Feature

IEM Kolkata holds annual management fest

The Institute of Engineering & Management (IEM), Kolkata, held its 15th Annual Management Fest, SRJAN 2K24, organised by the MBA Department. The event featured a range of competitive activities that emphasised innovation and collaboration among participants. The fest was inaugurated by Subhrangshu Sanyal, CEO, IIMC Innovation Park, along with Preeti Sen and Bishakha Patra, Head of HR at Spectrum Filtration Pvt Ltd. Participants engaged in various events including photography, short film, logo design, debate, business meme, and business quiz.

Thanks to AI, no more burdened professors in classrooms

By taking over routine tasks, AI will allow educators to focus on fostering creativity

Divyansh.Kumar@timesofindia.com

By automating repetitive tasks and taking over mundane administrative work, Artificial Intelligence (AI) will allow educators to focus more on fostering creativity, critical thinking, and problem-solving.

In a traditional classroom, teachers deliver lectures, assist and assess students' work which often leaves little time for ideation, creative thinking and advanced learning. With AI integration, tasks such as administrative work, marking attendance, grading, and providing basic instruction can be automated. AI can assess students' understanding by conducting quizzes and help prepare them before class discussions even begin, ensuring that students are better prepared for advanced interactions.

Assess students' knowledge

In September, IIM Sambalpur introduced AI platforms that are being used to automate the initial layers of Bloom's Taxonomy, including its six forms — knowledge, comprehension, application, analysis, synthesis and evaluation. "This will be done by assessing students' knowledge through quizzes and structuring discussions around case studies. This frees up professors to focus on higher-level creative and critical thinking tasks, enhancing students' ability to apply theoretical knowledge to real-world problems," says Prof Mahadeo Jaiswal, director, IIM Sambalpur.

With AI playing a more prominent role, institutions across the globe are preparing the next generation for an AI-driven future. "This shift will empower educators to dedicate more time for in-depth discussions, research and mentorship, and personalised guidance. This will also tackle faculty shortages while improving the educational experience," adds Prof Jaiswal.

IIM Sambalpur is pioneering this transformation, with the model set to be tested soon. "We are using AI for around five out of 20 sessions by automating structured tasks such as quizzes, participation tracking, and pre-class assessments. This enables pro-



Key challenges

- **Data privacy:** Concerns about safeguarding student information during AI implementation
- **Faculty resistance:** Initial apprehension among faculty regarding AI integration
- **Student adjustment:** Students may struggle with transitioning to a structured learning environment
- **Resource allocation:** Balancing the costs associated with AI technology and training

fessors to steer discussions towards higher-order learning," he adds.

In the top US universities, AI has been handling repetitive tasks, allowing faculty to focus on more advanced learning. "Assessing the participation of 90 students can be overwhelming in traditional set-

tings, but with AI, we can ensure equitable evaluation and feedback," says Prof Jaiswal, underlining how AI will address faculty shortage. "Even the top institutions, including IIMs and IITs face a deficit of 30%-40% faculty. If AI can handle 20% of our faculty requirements, we will see a significant improvement in education quality without escalating the cost," he adds.

Implementation hurdles

Despite its benefits, implementing AI has its challenges. Data privacy is a primary concern, and IIM Sambalpur plans to collaborate with tech companies to safeguard student information. Initial apprehension among faculty members will be addressed through workshops and pilot programmes. "The technology will be introduced in a phased manner, starting with a select group of faculty members. This will allow for real-time feedback and ensure a smooth transition," Prof Jaiswal says, adding, "Notably, students accustomed to less structured learning may find the shift to a more accountable system challenging, but the goal is to enhance overall educational outcomes."

Cost factors

While AI implementation comes with associated costs, Prof Jaiswal points out that the expenses are manageable. Currently, the institution pays around \$5 per student for Harvard cases, and this increases to \$10 with the AI platform. "However, faculty cost savings during AI-driven sessions balance the overall expenditure. As the system expands, we expect the per-session cost to decrease," he says.



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Politics is the art of looking for trouble, finding it everywhere, diagnosing it incorrectly, and applying the wrong remedies

- GROUCHO MARX

West Asia & Beyond

Call it the butterfly effect on US elections - Israel strikes Iran, Musk-Putin talks & fears of oil price shocks

Tuesday week is the US presidential election. Three events over the weekend unrelated to elections may still impact voting as the Trump-Harris fight comes down to the wire. First, as expected, Israel targeted Iran's military infra. What was unusual is Israel claimed the hits, making its covert war with Iran turn overt, returning West Asia's volatility to the centre of conversation. This can impact turnout in a swing state like Michigan - home to the largest numbers of Palestinian- and Lebanese-Americans in US, who helped Biden win in 2020. But, since Oct 7 last year, there has been open discontent with Democrats' support for Israel, and Biden's failure to negotiate a ceasefire. Saturday's strike may keep anti-Trump voters home, because the weekend sharpened the anti-Harris feels too.

The second event is what didn't happen. There's alarm over escalation of conflict, but global oil prices didn't react though prices soared 9-10% after Iran had sent missiles to Israel. The new reality is US and Saudi have capacity enough to cover shortfalls from Iran's absence in the oil market. Beijing buys 90% of Iran's oil, which is around 15% of China's needs, and imports the rest from Russia, Saudi etc. But for American voters, fear of global oil price shocks impacting domestic gas prices (read inflation) is a big deal days ahead of polling.

It's said the storyline of conflicts in West Asia is 'continuity'. Saturday's strike was in tune, with Tehran playing down damage, and Tel Aviv stopping after three rounds of 'targeted, precise' attacks that spared oil/nuclear facilities - as demanded by US. Washington's control over pace of West Asia conflicts is near-absolute. It's largely true even for the Russia-Ukraine war. Take, for instance, Trump's promise to stop both wars if he's elected, regardless of his ability to do so. Fact is, next phase of both wars will depend on who takes White House.

Which brings one to the third event - WSJ's potentially explosive report of Trump's vociferous supporter Musk being in frequent contact with Putin. The report triggered a demand for an investigation from Nasa chief - Musk's SpaceX has multibillion-dollar US gov contracts - and hot denials from Kremlin. That Russia interfered in US's 2016 presidential polls to sway the election outcome is established. Musk-Putin tangos little impact the Trump voter, but can bother the non-Trump Republican. And Harris's campaign won't shy from a last-ditch effort to make something of it, especially since it's looking like who stays home might decide the vote.

Blowing In The Wind

Delhi's toxic air is killing us softly with its smog. Netas give a damn

Sunday's AQI touched 352, but Delhiites don't need to know the number - from their burning eyes, irritable throat, dry cough, wheezing, breathlessness, over 15% rise in cases of asthma, COPD and pneumonia as early as Sep, they can tell air's a killer. It is nothing new, but what doesn't cease to amaze, year after year, is the state's stilted response to air pollution.

Listing out what needs done is flogging a dead horse. Yet the state will slip into the same old ritual, flog ineffective plans that environmentalists have long said are either ineffective or have limited scope. Measures that should be year-round, such as ban on open burning and suppressing dust on roads and construction sites, and traffic management, are ignored till AQI hits a high note and All Scramble. Then courts All Rise, wagging a finger and scolding Delhi's neighbours on non-compliance, who in turn, will move some, but farm stubble, it will burn. There is no excuse for the collective failure of govts and authorities in NCR. Problem is, govts are acting like extensions of party offices - squawking at cross purposes with little commitment to their office, and near zero investment in public welfare.

Air pollution cripples productivity. An NCAER study in 2023 on economic costs of Delhi's air pollution calculated annual productivity loss to be ₹31.3bn and health expenditure at ₹4.1bn. Other studies have measured loss of life expectancy by 6.2 years for Delhi's residents. Improved public transport is the one thing entirely in Delhi gov't/LG's control. But nothing has been done to fix it. Massive surge in PM2.5 from vehicular pollution as traffic volumes explode ahead of Diwali is deliberately unseen. How to tackle Delhi's scourge? Close your eyes. Wait till it goes away some.

The safety net

It's great...and out of reach of most Indians

Anupam Srivastava



The seller greeted me warmly and welcomed me into his office. I had told him I was on the verge of turning sixty, the time in one's life when a productive asset metamorphosises overnight into a Kafkaesque creature, bearing no semblance to one's previous self.

Without social security, wealth, or medical cover, this phase of one's life is fraught with anxiety about the future for most. I needed a medical cover, a safety net to support me if I fell ill, so that my family wouldn't bear the "catastrophic expenditure" which the National Health Policy acknowledges as a major contributor to poverty.

Soothing my frayed nerves, the seller pointed out a safety net in the display window. "That's for you, it provides medical cover of ₹5L, all paid by gov't," he said, smiling.

I was transported to a state of bliss. It is human not to want to die early and prolong one's life with medical treatment when one needs it. I immediately reached out for the net, but somehow could not get to it. He explained patiently, "You will see it at a distance, always above you, until you turn seventy. After that, it will find its place below you."

Crestfallen, I pleaded that wouldn't work for most Indians as on an average Indians are expected to live less than seventy years. At sixty, their incomes dwindle, or altogether vanish. World Bank estimates there are 93m people in the 60-69 age group, and only 45m in the 70-80 age group. How many would cross over to the other side?

"You know how much it'll cost to cover people above sixty?" thundered the seller. Yes, but would that be too much for the world's fifth largest economy, which habitually spends on non-essentials? The seller looked upset. There was already a precedent, I argued. Govt-supported cover for its employees, the judiciary, and elected representatives was extremely generous. Why couldn't everyone have the same cover, like it was in most of Europe and so many other countries?

By this time, more people had entered the shop. The seller became occupied with them, showing them other exciting items. I withdrew, to find the safety net I would look at for the next ten years, if I lived that long.

Zelensky's New Peace Formula

It includes Global South, particularly India. Western military aid can defend Ukraine but not end the war. Here's Kyiv's new hybrid approach

Rudroneel.Ghosh@timesofindia.com



Reading his TOI interview closely, it was clear how Zelensky's thinking about how to end the war is evolving.

First, it appears he has accepted that while he may need US and his Western partners to defend against Russian attacks, the war cannot be ended without the support of Global South nations. He alluded to this during the interview when he accepted that sanctions against Russia have not functioned fully. In other words, Russia has been able to evade the impact of sanctions through bilateral trade with certain countries.

The problem, as Zelensky sees it, is that these countries, while voicing support for ending the war, are carrying out their trade with Russia basis economic self-interest. They cite the need for dialogue to avoid taking a position on the war. Hence, Zelensky's strategy now seems to be twofold. Call out neutrality as hidden support for Russia, and compel those who say they want to help bring peace, to walk the talk.

In the process, Zelensky is laying down parameters for dialogue to end the war. Such dialogue should stem from or closely track Ukraine's Peace Formula and Peace Summit joint communique. Talks could also be on specific points of the formula or communique, such as the return of forcibly deported Ukrainian children. This way, Zelensky feels, Ukraine can control the dialogue to its advantage.

Second, Zelensky clearly knows getting into peace negotiations right now is not to Ukraine's advantage. Despite the Kursk operation, Kyiv hasn't been able to completely halt the Russian onslaught. This is due to a combination of delayed military supplies to Ukraine from US, and plain old numerical advantage Russians have. Moscow can afford to throw bodies into the battlefield, Ukraine can't. Therefore, as Zelensky says in the interview, Ukraine has to

save its people by giving up land. Meanwhile, Putin, given his position in the Russian political system, can tolerate giving up people for land. And land is also what gives him a potential off-ramp to end the war.

To counter this disadvantage, Zelensky now has a 'Victory Plan' that includes the West offering - not granting - Nato membership to Ukraine and giving it a long-range weapons package as a deterrence against Russia. Zelensky wants it in writing that

But if he can successfully pitch Ukraine's value in a post-war European security architecture, Zelensky feels he'll have greater bargaining power at the eventual negotiating table with Russia. The last thing he wants is a frozen conflict that'll allow Moscow to restart the conflict some years down the road. European and Nato security guarantees are the best way to thwart Russia's "nefarious" designs in future.

And finally, Zelensky has come to appreciate India's strategic autonomy. Still frustrated about India-Russia defence and oil trade, he nevertheless senses New Delhi at this point may have more elbow room than Beijing to consider Ukraine's point of view. There's little strategic daylight between Beijing and Moscow. New Delhi, on the other hand, can toggle between Brics and Quad. This is why he is looking at opening a humanitarian angle for New Delhi's buy-in through the issue of the return of Ukrainian children.

Modi could ask Putin to find and return Ukrainian children to Kyiv. This'll also allow Putin to follow through voluntarily. Putin could also stick to the argument that these children were relocated to protect them from the war. It would embarrass International Criminal Court, sure, but Ukraine would get its children back. Modi, a diplomat win, and Putin, some credit.

This in turn would also be a litmus test for India in terms of how far it's willing to go to facilitate dialogue. And should there be progress on returning the children, other parleys to end the war could follow.

Zelensky knows he needs to come to the negotiating table to end the war. He knows military strength on the battlefield alone won't stop Russia. He needs a hybrid strategy that combines deterrence of Russia on the frontline and talks with Global South nations to be in a strong negotiating position. And with US elections too close to call, he is hedging his bets. Zelensky's showing a willingness to be flexible.



Chad Crowe (USA)

Method In Tel Aviv's Aggression

Israel's strike on Iran means it has had its revenge without crossing the red line set by US. Iran's been prevented from entering into direct conflict with Israel

Aydin Sezer



With limited strikes against Iran on Saturday, Israel once again implemented its so-called strategy of 'preventive war' outside its territory. Iran, Lebanon, Syria and Yemen are the battle zone for Israel to execute this strategy.

Almost three weeks have passed since Iran's attack on Israel. Iranian president Masoud Pezeshkian had said at the time, "Region's security means security of all Muslims. We don't want a war or massacre. I've emphasised our demand for security and peace. No country and no nation can prosper in the midst of war. We've been left with no choice but to respond. If Israel decides to retaliate, it'll face an even stronger response."

Pezeshkian has often repeated, "Our patience doesn't mean we're afraid." Undoubtedly, a message to the Iranian public, but also a call to build a front within the Islamic world. The new Iranian leadership is dealing with serious economic challenges but doesn't want to remain a bystander to the escalating developments in the region.

But it simply doesn't have the financial resources to maintain influence on the region. Balance between Iran's economic capacity and its foreign policy objectives is out of whack, and if conflict continues, this gap will only widen, with consequences for the current Iranian leadership's future itself.

Three developments help better understand the region, or predict developments, in reality largely unpredictable.

● While US's ceasefire plan was being negotiated, Hamas's Ismail Haniyeh, who was supportive of the ceasefire, was killed in Tehran.

● On the plan falling through, Pezeshkian later said, "We were deceived by the promise of a ceasefire by American and European leaders. It was to be in

exchange for not responding to Haniyeh's assassination." Iran had been stalled.

● Lebanese foreign minister also told CNN Hezbollah's Nasrallah and Lebanon had agreed to a ceasefire with Israel and had communicated the same to Israeli gov't, and to US and France, with Netanyahu accepting the proposal. Immediately after this agreement, Israel killed Nasrallah.

So, what really happened after Iran's attack three weeks ago? We know Netanyahu, who has the support

with US. Washington has all along cautioned Israel against striking Iran's nuclear facilities or oil infra. Indeed, Israel's revenge strikes were precisely as authorised by US - against limited military targets.

Israel kept the promise it made to US of "proportionate response", with no energy or nuclear facilities among the targets. US said it knew of Israel's plan - Tel Aviv had informed Washington.

Iran's statements were as expected. It said that its air defence systems successfully tracked and countered Israel's "aggression" but that there was some limited damage. Israel, again as expected, warned Iran that Tel Aviv would be "forced to respond" if Tehran launched fresh escalation. It was all perfectly executed.

A key priority for US was to eliminate the risk of Iran falling into Netanyahu's trap of getting forced into a direct conflict with US military in the region. In this, US succeeded. The attack was deemed inadequate by hardliners in Israel, but Israel got to strike Iran.

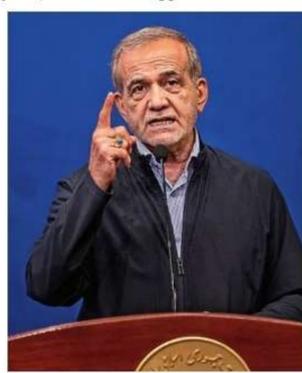
Point is, there's a massive power gap between Iran and Israel. The West is all-in for Israel, while Iran has no serious supporter. To what extent Iran can trust Russia is debatable given Moscow's relations with Israel - more than a million Russian citizens live in Israel today.

It's possible to see the scope and restraint of Saturday's attack as a success of the Biden administration. If a more comprehensive attack had been carried out, Iran's immediate response could completely change the electoral climate in US. Netanyahu's influence on the US election process needs no repetition.

In fact, Israel knows and wants to prove to its allies, especially US, that Iran is not as powerful as it's perceived to be, and that fighting organisations it supports won't lead to frightening doomsday scenarios.

Israel and its allies are exploring the possibilities of changing the region's dynamics, but one must await the results of US elections to see what shape the process will take.

The writer is a former diplomat



Calvin & Hobbes



If You Are Lonely, It's A Sign You Are Ready

James Anderson

We are never truly alone. Loneliness is perplexing and painful, but essentially it is an illusion, a mask created by the surface consciousness. Losing a 'soulmate' is unbearable if one doesn't recognise the immortal spirit residing in all. This truth is our first step away from loneliness. It is illusory because, innately, we are divine and one with everything.

If you are lonely, you stand on a bridge between two worlds: one of lack, the other plenitude. The lack creates a vacuum which will be assuaged if one adopts a conscious approach. Because of this, loneliness offers an ideal platform for the spiritual life. The Mother said: "Those who feel lonely in the world are ready for union with the Divine." Somehow, the emptiness has to be filled. Aloneness is generally regarded as

something to be avoided. It is radical to consider it an opportunity. When alone, many will search for props. Generally, these episodes are used unwisely. We indulge our senses. We drink or eat too much. We interact on social media and generate virtual relationships to blot out the void. We switch on the television to create new images and noises. The distraction is viewed as company: anything to expunge the nightmare. Anything but this silence. The prospect of sacrificing such accessories is considered unbearable.

The yearning for company is embedded in us the moment we are born. Then, gradually, we get with the social fabric and become magnets for every conditioning, so much so, we might interpret aloneness as a sign of inferiority. The herd mentality is what

we must swim against. Isolation leads to further morbidities and creates self-pity, a sign of misplaced self-love. Instead of loving for the sake of loving, we erect so many conditions. We identify the ego as ourselves. We must continuously step back and disengage from the flux in order to discover our Inner Friend and this is when we begin to expand and grow. Seize this vibration if it visits you and offer it to the Light.

In Integral Yoga, every knot is an opportunity for growth. We absorb a simple truth: do not expect anything from anyone. Otherwise,

you'll wind up hurt. Attachment only festers loneliness. It comes when we slide onto the surface, far away from our 'true home'. We can only depend on what lies inside. The surface consciousness cannot process aloneness. There is outer and inner loneliness.

Sacredspace
If the many and the One be indeed the same Reality, then it is not all modes of worship alone, but equally all modes of work...all modes of creation, which are paths of realisation. No distinction, henceforth, between sacred and secular.
Sister Nivedita





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AMID CLAIMS THAT SHE USED OZEMPIC, LIZZO WEARS HALLOWEEN COSTUME THAT SPOOFED A WEIGHT LOSS DRUG NAMED AFTER HER

'FORREST GUMP' CO-STARS TOM HANKS & ROBIN WRIGHT REUNITE AFTER 30 YEARS FOR NEW MOVIE, FIND WORKING TOGETHER 'EASY'



Israeli strike severely harmed Iran, achieved all its goals: Netanyahu

Khamenei Says Damage Must Not Be Exaggerated Or Downplayed

Jerusalem: Israel's air strikes "hit hard" Iran's defences and missile production, PM Benjamin Netanyahu said on Sunday, but Iranian supreme leader Ayatollah Ali Khamenei said the damage from Saturday's attack should not be exaggerated.

With warfare raging in Gaza and Lebanon, direct confrontation between Israel and Iran risks spiralling into a regional conflagration. But a day after the air strikes, there was no sign they would spark another round of escalation. However, heavy fighting in Lebanon between Israeli forces and Iran-backed Hezbollah, which sharply intensified over recent weeks, continued on Sunday with an Israeli air strike killing eight people in a residential block in Sidon, media said.

"The attack in Iran was precise and powerful, achieving all of its objectives," Netanyahu said, in a speech marking the official Hebrew calendar anniversary of the Hamas attack on Oct 7 last year. Israel's strikes were in retaliation for an Oct 1 attack by Iran, which fired about 200 missiles at Gaza, though most were intercepted by the country's air defences. Netanyahu said: "We kept our promise. The air force attacked Iran and hit Iran's defence capabilities and missile production." His speech was interrupted by shouting from relatives of victims of the Hamas attack in the crowd. Netanyahu stood silently for more than a minute during the ceremony, which



Police and emergency responders at the site of a truck attack in Tel Aviv

One dead, 40 injured as truck rams a bus stop near Mossad HQ in Tel Aviv

One person was killed and dozens were injured on Sunday when a truck struck a bus stop at a major intersection near Tel Aviv in central Israel in what police said was a terrorist attack. Israeli police said about 40 people were injured to varying degrees, including some seriously, and were taken to nearby hospitals. Ichilov Medical Center in Tel Aviv said one of the victims succumbed to his wounds. In addition to being near the Mossad headquarters and a military base, the bus stop is also close to a central highway junction. The attack took place around 10 am (local time), police said, noting the driver — who had Israeli citizenship — was "neutralised" by gunfire from a nearby civilian. "All investigative directions are being examined with an emphasis on the suspicion that this is a terror attack," police said. Israeli media reported that the attacker was an Israeli Arab. AGENCIES

was broadcast live. The Islamic Republic has not signalled how it will respond to Saturday's long-anticipated strikes. Iranian Prez Masoud Pezeshkian said on Sunday that Iran is not looking for war but will give an "appropriate response" to Israel's attack, according to state media. Earlier, Khamenei said Israel's calculations "should be disrupted". The attack on Iran, which killed four soldiers and caused some damage, "should neither be downplayed nor exaggerated", he said. The Iranian parliament speaker, Mohammad Baqer Qalibaf, said Iran was entitled to self-defence and its response "will be definite, in compliance with requirements".

Iran's military has not acknowledged damage at either Khojir or Parchin. Iran's mission to the UN did not immediately respond to a request for comment, nor did the Israeli military. There have been no images of damage so far released by Iran's military. AP

Sat images show damage at two secretive Iranian military bases

Dubai: An Israeli attack on Iran damaged facilities at a secretive military base southeast of Tehran that experts in the past have linked to Iran's onetime nuclear weapons programme and at another base tied to its ballistic missile programme, satellite photos analysed on Sunday by AP show.

Some of the buildings damaged sat in Iran's Parchin military base, where the International Atomic Energy Agency suspects Iran in the past conducted tests of high explosives that could trigger a nuclear weapon. Iran long has insisted its nuclear programme is peaceful, though the IAEA, Western intelligence agencies and others say Tehran had an active weapons programme up until 2003. The other damage could be seen at the nearby Khojir military base, which analysts believe hides an underground tunnel system and missile production sites.

Iran's military has not acknowledged damage at either Khojir or Parchin. Iran's mission to the UN did not immediately respond to a request for comment, nor did the Israeli military. There have been no images of damage so far released by Iran's military. AP

UNSC to meet today over Israeli strike: Diplomats

New York: The United Nations Security Council is expected to meet on Monday to discuss Israel's attack on Iran, diplomats said on Sunday. Iran's foreign minister Abbas Araghchi called on the Security Council to meet over the attack and diplomats said the council was likely to discuss the situation Monday. "Israeli regime's actions constitute a grave threat to international peace and security and further destabilise an already fragile region," Araghchi said in a letter to the 15-member council on Saturday. "Iran, in alignment with the principles enshrined in the Charter of the UN and under international law, reserves its inherent right to legal and legitimate response to these criminal attacks at the appropriate time," he wrote. REUTERS

Michelle appeals to men: 'Take our lives seriously'



Harris with Michelle Obama at a campaign rally in Michigan

Michelle Obama challenged men to support Kamala Harris' bid to be US' first female prez, warning at a rally in Michigan on Saturday that women's lives would be at risk if Donald Trump returned to the White House. The former first lady described the assault on abortion rights as the harbinger of dangerous limitations on healthcare for women.

Some men may be tempted to vote for Trump because of their anger at the slow pace of progress, Obama said, but "your rage does not exist in a vacuum." "If we don't get this election right, your wife, your daughter, your mother, we as women will become collateral damage." The rally was her first appearance on the campaign trail. "She has demonstrated that she's ready," the former first lady said. "(But) as a country, are we ready for this moment?"

Her voice vibrating with emotion, Obama spoke about the dangers of childbirth, when a split-second decision can mean the difference between life and death. "I am asking y'all from the core of my being to take our lives seriously." AP

Trump bowls a Google-y, says Pichai praised his McD sortie

Chidanand Rajghatta | TNN

Washington: MAGA megaphone Donald Trump is claiming that Google CEO Sundar Pichai called him to convey accolades on his visit to McDonald's, amid reports that big-tech CEOs and billionaires are "seeing the writing on the wall" in the prez elections and therefore folding before Trump to avoid retribution.

"I actually got a call from Sundar... the head of Google and he said, Sir, I just want to tell you what you did with McDonald's was one of the single biggest events we've ever had at Google," Trump claimed at a rally in Pennsylvania on Saturday, repeating an assertion he made hours before the Joe Rogan podcast.

Trump has previously claimed such complimentary calls from Apple's Tim Cook and Meta's Mark Zuckerberg. As with Pichai, they too have refrained from confirming or denying the calls, likely so as to not offend the tetchy ex-prez. Claiming calls from and conversations with prominent figures, including foreign heads, has long been a Trump tactic. Critics see them as fictional or self-aggrandising rendering of the exchanges since they remain unconfirmed and uncorroborated.

Trump frequently relates how he warned French Prez



TRUMP'S GIG 'A HIT': Trump said he had got a call from Google CEO Pichai, who conveyed accolades on his visit to McDonald's. He said, "It's one of the biggest things we've ever had on Google." It just hit!

Emmanuel Macron that he would impose retaliatory tariffs on French wines and champagne if France did the same to American automobile industry, forcing him to back down.

He also claims to have warned a Taliban leader, whom he refers to only by the first name 'Abdul', that he would bomb his house if US troops in Afghanistan are attacked. He once claimed, at a White House meeting with then Pakistan PM Imran Khan, that India's PM Narendra Modi asked him to mediate on the Kashmir issue, forcing New Delhi to refute the claim. Such an invitation would be a departure from New Delhi's long-standing position that it is a bilateral matter, a stand successive US ad-

ministrations have embraced. Typically, foreign leaders and business honchos do not confirm the conversation — likely so as to not offend him. But Trump's MAGA acolytes see these uncorroborated claims as proof of Trump's impending victory. "They're either all trying to keep up with Musk or they're trying to get ahead of something they see coming," Charlie Kirk, a top Trump supporter, said on X. Another Trump supporter noted: "When Fortune 500 CEOs start aligning towards the end of the election cycle, that should give everyone some indication of what's coming... these people have more skin in the game."

Trump has been unhappy with Google for some time now and has openly complained that it illegally uses a system to show only bad stories about him while featuring only good stories about Kamala Harris. He has also called for justice department prosecution of Google, failing which, he has warned he will do so "when I win the elections". Trump's claim of Pichai's outreach comes on the heels of two of America's largest dailies, Washington Post and Los Angeles Times, owned by billionaires Jeff Bezos and Patrick Soon-Shiong, respectively, spiking endorsements for Harris drafted by their editorial teams. US correspondent for TOI

Elon-gate: Musk laughs off expose on his illegal status at start of storied career

Chidanand Rajghatta | TNN

Washington: Tesla and SpaceX honcho Elon Musk is laughing off reports that he began his tech career illegally in the US after dropping out of college, even as he rails against illegal immigration, saying "it is literally easier for a serial killer to get into America than a Nobel Prize winner".

A deep dive by the US media this week into Musk's self-confessed sketchy immigration status that confirmed an illegal start to his career was picked up by Prez Biden, who told a campaign event in Pittsburgh that the wealthiest man in the world was an illegal worker after dropping out of college. "He was supposed to be in school when he came on a student visa. He wasn't in school. He was violating the law. He's

talking about all these 'illegals' coming our way," Biden said.

"So NOW he cares about illegals," Musk responded on X, with two laughter emojis. He claimed in another post on X that he was on a J-1 visa that transitioned to an H-1B. "They know this, as they have all my records. Losing the election is making them desperate," he said. Foreign students typically come to US on a J-1 visa which is then transitioned into H-1B after, which makes them eligible for work after they complete their optional training (OPT). Sometimes there is a gap between the two, rendering some students briefly "out status" if they remain in the country.

Separately, while campaigning for Trump in Pennsylvania, Musk called for "comm-

on sense immigration... quick & easy legal immigration for honest, hardworking, talented people". He wanted the responsibility for streamlining legal immigration management to be given to a competent company, "as the bureaucracy is utterly broken".

According to a Washington Post investigation, Musk arrived in the US to attend grad school at Stanford in 1995 but did not enroll in the programme he was accepted to. Instead, he began a venture-backed startup called Zip2 with his brother Kimbal, eventually selling the company for about \$300 million in 1999. The paper cited investors and the funding agreement for Zip2 that stated that the Musk brothers and an associate had 45 days to obtain legal

work status. Otherwise, the VC firm could reclaim its investment. "Their immigration status was not what it should be for them to be legally employed running a company in the US... We don't want our founder being deported," it quoted a then board member as saying.

Musk and his brother Kimbal have joked about their former illegal status in the past. "When they did fund us, they realised that we were illegal immigrants," Kimbal said in a 2013 interview. "Well..." Elon said. "Yes, we were," Kimbal said. "I'd say it was a grey area," Elon replied to audience laughter. Musk has now adopted a hardline anti-illegal immigration stance and frequently accuses Kamala Harris of allowing illegal immigrants into the US for political ends — "importing voters", as he puts it.

45 killed in Gaza as ceasefire talks resume

Cairo: Israeli military strikes killed at least 45 Palestinians across the Gaza Strip Sunday, most of them in the north of the enclave, Palestinian health officials said, as efforts to secure a ceasefire resumed in Qatar. At least 43 of those killed Sunday were in northern Gaza, where Israeli troops have returned to root out Hamas fighters who it says have regrouped there.

The directors of the CIA and Israel's Mossad intelligence agency, meanwhile, are meeting with Qatar's PM Sunday in Doha, an official briefed on the talks said. The negotiations

Egypt says it proposed 2-day Gaza ceasefire, exchange of captives

Egypt has proposed a two-day ceasefire in Gaza which would entail an exchange of four Israeli hostages for some Palestinian prisoners, Prez Abdel Fattah al-Sisi said Sunday. Speaking alongside Algerian Prez Abdelmadjid Tebboune during a presser in Cairo, Sisi also said that talks should resume within 10 days of implementing the temporary truce in efforts to reach a permanent one. REUTERS

will seek a short-term ceasefire and the release of some hostages being held by Hamas in exchange for Israel's release of Palestinian prisoners, the official said. The talks aim to get Israel and Hamas to agree to a halt in fighting for less than a month in the hope it would lead to a more permanent ceasefire. There was no immediate comment from Hamas but a Palestinian official close to the mediation effort said: "I expect Hamas would listen to the new offers, but it remains determined that any deal must end get Israeli forces out of Gaza." REUTERS

Cash-strapped Pak seeks additional 10 billion yuan loan from China: Report

Islamabad: Pakistan has requested an additional 10 billion yuan (\$1.4 billion) loan from China as the cash-strapped country has already used the existing 30 billion yuan (\$4.3 billion) Chinese trade facility. Finance minister Muhammad Aurangzeb, who met with China's vice minister of finance Liao Min on the sidelines of recent IMF and the World Bank meetings in Washington, requested the Chinese side to raise the limits under its currency swap agreement to 40 billion yuan, a statement by the finance ministry said late Saturday.

If Beijing accepts, the total facility will reach about \$5.7 billion. This is not the first time Pakistan has requested an increased debt limit. But Beijing has declined all past requests. Islamabad's latest request comes less than two weeks after China extended the current \$4.3 billion (30 billion yuan) facility for another 3 years, pushing Pakistan's debt repayment deadline to 2027. PTI

Indian dies trying to cross English Channel after small boat deflates

Paris: An Indian man about 40 years old died on Sunday morning in northern France after the inflated boat he and other migrants had boarded to cross the English Channel deflated, French authorities said in a statement.

This year is proving to be the deadliest for migrants' crossing attempts aboard small boats since numbers began surging in 2018, according to the maritime prefecture that oversees French waters in the channel. The man's

death Sunday pushed this year's tally so far to 56. Around 5.30am (local time), a group of migrants launched their small boat off the town of Tardingen, some 25km west of Calais.

The boat, which "appeared to be in very poor condition," deflated immediately after departure, the statement said. "Migrants... returned to the beach swimming but not everyone was equipped with a lifejacket." The Indian man had a car-



56 MIGRANT DEATHS SO FAR This year is proving to be the deadliest for migrants' crossing attempts aboard small boats since numbers began surging in 2018. The man's death Sunday pushed this year's tally so far to 56

diac arrest. Police gave him a cardiac massage on the beach, the statement said, but could not resuscitate him. An inquiry has been opened.

This was just one of many attempts by migrants to cross the channel since weather improved on Monday. Local authorities registered 57 attempts since then, 32 of which were stopped by law enforcement. The French coast around Calais has long been a jumping-off point for people fleeing conflict and poverty around the

world seeking to reach Britain, often via dangerous and sometimes deadly sea journeys across one of the world's busiest shipping channels.

Europe's increasingly strict asylum rules, growing xenophobia and hostile treatment of migrants are pushing many migrants north. While the United Kingdom govt has been hostile, too, many migrants have family or friends in the UK and a perception they will have more opportunities there. AP

Japan's governing coalition loses majority, poll outcome in balance

LDP Has Governed Japan For All But Four Years Since 1955

Tokyo: Japan's governing coalition lost parliamentary majority in a drubbing at Sunday's election, raising uncertainty over the make-up of the next govt and the outlook for the world's fourth-largest economy.

With all but 20 of the 465 seats accounted for, PM Shigeru Ishiba's Liberal Democratic Party (LDP), which has governed Japan for almost all of its post-war history, and junior coalition partner Komeito took 209 seats in the lower house of parliament, public broadcaster NHK reported. That was down from the 279 seats they held previously and marked the coalition's worst election result since it briefly lost power in 2009. "This election has been very tough for us," a sombre-looking Ishiba said. Komeito's Keiichi Ishii, who took over as that party's new chief last month, lost in his district. The biggest winner of the night, the main opposition Constitutional Democratic Party of Japan (CDPJ), had 143 seats so far, up from 98 previously, as



other power-sharing deals. The PM had called the snap poll immediately after being elected to head the party last month, hoping to win a public mandate for his premiership. His predecessor, Fumio Kishida, quit after his support fell due to anger over a cost of living crunch and the scandal involving unrecorded donations to lawmakers. The election also took place nine days before voters in the US — Japan's closest ally — head to the polls in another unpredictable ballot. The LDP has governed Japan for all but four years since 1955. It has held an outright majority since it returned to power in 2012 after a brief spell of opposition rule. It also lost office briefly in 1993, when a coalition of seven opposition parties formed a govt that lasted less than a year. Smaller parties, such as the Democratic Party for the People or the Japan Innovation Party, could now prove key to forming a govt. But both propose policies at odds with the LDP line. REUTERS

20 tied to Hasina's govt get crimes tribunal summonses, to face genocide charges

Ahsan Tasnim

Dhaka: Ten former ministers and two advisers from the ousted govt of Sheikh Hasina are among 20 people ordered to appear before International Crimes Tribunal (ICT) of Bangladesh on Nov 18. They face charges of alleged crimes against humanity and genocide committed during the July-Aug uprising that led to the collapse of Hasina's 15-year govt.

The political situation in Bangladesh remained tense as Hasina's Awami League prepared to confront the caretaker govt's legal and political actions, with plans to mobilise street protests against what the party called mass witch-hunting. The ICT — established in 2009 to prosecute those responsible for atrocities committed during the 1971 Liberation War — issued summonses following two petitions filed by the prosecution. The tribunal named 20 people in its order, including several prominent politi-

cians from Hasina's Awami League and allied parties.

In a statement on Facebook page Sunday, Awami League declared its plans to take to the streets "together with the people". "The people are the source of power for Awami League," it said. Confirming the party's call, organising secretary Shaiful Alam Chowdhury told Voice of America: "We are planning to demonstrate and start our political activities."

On Oct 17, the ICT had issued arrest warrants for Hasina, her son Sajeeb Wazed Joy and 45 other ex-cabinet members and senior politicians. These summonses come amid a broader crackdown on the party's brass, with the tribunal also announcing Sunday that arrest warrants were issued against 17 more people, including former Dhaka Metropolitan police commissioner Habibur Rahman. They are required to appear before the ICT on Nov 20 in connection with another case involving similar charges.

DAILY PLANET



BIRTHDAY VOYAGE: Well-wishers lined the banks of Bangkok's Chao Phraya River Sunday to watch King Maha Vajiralongkorn ride a glittering royal barge procession to mark his 72nd birthday

Third production hit amid abuse claims against Neil Gaiman

Good Omens," a series based on a novel by the author Neil Gaiman, will return for a third and final season, but it will consist of only one episode. Prime Video announced on Friday. "Good Omens" is the third production to face turmoil this year amid allegations, including claims of sexual assault, that five women have made against Gaiman relating to conduct from 1986 to 2022. The final season of the series will be truncated to one 90-minute episode, and Gaiman, who contributed to the writing of the final series, will not be working on the production, according to Amazon MGM Studios. The company didn't comment on why Gaiman, 63, will not be involved. Gaiman, who also did not respond, has previously denied any wrongdoing. Previously, the allegations have reportedly hit Disney's "The Graveyard Book" and Netflix's TV show "Dead Boy Detectives".

Thousands of KG schools shut across China: Hit hard by China's deepening demographic crisis, thousands of famed kindergartens have been closed as enrollment of children dropped sharply due to a significant decline in birth rates. In 2023, the number of kindergartens fell by 14,808 to 274,400, the annual report by the Chinese education ministry stated. It is the second consecutive annual decline. The number of children enrolled in kindergarten declined for a third consecutive year — dropping by 11.55%, or 5.35 million, last year to 40.9 million. The number of primary schools also dropped by 5,645 to 143,500 in 2023, a 3.8% fall.

Georgia's Russia-tied governing party wins in disputed election

Georgia's governing party won nearly 54.8% of the vote in Saturday's parliamentary election, the electoral commission said Sunday, as opposition parties disputed the result. It was a blow for pro-Western Georgians who had cast the election as a choice between a Russia-linked governing party and an opposition aiming to fast-track integration with Europe. Governing Georgian Dream, headed for a fourth term, will take 89 seats, with four pro-Western opposition parties receiving 61 seats in total. REUTERS

AROUND THE WORLD

Shampoo and chapati might have a common origin. The word shampoo was included in English dictionary in the 18th Century and it originated from the Hindi word champoo — later champi. This word had a Sanskrit root — chapati which meant to press, knead and soothe

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CL 1990

Sebi notice to Axis over Max Life Insurance stake

New Delhi: Sebi has issued a show cause notice to Axis Bank and its subsidiaries in a case related to stake buy in Max Life Insurance. In a regulatory filing, Axis Bank said the SCN was issued on Oct 25 through email. Axis Bank and its subsidiaries Axis Securities and Axis Capital have received an SCN through email from Sebi, it said. The SCN is being reviewed and responses will be filed with Sebi, it said. Max Financial Services also said a few directors and a few key managerial personnel of the company have received an SCN through email from Sebi. AGENCIES



Ericsson bets on network boost in India

New Delhi: Swedish telecom gear maker Ericsson expects its next phase of growth in India will be driven by network densification due to the rising data consumption appetite of end users in the country, a senior company official has said. Ericsson's MD for India Nitin Bansal said there is significant potential for growth in fixed wireless access in India. AGENCIES

Hindustan Zinc plans \$2bn investment

New Delhi: Vedanta Group firm Hindustan Zinc plans to pump in up to \$2 billion (around Rs 17,000 crore) to double its production capacity to 2 million tonnes in the next few years, its CEO Arun Misra said. The company is looking for mining partners for the same, Misra told PTI. AGENCIES

figure it out 1.2bn

young people in developing countries will reach working age over the next decade. Yet only 420mn jobs are expected to be created



Campa triggers price war in cola market

Asmita.Dey@timesofindia.com

Mumbai: Reliance is doing a Jio with Campa Cola. The brand's disruptive pricing has beverage giants PepsiCo and Coca-Cola on tenterhooks. Campa Cola has priced its 200 ml bottles at Rs 10, lower than Coca-Cola and PepsiCo's pricing of Rs 20 for 250 ml (comparison only for PET bottles as Campa has those). For almost all pack sizes, Campa Cola is offering lower rates to consumers with a differential of Rs 10-20. Coca-Cola and PepsiCo have not slashed prices of their products as of now but are deploying other tactical measures on the ground, distributors of the brands in

PCs, telecom parts largely push rise in Chinese imports

Total Imports From Neighbour Up 11% At \$47Bn In April-Aug

Sidhartha@timesofindia.com

New Delhi: The increase in imports from China may largely be attributable to influx of computers, telecom equipment and their components, with chemicals used for medicines seen to have declined.

During April-Aug, Chinese imports into India rose almost 11% to \$46.6 billion, from \$42 billion in the corresponding period last year. Within this, an increase of \$1.5 billion is on account of higher shipments of computers and machinery and another \$3.2 billion is due to more electrical machinery, electronics and telecom goods entering India, data sourced from the commerce department showed (see graphic).

According to think tank GTRI, these 10 groups accounted for 83.8% of India's imports from China and saw an average 14.7% growth during April-Aug 2024. Just three product segments — electronics, machinery and organic

TRADE DEFICIT WIDENING

Top imports from China (April-Aug)			
Figs in \$ mn	2023	2024	% change
Electrical Machinery, Electronics, Telecom	12,146	15,304	26
Machinery, Laptops, Computers	9,037	10,556	17
Organic Chemicals	5,651	5,041	-11
Plastic, Articles	2,310	2,770	20
Iron & Steel	963	1,110	15
Scientific, Medical, Surgical Instruments, Parts	961	1,091	14
Vehicles, Parts	763	865	13
Articles of Iron, Steel	832	833	0
Aluminium, Articles	612	778	27
Miscellaneous Chemical Products	714	741	4

Source: GTRI, Commerce Dept

chemicals — account for two-thirds of India's imports from its neighbour.

In April-Aug 2024, India's trade deficit with China has widened to \$40.8 billion, against \$35.7 billion a year ago, as imports went up and

exports fell 8% to \$6.3 billion. Among specific products, integrated circuits, micro-assemblies and memories grew 49% to \$3.5 billion, according to GTRI data.

Mobile components and phones as a segment saw a

surge of 63% to \$2.7 billion, with bulk of it seen to be on account of parts going into manufacture of phones in India. As a category, smartphone imports from China shrank to \$76 million during the first five months of the current fiscal year, compared with \$187 million in the year-ago period.

There was, however, no stopping of computer and laptop imports, which went up 13.5% to \$2.5 billion at a time when govt is again reviewing the import regime with an eye on domestic imports and most of the goods coming from China. Similarly, solar modules, cells and panel imports were seen to be 50% higher at \$1.1 billion.

There was good news on antibiotics, whose imports stayed flat at just over \$700 million, while lithium ion cells saw a decline of 20% to \$837 million. Electronics and medicines have been among two product segments where govt has sought to reduce reliance on Chinese imports.

FPI trades, Q2 nos to shape mkt trend

TIMES NEWS NETWORK

Mumbai: Trading activities by foreign funds, quarterly earnings by a host of blue chip companies and Waaree Energies' listing are the top factors that would drive the market in the new week.

Market players will also closely monitor crude oil price movements due to geopolitical tensions in West Asia, as well as how the rupee trades against other major currencies. The uncertainty regarding the outcome of the US presidential elections will also weigh on market sentiment, analysts and dealers said.

The week's trading would

Sensex Loses 6% In Oct

Other Factors To Impact Street
 > Crude oil price movements due to geopolitical tensions in West Asia, and rupee's trade against other major currencies
 > Uncertainty regarding outcome of the US presidential elections
 > Results of leading cos like Bharti Airtel, Adani Power, Ambuja Cements and Sun Pharma in the week

be truncated by Diwali holiday on Friday when there will be shortened, special sessions on both the BSE and NSE. So far in the month, foreign funds have net taken out nearly Rs 90,000 crore from the secondary market alone. Although domestic funds have net infused about Rs 1.1 lakh crore worth of funds, these institutions have not been able to cushion the impact of foreign funds' selloff on leading indices. As a result, the sensex and Nifty have both lost nearly 6% in Oct.

In the new week, too, foreign funds are likely to be the trend deciders. Foreign portfolio investors "are likely to continue their selling in the near-term since market sentiment has turned weak due to escalation of tensions in West Asia and the uncertainty regarding the outcome of the

US presidential elections," V K Vijayakumar, chief investment strategist at Geojit Financial Services, said.

During the week, leading companies including Bharti Airtel, Adani Power, Ambuja Cements and Sun Pharma are set to announce their July-Sept quarterly numbers. Overall quarterly results thus far have been muted, which has affected investor sentiment, market players said.

The listing of Waaree Energies — that created a new record for the number of applications at over 97 lakh — on Monday would also have an impact on trading sentiment on Dalal Street, market players said.

Rising inventory levels lead to discounts

Continued from P 1

It's not just the regular models that are on heavy sale. Some of the so-perceived blockbusters like Toyota Innova Hycross and Mahindra 3-door Thar have also come in to discounts. Hycross, which had long enjoyed a star status since its launch with a "strong hybrid" version, is now facing the heat due to the slowdown as it now comes with a discount beginning Rs 1.5 lakh, according to data compiled by research firm Jato Dynamics. The Thar 3-door is suffering after the launch of its 5-door sibling, with discounts at Rs

1.5 lakh as buyers are opting for the new variant.

Mahindra's XUV400 electric is also on heavy discount, giving a lucrative Rs 3 lakh discount to buyers. Industry analysts say discounts will get deeper post Diwali when dealers and companies will engage in "desperate measures" to clear up idle inventories.

After passing through a bumper demand period when the economy started to open up after the Covid lockdowns in 2021, the car industry has fallen on tough times this year as buyers do not appear to be excited about new purchases as they were earlier. Most of

FESTIVE CHEERS

Maruti Baleno	1.1
Honda City	1-1.3
Maruti Grand Vitara	1.1-1.4
Honda Amaze	1.2
Scorpio	1.2
Skoda Kushaq	1-1.3
VW Tiguan	1.3

Figs in ₹ Lakh

the carmakers have been moderating production and cutting on dealer dispatches as inventory levels continue to rise. These include top makers Maruti, Hyundai, Tata Motors, Honda Cars, Volkswagen, Skoda and Audi.

and the price at which they sell it to consumers.

PepsiCo, on the other hand, might push lower-priced packs into the market, a distributor of the brand said. In fact, in a recent earnings call, PepsiCo's India bottling partner Varun Beverages said that if the market situation warrants, they will come up with a range that can "fight" Campa's pricing.

"Reliance is carrying out vigorous promotional activities on the ground for Campa and aggressively trying to get distributors. They want to do the same thing they did with Jio," the distributors said. Coca-Cola and Reliance did not respond to queries while PepsiCo declined to comment.

In parts of the Eastern markets such as Kolkata, Campa is going "overboard" on marketing besides offering cost subsidies to distributors. In the East at least, Campa is targeting price-sensitive pockets to gain foothold.

"The price points of Campa are making an impact on the ground. Coca-Cola and Pepsi have lost some market share in West Bengal. Our estimates suggest that Campa has gained a 2% market share in the non-alcoholic beverage segment in the region," a Coca-Cola distributor based in the Eastern region said, adding that it needs to be seen how Campa sustains such a pricing strategy in the long run.

Swiggy trims valuation target to \$11.3bn for IPO

Cuts It From Up To \$13Bn For \$1.4Bn Offer Amid Choppy Mkts, Weak Hyundai Debut

TIMES NEWS NETWORK

Mumbai: Swiggy is targeting a valuation of \$11.3 billion for its Rs 11,327 crore (close to \$1.4 billion) initial public offering (IPO), which is set for a Nov 6 launch.

The food delivery startup has tempered down its initial target of up to \$13 billion valuation amid choppy market conditions and weak response to Hyundai India's market debut, sources told TOI.

"Had the market conditions been better, Swiggy may have looked at a valuation of \$12.5-13 billion. Besides, it's the only over \$1 billion IPO slated to be launched globally during the time of the US elections," sources said.

Swiggy will raise Rs 4,499 crore through a fresh issuance of shares, while the offer for sale component will amount to Rs 6,828 crore, sources said. Swiggy's largest shareholder Prosus,

along with other investors including Accel and Elevation Capital, are selling a portion of their stakes in the IPO. SoftBank is not selling any shares. "As a consumer compa-

value of the company between \$13.3-\$15 billion, sources said. In Oct, however, the sensex has plunged 6,434 points from its Sept 26 life-high of 85,836. Selling by foreign funds is

'Still At 10% Premium To Last Round'

> Swiggy's investors had estimated the co's fair value between \$13.3-15bn
 > But choppy market conditions, weak response to Hyundai's IPO have caused the co to temper down its initial target
 > Swiggy had last raised

\$700mn from investors in Jan 2022 at a valuation of \$10.7bn
 > The \$11.3bn valuation is still at a 10% premium to last round, sources said
 > In its Nov 6 IPO, Swiggy will raise ₹4,499cr through a fresh issue of shares and ₹6,828 cr from offer for share



ny, we want to place more on the table for retail investors. The \$11.3 billion valuation is still at a 10% premium to the last equity round," sources said. Swiggy had last raised \$700 million from investors in Jan 2022 at a valuation of \$10.7 billion.

Swiggy's investors had, in fact, estimated the fair

the main reason for the market's slide.

Swiggy's IPO is the biggest to be floated by an Indian startup after Paytm's Rs 18,300 crore IPO in 2021. Rival Zomato had raised Rs 9,375 crore through an IPO in 2021. Swiggy competes with Zomato in both the food delivery and quick commerce segments.

EEPC backs diversified mkts

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Chennai: The Engineering Exports Promotion Council has asked Indian engineering goods exporters to look at diversified markets like Africa, Latin America and CIS countries to offset slowdown in its traditional markets, the US and Europe, due to disruption in world order due to political conflicts and war.

While the US remains India's largest market for engineering exports, major destinations in the European Union are Germany, Italy and UK, which are facing a slowdown.

"While the US and Europe will continue to account for a larger share of our engineering goods exports, the focus on developing countries will enable India to export value-added products as Indian technology is best suited to these mar-

kets," Rakesh Shah, chairman (trade promotion), EEPC India told TOI.

According to him, every exporter can feel the slowdown in the European market, while the US has started going up and the industry hopes that things will be much better than now once the US elections are over.

Shah said so far, India has either been a supplier of raw material or a component or part supplier.

TOI IN THE CLASSROOM

Check These Parameters To Track Performance Of Mutual Fund Portfolio

As many as 9.7 million new investors have come to mutual funds over the last one year. These as well as existing investors are keen to track the performance of their mutual fund portfolio. Since the net asset value (NAV) is declared every working day, it is easy to track performance over both short and long periods of time.

What Matters When Looking At MF Returns?

Financial planners believe investors should not just look at returns in isolation, but should look at many other factors while evaluating performance. An important thing would be to compare rolling returns with the right schemes and peers, study expense ratio, look at statistical factors like standard deviation and beta. They should also be looking at fund manager tenure.

performance should be compared with the Nifty 50 or Nifty 100 and not with the Nifty Smallcap 250 or other mid or small-cap schemes. Similarly, returns from equity mutual funds should not be compared with fixed income or gold funds. A large-cap active fund must be compared with another peer in the same category. If the average return from the large-cap category over three years is 20% annualised and your scheme has returned 14%, it indicates your fund is not faring well. Financial planners feel a fund has performed well when it does better than its benchmark and category. If there are 10 funds in the category and the fund is amongst the bottom three, and not able to beat category average, it indicates that there are better funds out there.

Invesco Mutual Fund

An investor education and awareness initiative

For Know Your Customer (KYC) guidelines along with the documentary requirements and procedure for change of address, phone number, bank details, etc., please visit the Education and Guidance section on www.invescomutualfund.com. Investor should deal with only SEBI registered Mutual Funds, details of which can be verified under "Intermediaries/Market Infrastructure Institutions" on <https://www.sebi.gov.in/index.html>. For any grievance/complaint, please call us on 1800-209-0007 or write to us at mfservices@invesco.com. Alternatively, complaints can be registered on the SEBI SCORES Portal at <https://scores.gov.in>

Mutual Fund investments are subject to market risks, read all scheme related documents carefully.

How Important Is The Expense Ratio?

An expense ratio measures how much of a fund's assets are used for administrative expenses. While passive schemes may have a low expense ratio of 25 bps, active ones have a ratio of 1.5-2%. Investors could also look at the track record of a fund house and allow 3-5 years for an equity fund strategy to bear fruit. They must compare a fund with competition and consider quality of the fund management team, its churn, quality of stocks, and volatility.

Comparing With Peers' Returns...

The right way to look at your scheme returns is to compare it with the benchmark and peers. For example, a large-cap equity scheme's

Is Consistency In Scheme Vital?

If fund performance is unstable, or if a fund just outperforms in bull markets and underperforms in bear markets, it is better to avoid it. Sophisticated investors also look at parameters that evaluate volatility like beta and standard deviation, portfolio turnover and churn while evaluating a scheme. For example, a scheme with high volatility and churn may give returns but not suit conservative investors.

—PRASHANT MAHESH

GALLERY

Manika loses in quarters of WTT Champions

Manika Batra crashed out of the WTT Champions after a quarterfinal straight game defeat against China's Qian Tianyi in Montpellier, France. The Indian, a world No. 30, went down to Tianyi 8-11, 8-11, 10-12 in just 25 minutes on Saturday night.

India go down to Thailand: India lost to Thailand 2-3 in a high-octane clash of the AFC U-17 Asian Cup 2025 Qualifiers in Chonburi, Thailand, on Sunday. The loss means India will have to wait for the results of the other group-stage games before they know their fate regarding progression to the next round.

Vinicius favourite to bag Ballon d'Or: With neither Lionel Messi nor Cristiano Ronaldo nominated, Real Madrid winger Vinicius Junior is the favourite to be crowned the world's best player and become the first winner born this century, when the Ballon d'Or is presented at a gala ceremony in Paris on Monday. As Messi and Ronaldo reach the final stages of their careers, Vinicius, Kylian Mbappe, Erling Haaland, Jude Bellingham and Lamine Yamal make up a field of contenders who could challenge for years to come.

Mumbai, Odisha share spoils in ISL

Odisha FC and Mumbai City settled for a point each in a fast-paced 1-1 draw in their Indian Super League (ISL) match in Mumbai on Sunday. Visiting Odisha took the lead through Roy Krishna in the 14th minute but Nikolaos Karelis got the equalizer for Mumbai 9 minutes later.

India women exit with loss to Nepal: India crashed out of the SAFF Women's Championship as they lost to Nepal 2-4 in penalty shootout in the semifinal match marred by utter confusion after the home side held up play for more than one hour in protest against a decision of the referee in Kathmandu on Sunday.

Sivarajan, Sukant shine: Sivarajan Solaimalai and Sukant Kadam helped India win an impressive 24 medals at the Japan Para Badminton International on Sunday. India won six gold, nine silver and as many bronze medals in the tournament.

Sainz happy to grab sixth career pole: Carlos Sainz seized pole position for Mexico City Grand Prix with a consummate performance for Ferrari in Saturday's qualifying session, outpacing Red Bull's defending champion Max Verstappen. "I am so very happy," said Sainz after grabbing his sixth career pole position.

Bhatia wins pickleball meet: India's Armaan Bhatia clinched the men's Pro Singles title at the PWR DUPR India Masters Pickleball Championship, defeating USA's Dusty Boyer in a nail-biting final match in New Delhi on Sunday. The final scoreline was 8-11, 11-9, 11-8.

ACTION TODAY

CRICKET: Ranji Trophy, 9:30 am (Jiocinema);
TENNIS: Paris Masters, 3:30 pm (Sony Sports)

BARCA BOSS
BERNABEU

Lewandowski Double And Yamal's Record Goal Sink Real Madrid 4-0

Madrid: Robert Lewandowski scored twice and Lamine Yamal piled on to ruin Kylian Mbappe's first clasico as Barcelona routed Real Madrid 4-0.

The lopsided victory in Spain's capital ended the hosts' unbeaten run in La Liga at 42 games, one shy of Barcelona's record streak in 2017-18. Carlo Ancelotti's side suffered its first loss since Sept. 23 last year.

And what a loss it was. Lewandowski got the visitors going from a superb pass by Barcelona's latest youth talent Marc Casado in the 54th minute and rose up to head in a fine header three minutes later to silence Santiago Bernabeu Stadium.

Yamal made it a rout in the 77th when the teenage phenom rifled a shot from an angle over goalkeeper Andriy Lunin. That goal made Yamal the youngest scorer in a clasico at 17 years, 105 days, surpassing teammate Ansu Fati, who was about 250 days older in Oct 2020.

Raphinha then broke free with Madrid completely unhinged and chipped Lunin in the 84th.

The win came three days after Barcelona thumped Bayern Munich 4-1 in the Champions League. They have outscored their last five opponents 21-2.



CLASICO STATEMENT: Robert Lewandowski (left) celebrates with Lamine Yamal after scoring Barcelona's second goal against Real Madrid in Madrid on Saturday

Racist insults directed at Yamal

Madrid: Real Madrid condemned racism from some of their supporters aimed at Barcelona players including teenager Lamine Yamal and Alejandro Balde during the club's 4-0 Clasico defeat on Saturday. La Liga said they would report the incidents to Spanish authorities, while the government was also critical of the abuse.

Videos emerged on social media after the game showed 17-year-old Spain star Yamal targeted during a goal celebration after becoming the youngest Clasico scorer. Real Madrid said they had opened an investigation to identify the perpetrators. AGENCIES

It is an understatement that Mbappé had a frustrating first game against Barcelona in a white shirt.

The France star was caught eight times offside by Barcelona's synchronized back four and failed to beat second-choice goalkeeper Iñaki Peña one-on-one with his team down two goals.

Hansi Flick, meanwhile, had a night to remember in the first clasico for the Ger-

42 Real Madrid's unbeaten run in La Liga ended at 42 games, one shy of Barcelona's record streak in 2017-18. Carlo Ancelotti's side suffered its first loss since Sept 23 last year

14 Lewandowski's two goals took his tally to 14, his best in the Spanish league

man coach. After opening a six-point lead over Madrid at the top of La Liga, it is no longer a foregone conclusion that with Mbappé on board Ancelotti's side will waltz to a second straight domestic title.

Yamal upstaged Mbappé this summer when Spain beat France en route to winning the European Championship, and he did it again. To top it off, he scored with his supposedly "not as good" right foot before

Salah helps Liverpool hold Arsenal 2-2

London: A late Mohamed Salah strike helped Liverpool rally to hold Arsenal 2-2 in their Premier League match on Sunday.

An injury-hit Gunners led twice, first through Bukayo Saka and then Mikel Merino, but goals from Virgil van Dijk and then Salah ensured that Liverpool left London with a point.

The result has left Liverpool second on 22 points, one behind Manchester City. Arsenal are third on 18.

United concede late penalty in loss at West Ham: Manchester United missed an open goal and conceded in stoppage time to lose 1-2 at West Ham in the Premier League, piling more pressure on manager Erik ten Hag on Sunday.



RESCUING A POINT: Mohamed Salah (right) scores Liverpool's second goal against Arsenal in London on Sunday

A fourth defeat in nine league games left United languishing in 14th place in the 20-team standings.

Jarrold Bowen converted a highly disputed penalty in the second minute of added-on time after a foul by Matthijs de Ligt as United counted the cost of a string of wasted chances, notably when Diogo Dalot sidestepped over when faced with an empty net in the first half.

If that was surely the miss of the season so far, Cole Palmer might have delivered the pass of the season in Chelsea's 2-1 win over Newcastle.

Palmer provided more glimpses of his outrageous talent by scoring the winner after helping to set up the opener, by Nicolas Jackson, with a stunning through ball.

Facing his goal inside his own half, the 22-year-old Eng-

land playmaker span round and curled a 50-metre pass behind Newcastle's defence toward Pedro Neto, who set up Jackson in the 18th minute.

Alexander Isak equalized but Palmer drove home his seventh goal of the season in the 47th to secure the victory for Chelsea at Stamford Bridge.

Crystal Palace finally claimed their first league win of the season by beating Tottenham 1-0 thanks to Jean-Philippe Mateta's goal. AGENCIES

SUNDAY'S EPL RESULTS — Chelsea 2 (Jackson 18, Palmer 47) Newcastle 1 (Isak 32); Crystal Palace 1 (Mateta 30) Tottenham 0; West Ham 2 (Summerville 74, Bowen 90+2-pen) Manchester United 1 (Casemiro 81); Arsenal 2 (Saka 9, Merino 43) Liverpool 2 (Van Dijk 18, Salah 81).

Young wins title; amateur Mannat is India's best

V Krishnaswamy

Gurugram: Four days after turning 42, Liz Young celebrated it by finally winning the Hero Women's Indian Open on her ninth visit to India. Young showed great mental strength and played one of the steadiest rounds when it mattered the most.

With just one birdie and one bogey, which came after a trip into the water on the 18th, Young carded 72 after 74-73-67 on the first three days to finish at 2-under total at the demanding DLF Golf and Country Club.

It was the second lowest winning score since the event joined the Ladies European Tour.

Singapore's Shannon Tan, France's Agathe Sauzon, Kiwi Momoka Kobori and Belgium's Manon De Roey tied for second at 1-under.

For India, the standout performance came via the talented amateur Mannat Brar, who closed the week with her best round of the week at 2-under 70 to finish at tied 11th.

DYF is class apart

Khainin Haidermota

Kolkata: The Golconda St. Leger Gr-I to be contested over 2800 metres seems to be at the mercy of Adhirajasingh-saddled DYF at Malakpet on Monday. The grey is well served by the terms of the race and should give his rider Trevor Patel a walk in the park. Trevalius, who is running good races, is likely to take the second spot.

HYDERABAD SELECTIONS 12.50pm: 1. Lifes Journey 2. Bellingham 3. Ambitious Star. **1.20pm:** 1. Mark My Day 2. True Icon 3. Sweet Dancer. **1.55pm:** 1. The Pious

RACING CORNER

2. Nkalanzi 3. Glimmer Of Hope. **2.30pm:** 1. Detective 2. Desert Hero 3. Trishul. **3.05pm:** 1. Wandering Warrior 2. Quality Warrior 3. Master Touch. **3.40pm:** 1. Juramento 2. Devils Magic 3. Amiya. **4.15pm:** 1. DYF 2. Trevalius 3. Truth. **4.50pm:** 1. Grey Sky 2. Battle On 3. Silver Arrow. **Day's Best:** Lifes Journey, Good Double: The Pious and DYF.

Mandarino wins a thriller: Irfan Ghatala-trained Mandarino won a thriller of a race in the Mysore Derby Grade-I at Mysuru on Sunday. The son of Mandara was ridden by L Alex Rozario.

MYSURU SHORT RESULTS (WITH INTER-VENUE DIVIDENDS)

1: (3-10-4) The Grey
Geranium 1; Baltimore 2; Rising Sun 3. **2:** (5-2-4) Southern Force 1; Heroism 2; Blue Origin 3. **3:** (9-6-7) Free To Play 1; Dynamic Force 2; Natural One 3. **4:** (4-7-6) Czar 1; Vijaya Falcon 2; Brave Trooper 3. **5:** (1-2-4) Shamrock 1; O Hansini 2; Shubankar 3. **6:** (5-3-6) Mandarino 1; Bourbonaire 2; The Leader 3. **7:** (5-3-11) Mystikos 1; Tiger King 2; Force Of Nature 3. **8:** (3-5-1) Silver Days Again 1; Chisox 2; Extraordinary 3. **Jackpot:** Rs 16,108 (c) 634. **Mini Jackpot:** Rs 22,447. **Treble:** (I) Rs 612 (II) Rs 244 (III) Rs 4,788.

TIMES NATION

Every single grain of paddy to be procured, says Centre

New Delhi: Despite being at daggers drawn, BJP-led Centre and AAP govt in Punjab have now found themselves on the same side, trying to solve a tricky problem, and the Centre has pulled out all stops to help the Bhagwant Mann govt come out of a paddy procurement muddle, reports Dipak Dash.

Food minister Pralhad Joshi dismissed "rumours" of storage paucity impacting paddy procurement in Punjab and said the Centre would procure "every single grain of paddy" in the state. Govt also indicated that there would not be any state-specific relaxation in paddy procurement norms, saying any tweak would be applicable uniformly across states.

Joshi held a press conference on Sunday, days after his meeting with Mann where he had assured the CM to buy the targeted quantity of paddy from farmers. On the slowdown in paddy procurement, Joshi said it was because of high moisture content in grain due to rains in Sept, just before harvesting. "Rumours are being spread. I want to clearly state that creating space is our (central govt's) responsibility and we will take care of that. Currently, there is 14 lakh tonnes storage capacity in Punjab and this will increase to 16 lakh tonnes by Nov 1," Joshi said.

Rice millers in Punjab have been demanding relaxation in Out of Turn Ratio (OTR) norm, which is paddy to rice conversion, citing that PR-126 paddy variety has been giving 4.5% lower OTR. Joshi said the variety grown was in use in Punjab since 2016 and "there had never been any such issues reported previously".

"OTR norms prescribed by the Centre are uniform across India and are agnostic of the seed variety. Procurement nationwide is primarily based on uniform specifications, commonly called Fair Average Quality (FAQ)," the food ministry said.

₹72L/yr rare-disease drug can be made for ₹3k/yr, HC told

Expert: India Must OK Local Production

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A drug to treat Spinal Muscular Atrophy (SMA) that costs about Rs 72 lakh per patient per year because of patent protection and absence of local production could be produced for as little as Rs 3,000 per year if India would allow local manufacture. This opinion from a drug costing expert was part of an affidavit filed by a 24-year-old SMA patient in Kerala high court.

Dr Melissa Barber of Yale University, who has worked as a consultant for WHO, World Bank and Médecins Sans Frontières (MSF) and has specialised in developing and refining methods for estimating the cost of production of medicines, conducted a cost analysis for risdiplam on the request of the petitioner. "Even a markup of 1,000% (unit price \$12.83 per



This opinion from a drug costing expert was part of an affidavit filed by a 24-year-old SMA patient in Kerala High Court

60mg/80mL vial) would result in a 99% decrease relative to current prices in the United States (\$11.70 per vial)," stated Dr Barber on the price of active pharmaceutical ingredient (API) required for making risdiplam.

In her submission to the court, Dr Barber pointed out that risdiplam was the preferred treatment for SMA in many health systems contexts for both cost and ease of administration. It can be administered orally by family members, while other

SMA treatments require infusion or injections using lumbar punctures, she added. "Risdiplam is a small-molecule medicine, with less complex manufacture than other treatments for SMA. Production in small volumes is both feasible and cost-effective," she stated. The costing Dr Barber submitted to the court included costs of materials (active pharmaceutical ingredient, excipients, vial), formulation and secondary packaging costs, a 20% mark-up, and tax on profit.

While the health ministry affidavit filed in Sept stated that financial assistance for patients with rare diseases has been increased from Rs 20 lakh to Rs 50 lakh, the petitioner pointed out that it would not be adequate unless indigenous production was made possible. The ministry stated that a digital platform for crowdfunding has been started to facilitate donors to contribute to the treatment costs of patients with rare diseases. The petitioner's affidavit pointed out that the digital platform has been a non-starter with just Rs 3.5 lakh collected through it when the number

of patients registered as of Oct 14, was 2,340. Her affidavit pointed out that the ministry did not respond to the court's specific query about how the supply of medicines for the patients could be continued, considering that financial assistance and crowdfunding were insufficient. The ministry merely stated that the department of health research was set to launch a programme developing 12 indigenous drugs for rare diseases without stating whether these 12 drugs included risdiplam.

National Rare Diseases Committee was constituted through an order in May 2023 for implementing National Policy for Rare Diseases, 2021. The ministry response stated that the short-term goal of the committee is to look after procurement of drugs, while the mid-term goal is indigenisation of drugs.

However, there were no details regarding what steps it had taken for creating a conducive environment for indigenous manufacture of drugs for rare diseases at affordable prices as stated in the policy, the petitioner's affidavit stated.

Rat-trap manufacturers move Bombay HC against 'illegal' ban on glue boards

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Mumbai: Rat trap manufacturers, feeling stuck by notifications calling for a ban on glue boards, have petitioned Bombay high court to have them quashed.

The circulars, first issued in Aug 2011 and in Nov 2020 by Animal Welfare Board of India (AWBI), are "illegal and arbitrary" and have infringed their legal and various fundamental rights, the pest control companies have contended. AWBI said glue traps are

inhumane and contrary to provisions of Prevention of Cruelty to Animals Act.

The rodent control companies claim the use of glue traps in India provides a non-poisonous and pesticide-free solution to stem infestation. The 2011 circular was advisory in nature, they said, and the state govt did not issue any ban then. But in 2020, AWBI secretary issued a letter to all states and the Directorate General of Foreign Trade, Delhi, to take steps to impose a ban on manufacture and import of glue traps, according to the

petition filed by pest control companies. Last Sept, Glue Boards Manufacturers Association said it learned from news articles that a ban was imposed, but the petition filed in May and registered in July 2024 said no official circular has been made available.

It argued that no legal provision exists to segregate humane and non-humane ways to measure cruelty inflicted on rodents to justify a ban. They contend that as manufacturers of rat glue traps used widely to prevent health hazards caused by

millions of rats that infest the country, the circulars are unlawfully issued.

Glue traps are "mandated in several industries", says the petition, including the hotel and restaurant business, Indian Air Force, Indian Railways, and Indian Space, Information Technology and Research Organization, which regularly issue tenders for their purchase. The traps set out how to release the trapped rat with vegetable oil, said manufacturers from Goa, Mumbai, and four other pest control firms that filed the petition.

Shell carrying cake that defined Boer War truce adorns MP museum

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Nagpur: When Boers in South Africa were at war with the British and laid siege to the garrison town of Ladysmith in 1899, there was an unexpected gesture from the Dutch-speaking raiders who were waiting in ambush.

An artillery shell flew from the Boer side into the town on Dec 27, but it wasn't mounted with a fuse to trigger an explosion, but with a plum cake and "Christmas Greetings" painted on it. The artillery shell which defined truce, now lies 7,500km off the Ladysmith battlefield, at Jabalpur, unknown to many. The Indian Army continues with the British tradition of holding the annual Ladysmith competition to mark the siege and end to Boer hostilities in the South African town.

Last week, a competition was held at the Army's central ammunition depot (CAD) in Pulgaon, 100km off Nagpur, and the home team bagged the medal, keeping alive the 125-year-old colonial ritual. The event also foregrounded the La-



DELICIOUS PIECE OF HISTORY

dysmith story. "The shell was brought to India by Major Mohan and presented as the Ladysmith trophy for a firing competition among ordnance units. This is the original one and its replica is used as a rolling trophy for firing competitions conducted every year," reads another note shared by the CAD Commandant, Brigadier Kaushlesh Panghal, after sourcing details from Army Ordnance Corps (AOC) Museum at Jabalpur, where the shell is kept for the past eight

decades. Major Mohan brought the military relic to India from South Africa when artefacts were being collected from across the globe during British rule to build a museum at Jabalpur, said an AOC officer. Entry to the museum is restricted. The same museum has the American Gatling Gun — the oldest machine gun and the only surviving operational piece.

The US ambassador had once offered a blank cheque to get it back, only to be politely refused by India. TOI traced the history of the shell and the Ladysmith firing competition after the Pulgaon event on Oct 20 and 21. Since it landed at the ordnance field park, it turned into an annual celebration among the Royal Army Ordnance Corps of the British army. After independence, the AOC — which manages supply of ammunition to fighting units — holds an annual competition among its units.

A replica is mounted on a teak pedestal, on which a Union Jack has been framed with names of earlier winners etched on it, says the AOC note.

16-yr-old ambushed, stabbed & shot dead in Delhi by juveniles; 5 held

TIMES NEWS NETWORK

New Delhi: A 16-year-old boy was chased, stabbed and shot dead, and his friend was injured after four boys allegedly fired at them in Kishangarh.

An inquiry revealed that a few days earlier, the boy allegedly had an altercation with one of his suspected attackers and had slapped him.

A person with a criminal background, Sanjay Mehlawat, who was known to the boy who was slapped allegedly plotted to kill the 16-year-old. Mehlawat was arrested, and four juveniles were apprehended. Mehlawat (38) was previously allegedly involved in a case of attempted murder and Arms Act, 2019. The case against him is registered at Vasant Kunj North PS. The four juveniles, aged about 17 years and residents of Meh-

raul, are also identified as suspects in last Friday's case.

At 5.45 pm on Friday, police got a PCR call regarding the stabbing of two boys at Gausala village in Kishangarh. Upon arrival, officers found blood at the scene and an empty 7.65mm bullet casing. Local

KILLED OVER SLAP?

enquiries revealed that two injured boys were taken to Safdarjung Hospital, where they were identified as Saurabh Yadav, 18, and a 16-year-old boy who was declared dead on arrival. Saurabh told police that he was visiting his grandmother in Kishangarh where he met his friends — Kunal, Uday, and Tushtar.

They went for a ride on two scooters, reaching Gausala at 5pm, where the armed boys

ambushed them. One attacker fired a bullet that struck Saurabh in the back, causing him to fall. The attackers then chased and stabbed his friend multiple times before fleeing.

A probe has revealed that the attackers were juveniles acting on the instructions from Mehlawat, a Kishangarh resident known to the boys.

According to the uncle of the deceased boy, his nephew went to the gaushala (cow shelter) with friends to feed cows when the crime happened. "They shot my nephew and injured his friend," he said. Around six to seven rounds were fired, and the boy was stabbed half a dozen times, the uncle said. Asked about the motive, the uncle said that one of the attackers tried to recruit his nephew into illegal activities, but he refused.

ETHIOPIA'S YOMIF KEJELCHA CLOCKS 57MIN 30SEC TO BREAK WORLD HALF MARATHON RECORD IN VALENCIA

CHINA'S QINWEN ZHENG DEFEATS AMERICAN SOFIA KENIN TO WIN IN TOKYO, CLINCHES WTA FINALS BERTH

A SOBERING LOSS & SOME HARD LESSONS

India's Failures In Bengaluru And Pune Were A Result Of Failing To Understand The Grammar Of Test Match Batting

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Pune: When Rohit Sharma said he doesn't want to be too critical of his players after seeing India's invincibility at home end against New Zealand after 12 years and 18 series in Pune on Saturday, he may have had a point.

A close look of this Test team in all conditions reveals a few serious shortcomings. Crucially, the commitment of the players and the stars to domestic multi-day cricket must be questioned.

It starts with the batters appearing in no position to either hone or polish their defensive techniques or increase their ability to bat for long periods of time. Not just because they play a very high percentage of white-ball cricket where explosiveness is rewarded more than balance, technique and patience, the busy international calendar and star culture also means they hardly get to play domestic first-class cricket.

Rohit Sharma and Virat Kohli have not played a first-class game this season. All other pure batters in the team picked for the Test series against NZ, had played at least a game — either in the Duleep Trophy or Ranji Trophy.

The reason behind Rohit and Virat not playing any first-class game, be it either citing fitness worries or workload management, could be genuine and may have been recommended too by the medical team and team management. But not spending time in the middle, under the sun and in competitive environment can lead to failures. The runs, or lack of runs, in domestic cricket can help a player and his team to understand where he stands in terms of form and match-readiness.

When Washington Sundar made a dramatic Test comeback on the first day of the Pune game, all experts were united in their opinion: He was ready after playing against Delhi only a few days ago.

Besides Sundar, left-arm wrist spinner Kuldeep Yadav also played a domestic First-Class game despite his chronic groin issue. And so did Rishabh Pant, Sarfaraz Khan, KL

Rahul, Yashasvi Jaiswal, Shubman Gill, Akash Deep, Dhruv Jurel and Axar Patel.

Like Rohit and Virat, even Ravindra Jadeja, R Ashwin, Jasprit Bumrah and Mohd Siraj did not play a domestic First-Class game before the Bangladesh series or before the first Test against NZ in Bengaluru.

Rohit himself confessed that his reading of the pitch on the first day in Bengaluru was incorrect. The Pune pitch seemed to have slightly stumped him too as he took pacers Jasprit Bumrah and Akash Deep out of the game in the second innings. The talk of playing five specialist bowlers in Indian conditions never rang so hollow.

The Indian skipper with the hitherto Midas touch felt that there have been only two batting collapses, and the team should be allowed concessions after doing so well over the years at home.

It would be good to remember that India were all out for 145 (vs England, Ahmedabad 2021) and 109 & 163 (vs Australia, Indore 2023) too. While a completely doctored pitch ensured that the Ahmedabad game got over within two days, the crushing Indore defeat had seen Rohit winning the toss and opting to bat first.

When India won the 2020-21 Test series in Australia, Rohit Sharma missed the first two Tests and KL Rahul came back after missing the first Test due to injury. Virat too played just the Adelaide Test (all out 36); the game India lost.

Now, the troika is expected to provide calming influence on India's batting Down Under which seems a tall ask. Especially going by the form and manner of dismissals of Rohit and Virat in the longest form of the game.

To their credit, Rohit or coach Gautam Gambhir have not given the impression that they have not accepted the team's shortcomings — patience, technique, handling pressure and failure to bat out sessions consistently. Hence there is still optimism — for both the Border-Gavaskar Trophy Down Under and WTC qualification.

CLASS OF 2008

India had scored 387-4 for their most remarkable successful Test chase in recent years against England in Chennai in 2008. The target of 359 in Pune was similar. Virinder Sehwag (83) had given India a blazing start in Chennai.

Yashavi Jaiswal played a similar role in Pune with an attacking 77. But Rohit Sharma (8), Virat Kohli (17) and Rishabh Pant (0) failed to essay the kind of roles played by Gautam Gambhir (66*), Sachin Tendulkar (103*) and Yuvraj (85*) from the class of 2008.

SHORT TESTS A NORM

It was the third Test at the Gahunje stadium and none have gone into the fifth day. India added five more new Test centres, besides Pune, in recent years. They are Rajkot, Indore, Ranchi, Visakhapatnam and Dharamshala. These other five

centres have hosted a combined 14 Tests with three lasting five days, seven four days and four three days. So, Tests ending early is an overall norm. The preceding Test in Bengaluru also lasted only four days with the first day being washed out. **TNN**

SHASTRI BACKS GAMBHIR AFTER SERIES DEFEAT TO NZ

Pune: Former India head coach Ravi Shastri came out in support of the current Indian head coach Gautam Gambhir after the side conceded the ongoing Test series to New Zealand. India, captained by Rohit Sharma, marking their first Test series loss at home in 12 years. Shastri explained that since Gautam Gambhir is in the early phase of his coaching stint.

Indian batters collapsed against the Kiwi spin attack led by Mitchell Santner, who took 13 wickets as New Zealand defeated India by 113 runs to secure the series 2-0 with a game to go. "New Zealand have beaten them (India) handsomely in both the Test matches. It's food for thought (on series loss). He (Gambhir) has just taken over the job. It is never easy being coach of a team that has such a big following. It is still early days in his career as a coach. But he'll soon learn," Shastri said on commentary during the second Test in Pune. **ANI**

SANTNER EXPOSED INDIAN BATTERS' TECHNIQUES: DOULL

Pune: Former New Zealand pacer Simon Doull attributed India's shocking series defeat to their batsmen's inadequacies against spin bowling but he was not ready to write off underwhelming star batter Virat Kohli.

"There's a misconception that Indian players are better players of spin. I think they've had better spinners and they've been able to expose the opposition batters. But in this Test (at Pune), their batters were exposed a little bit by a very, very good performance from Mitchell Santner," Doull told **PTI Videos**.

"I think you get used to playing on such good wickets. And when it does turn, techniques get exposed. For a long time, when India played on turning surfaces, they still had the best spinners in the world in Jadeja and Ashwin. So, they've been able to undo other sides. In this Test, they were undone by a New Zealand side that, with all due respect, is not a world-class spin attack," he added. **PTI**

TURNERS HAVE AFFECTED INDIAN BATTERS' CONFIDENCE: BHAIJI

New Delhi: India's star batters have lost a lot of confidence over the years by playing on rank turners, feels former off-spinner Harbhajan Singh.

"If you have had great record at home for so long and if you lose, obviously there will be chatter. It was a tailor-made condition for spinners where ball was supposed to turn from first hour," Harbhajan told **PTI** in an interaction. The man who played in over 100 Tests stressed the reasons for the batting woes.

"Look at the trend during last decades. We are playing mostly on turners through the last decade with the hope that we will win the toss, score 300 and control the game," he added.

"Our batters have lost a lot of confidence playing on these tracks. The biggest example is Ajinkya Rahane, a fine player. His career suffered because of these kind of surfaces," Harbhajan said. **PTI**

EX-CHEPAUK CURATOR PARTHASARATHY DEAD

TIMES NEWS NETWORK

Chennai: Renowned curator K Parthasarathy, who was in charge of the pitches and outfield at the MA Chidambaram Stadium for a long time, passed away in Chennai on Sunday. He was 71 years old and is survived by his wife and daughter. Parthasarathy served the Tamil Nadu Cricket Association (TNCA) from 1972 to 2013 in a career spanning nearly four decades. He prepared surfaces for some of the iconic matches at Chepauk and was also involved in the famous India-Australia tied Test in 1986.

Parthasarathy earned accolades from players and coaches for dishing out "lively"

pitches, which offered good balance between bat and ball. Former Tamil Nadu spinner Sunil Subramaniam said that Parthasarathy, fondly referred to as 'Pacha' in the local cricket circles, had the knack of delivering tracks that offered good bounce.

"I learnt a lot from him. He prepared pitches that generated good bounce and he had his own way of doing it. He certainly knew how to make a bouncy track. I feel lucky that we bowled at a time when Chepauk had reasonable bounce," Subramaniam told **TOI**.

Parthasarathy was in charge of the pitches for the India-Australia Tests in 1998 and 2001 and the long-format match between India and England in 2008, when the hosts achieved the highest successful fourth-innings chase in Test history.

Bates, Devine shine as NZ level series

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Ahmedabad: New Zealand head coach Ben Sawyer had talked about the need for partnerships, which was missing from their batting performance in the opening ODI. On Sunday in the second ODI here, New Zealand women delivered on his talk. Senior batters Suzie Bates (58 off 70b; 8x4) and Sophie Devine (79 off 86b; 7x4, 1x6) led with big knocks

2ND ODI VS INDIA

while Bates' fellow opener Georgia Plimmer (41 off 63b; 6x4, 1x6) and middle-order batter Maddy Green (42 off 41b; 5x4) chipped in with meaningful contributions as the White Ferns accumulated 259/9, which proved more than enough as the hosts were bowled out for 183. The series is tied, with the final ODI to be played on Tuesday.

Chasing 260, India's start was hardly the one they were looking for. Southpaw Smriti Mandhana (0) had a loose waltz at a wide, away-going delivery and was caught at point by



New Zealand's Sophie Devine hits a boundary on Sunday

Plimmer off returning pacer Lea Tahuhu's (3/42) bowling. Fellow opener Shafali Verma (11) hit two sublime boundaries but was trapped in front by pacer Jess Kerr (2/49). Yastika Bhatia (12) too was caught behind off Tahuhu as India slipped to 26/3 in five overs. Captain Harmanpreet Kaur (24) and Jemimah Rodrigues (17) steadied the ship with 38-run partnership but the latter's dismissal, caught behind off Devine's (3/27) bowling, pegged India back. **Brief scores:** New Zealand 259/9 in 49.6 overs (Sophie Devine 79, Suzie Bates 58; Radha Yadav 4-69). India 183 in 47.1 overs (Radha Yadav 48; Sophie Devine 3-27, Lea Tahuhu 3-42). **NZ won by 76 runs.**

Rizwan named Pakistan captain

Islamabad: Pakistan appointed **Mohammad Rizwan** as captain of their white-ball teams on Sunday, and Babar Azam, Shaheen Afridi and Naseem Shah were all named in their One-Day International and Twenty20 squads for next month's tour of Australia.

All-rounder Salman Ali Agha will serve as Rizwan's deputy.

Babar as well as pace bowlers Afridi and Naseem were dropped by Pakistan for the last two tests against England due to patchy form and the team secured a 2-1 series win on Saturday. The trio will not feature in the matches against Zimbabwe which follow the Australian series.

Afridi demoted in new contracts: Fast bowler Shaheen Shah Afridi has been demoted in the new central contracts offered to 25 players by the Pakistan Cricket Board on Sunday.

Former all-format captain Babar Azam and Mohammad Rizwan were retained on the top tier contracts, while fast bowler Naseem Shah, Test captain Shan Masood and Afridi are in category B. The PCB didn't give a reason why Afridi had been downgraded but did say Masood's contract level was subject to whether he continues to lead the national team in red-ball cricket. **AGENCIES**

Porel puts Bengal on top

TIMES NEWS NETWORK

Kolkata: The Ranji Trophy match between Bengal and Kerala finally got underway at Jadavpur University's Salt Lake campus here on Sunday, although only 15 overs were possible on the second day. No play was possible on the first day due to wet outfield. With Bengal skipper Anustup Majumdar electing to field after winning the

RANJI TROPHY

much-delayed toss, the going was always going to be tough for the batters, given that the pitch had been under covers for a substantial period of time.

The situation was also ideal for Bengal pacer Ishan Porel to make a mark. Making a comeback after recovering from an injury, Porel used the conditions well to grab three wickets and reduce Kerala to 51 for four by stumps Day 2. Left-arm orthodox spinner Pradipta Pramanik picked up the other wicket.

Although Kerala openers got off to a steady start, with Rohan Kunnummal leading the way with some attacking shots, things soon got tough for them.



Bengal pacer Ishan Porel (third from left) celebrates after dismissing a Kerala batter on Sunday

Kunnummal scored 23 of the 33-run opening wicket partnership with Vathsal Govind before becoming the day's first casualty. Porel trapped him leg-before and immediately with the next ball, sent back the dangerous Baba Aparajith, caught by Wriddhiman Saha behind the stumps. Kerala, currently placed second in Group C, suddenly found themselves on the back foot.

More misery was to follow for the visitors, with Aditya Sarwate falling prey to Pramanik with the team score on 38. With Govind losing his wicket to Porel at the same score after

a laboured five, Kerala were looking down the barrel. Although skipper Sachin Baby and Akshay Chandran ensured there were no hiccups, Kerala have an uphill task when they step out again on Monday. "Good to get four wickets after the start. Hope we can capitalize on this tomorrow," Bengal coach Laxmi Ratan Shukla said. "It is good to see the bowlers with positive mindset and application." Avilinn Ghosh and Shuvam Dey made their debut for Bengal. **Brief scores:** Kerala 51/4 (R Kunnummal 23; I Porel 3/18) vs Bengal.

Shami says sorry for 'not being ready'

New Delhi: India pacer Mohammed Shami has apologised to the fans and the BCCI after the board decided against rushing his return to the team for the high-profile tour of Australia as he is yet to attain match fitness.

The 34-year-old Shami posted a video of his training on Instagram and said he would be back soon. "Putting in my efforts and getting better with my bowling fitness day-by-day. Will continue working hard towards getting ready for the match and to play domestic red ball cricket. Sorry to all cricket fans and bcci too, but very soon I'm ready to play red ball cricket. Love you all," Shami wrote.

Shami, whose return to competitive cricket following a long lay-off due to injury has been one of the talking points in the run-up to the tour of Australia, is expected to play in Bengal's next Ranji Trophy match against Karnataka in the first week of Nov.

Pacer's absence big loss, says Australia coach: Australia head coach Andrew McDonald feels the absence of Shami is a huge loss for India, but stressed that the hosts won't underestimate the quicks stepping in.

"Mohammed Shami is a big loss," McDonald was quoted as saying by ESPNcricinfo. "The way our batters speak about his relentless nature, his line and lengths, the way he goes about his business, a real good complimenting skill set to Bumrah so I think that one-two combo they'll lack a little bit, and they'll miss that." **PTI**

PERFORMANCE OF LEFT-ARM SPINNERS VS INDIA IN TESTS IN THE LAST TWO DECADES

Bowler	For	Span	T	Wkts	Ave	Best inns	Best match	5WI	10WM	SR
Monty Panesar	Eng	2006-12	11	36	40.94	6/81	11/210	2	1	85.1
Rangana Herath	SL	2009-17	11	33	48.06	7/48	7/115	2	0	88.8
Shakib Al Hasan	Ban	2007-24	10	25	40.88	5/62	7/174	1	0	62.6
Mitchell Santner	NZ	2016-24	4	23	29.60	7/53	13/157	2	1	53.1
Paul Harris	SA	2007-11	9	22	51.86	4/129	5/179	0	0	106.9
Tom Hartley	Eng	2024	5	22	36.13	7/62	9/193	1	0	68.3
Jack Leach	Eng	2021-24	6	21	33.90	4/54	6/178	0	0	62.2
Ajaz Patel	NZ	2020-24	5	21	28.42	10/119	14/225	1	1	47.8
Daniel Vettori	NZ	2009-10	6	21	41.80	5/135	6/199	1	0	96.3
Steve O'Keefe	Aus	2017	4	19	23.26	6/35	12/70	2	1	56.5

-Rajesh Kumar

Panesar to Santner, India's woes vs left-arm spin remain

Mitchell Santner's 13-wicket haul in the Pune Test is not the only time that a left-arm spinner has troubled India. TOI highlights some other instances post 2010.



MONTY PANESAR (ENG: 5-129, 6-81 AT MUMBAI, 2012)

After beating England at Ahmedabad earlier, India were confident of turning over their rivals on the red dirt of Wankhede. Kevin Pietersen's stunning 186 helped England reply to India's 327 with a robust 413. Monty Panesar, who had toiled for 47 overs for his five-for in the first innings (which included a brute to dismiss Sachin Tendulkar bowled), found the pitch much more to his liking in the second dig. He got Tendulkar again with an arm ball, this time lbw and devoured the rest of the batters with his quickish deliveries to help Alastair Cook's side record a famous 10-wicket thumping.



TOM HARTLEY (ENG: 7-62 AT HYDERABAD, 2024)

England had no business competing in this Test after India had rattled up 436 in reply to England's 246. At 5-163, and a deficit of 27, defeat, possibly by an innings loomed large. But Ollie Pope produced an innings for the ages like Pietersen had in Mumbai to score 196 and give India a nervy chase of 231 on a crumbling pitch. Cashing in on India's diffidence and lack of technique, Hartley, on debut, exploited the conditions perfectly and bowled England to a famous win by 28 runs in fading light.

MATT KUHNEMANN (AUS: 5-16 AT INDORE, 2023)

A late venue swap from Dharamshala to Indore didn't aid pitch preparation as the venue, known for batters dished out a bald, dry track. India won the toss and batted, but Matthew Kuhnemann bowled in the right areas to exploit the roughness in the surface to have batters stumped or caught at slip. With dream figures of 5-16, India could manage just 109 in 33.2 overs. Nathan Lyon produced an 8-for in the second dig as Australia won by nine wickets.

RANGANA HERATH (SL: 7-48 AT GALLE, 2015)

At 3-5 and still trailing India by 192 runs, an innings defeat loomed for the hosts. But then Dinesh Chandimal summoned his inner Viv Richards and belted an aggressive 162 off 169 balls to give Sri Lanka a sniff by setting India 176 to win in the fourth innings.

Rangana Herath, who had gone wicketless in the first innings after bowling 33 overs, then ran through India with a sublime spell of 7-48 to bowl India out for 112 and make it a sombre Independence Day. That he was there in the current NZ coaching set-up for the sub-continent sojourn, seemed like poetic justice.

STEVE O'KEEFE (AUS: 6-35, 6-35 AT PUNE, 2017)

At 94-3, replying to Australia's 260, things looked steady for India as they hoped to be on par with Steve Smith's side on the first innings. Enter Steve O'Keefe. The left-arm spinner just landed the ball on a length and challenged the batter's defences as India lost 7-11 to be bowled out for 105. On a pitch that was dry, a 155-run deficit soon turned into a target of 441 as Smith produced a masterclass on how to bat on a turner and grinded out a 109. O'Keefe was in business again exploiting the pitch, which had by now started to turn ragged and produced identical figures in both innings of 6-35. India lasted just 33.5 overs as Australia won by a mammoth 333 runs.

AJAZ PATEL (NZ: 10-119, 4-106 AT MUMBAI, 2021)

Red soil pitch in Mumbai with bounce is a left-arm spinner's delight. Murali Kartik, Nilesh Kulkarni, Ankeet Chavan, Ravi Shastri, have run through sides in domestic cricket. Ajaz Patel, a Mumbai-born Kiwi found the pitch to his liking too as he got the turn to produce the edges and got the ball to skid on too using natural variations to get batters bowled or lbw. With 10-119, he became just the third cricketer in Test history after Jim Laker and Anil Kumble to bag a perfect 10. He wasn't done, in the second dig, he got four more. His 14 scalps are the most by an overseas bowler in India.



We were attacked and we did nothing: Jaishankar on 26/11

Double Engine Govt Required In Maha, Says EAM During Mum Visit

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Mumbai: Maharashtra requires a government that is on the same page as the Centre, in which the country as well as the world will repose faith, said external affairs minister S Jaishankar. Reiterating the government's zero-tolerance policy on terrorism, he said, "When we talk of zero tolerance against terror, it is clear when somebody does something, there will be a response."

On the India-China border standoff, Jaishankar said the two countries would go back to the arrangement that existed in April 2020 along the Line of Actual Control in Ladakh. "We expect to return to pre-Oct 31, 2020, patrolling arrangements in areas like Demchok and Depsang. This will take some time," he said.

Jaishankar was on a visit to Mumbai on Sunday. Addressing a press conference at BJP's Mumbai office in Dadar, he



S Jaishankar said PM Modi works very hard attending international investment conferences and when the investments come to India, the state government plays a role

He said India-Middle East Economic Corridor connecting to Europe is one of the most talked-about connectivity corridors today. "Maharashtra, given its geography, will be at the centre of it," he said, highlighting the importance of the Vadnavan port.

On the India-China border tensions, Jaishankar said the

disengagement of the two armies is the first step in ending the four-year-long standoff in Ladakh. "We expect our two armies at Depsang and Demchok to return to their earlier positions," he said, adding that the de-escalation, as both armies are heavily armed, will not happen until India is sure that the same is happening on the other side as well.

On countering terrorism, he said Mumbai is a symbol of counter-terrorism. "We should not have a repeat of what happened in Mumbai. We were attacked and we did nothing. This is unacceptable. Wherever required, we will act after thinking it through thoroughly," he said. When India was a member of the UN Security Council, it was chairing the counter-terrorism committee, Jaishankar said. "We held the counter-terrorism panel meeting in the same hotel that was hit by the terror attack."

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My focus is on J'khand, a tough battleground, says Himanta

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Guwahati: Assam CM Himanta Biswa Sarma, BJP's Jharkhand co-in-charge for the assembly polls, described the state as a "tough battleground," while affirming that BJP will "leave no stone unturned in its endeavour to secure victory."

While five constituencies in Assam are also set for bypolls, Sarma has been



dedicating minimal time to it, instead choosing to focus primarily on Jharkhand for the BJP in Jharkhand. Jharkhand elections will be conducted in two phases on Nov 13 and 20, and will coincide with Assam bypolls.

"I am extremely preoccupied with Jharkhand elections. I have limited information regarding Assam bypolls and have asked our ministers and party members to oversee the campaign. I am uncertain as to whether I will be able to participate in campaigning here," he said.

NCP(SP) picks Swara's hubby to fight Sana Malik

Mumbai: Actor Swara Bhasker's husband, Fahad Ahmad, will be Sharad Pawar-led NCP's nominee for the assembly election. Ajit Pawar's NCP has fielded former minister Nawab Malik's daughter Sana Malik from the constituency, reports Prafulla Marpakwar. Ahmad's candidature has surprised even NCP (SP) functionaries, who were expecting a local functionary to get the ticket.

State NCP (SP) president Jayant Patil said Ahmad was president of Samajwadi Party Yuvjan Sabha—and joined NCP (SP) a few days ago. "We felt that he was a suitable candidate. We are sure he will win with a massive margin," Patil said.

Familiar fight in Bandra West as Shelar to fight Zakaria again

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Mumbai: Bandra West will see a familiar fight: sitting MLA Ashish Shelar will square off once again with former BMC corporator and Congress member Asif Zakaria. Zakaria had run against Shelar in 2019, too, but lost by a margin of 26,507 votes.



Earlier this month, there were reports that former MP Priya Dutt might contest the seat, but Dutt recommended Zakaria, a three-term civic corporator from the area. She took to X to congratulate Zakaria late Saturday after his candidature was announced.

While the key challengers remain the same, Mumbai North-Central constituency, which covers this assembly seat, has a new MP: Congress's Varsha Gaikwad defeated BJP's Ujwal Nikam in the Lok

Majrooh Sultanpuri's son enters poll ring

Andaleeb Sultanpuri, son of noted poet-lyricist Majrooh Sultanpuri, is contesting from Bandra West on Rashtriya Ulama Council's ticket, reports Mohammed Wajiduddin. The council has so far picked two candidates, including Chand Mohammed Sheikh from Colaba.

"I have joined a political party which is committed to empowering Muslims. I know my limitations as I am new to politics, but I am not entirely unknown as I have a legacy from my famous father. I want to do something for the community and the country," said Andaleeb, a former film director who also dabbled in the garments business.

Asked whether he would be blamed for splitting Muslim votes and indirectly helping Mahayuti candidate Ashish Shelar, Sultanpuri said: "MVA should have thought about it. Are we only to support others? I want Muslim youths to become self-reliant."

Sabha elections. Prior to Gaikwad, BJP's Poonam Mahajan represented the seat for two consecutive terms.

For residents in this constituency, which includes some of Mumbai's most active advanced locality management groups, key concerns include managing boom in restaurants and pubs, congested roads and late night noise. Additionally, locals are calling for better regulation of hawkers, a resolution on illegal slum en-

croachments in Nargis Dutt Nagar, Nityanand Nagar and Gazdarbandh, and a stronger focus on an eco-friendly Bandra. Shelar's agenda for the next five years is to rehabilitate slums and ease traffic. Zakaria said people are disgruntled as there has been a lot of wasteful expenditure, especially in the name of beautification projects that are later abandoned. "I wish to be that bridge so that pending works are completed," he said.

Nawab Malik to fight polls despite BJP objection

Mumbai: Controversial NCP functionary and former minister Nawab Malik has said he will on Tuesday file his nomination papers for the assembly polls, reports Prafulla Marpakwar. "My daughter, Sana, is filing her nomination papers on Monday. I will accompany her. I will file my nomination papers on Tuesday from Mankhurd-Shivaji Nagar constituency," he told TOI. He did not disclose if he would fight as an independent or as an NCP nominee.

On Saturday, NCP chief Ajit Pawar, party's working president Prafull Patel, state president Sunil Tatkare, and food and civil supplies minister Chhagan Bhujbal had called on Malik. Apparently, following objection by BJP functionaries Ashish Shelar and Chandrashekhar Bawankule to giving him a ticket, they had urged Malik not to file his nomination.

Anti-Sikh riots: HC admits CBI appeal against Sajjan acquittal

Times News Network

New Delhi: Delhi High Court has admitted an appeal by Central Bureau of Investigation (CBI) challenging the acquittal of former Congress MP Sajjan Kumar and others in a murder and rioting case linked to the 1984 anti-Sikh riots.

In a recent order, a bench of Justices Prathiba M Singh and Amit Sharma granted 'leave to appeal' to the probe agency against the trial court's decision of Sept 20, 2023, and scheduled the matter for further consideration in Dec. Leave to appeal is formal permission granted by a court allowing a party to challenge a decision in a higher court.

"In the opinion of this co-

urt, CBI's leave to appeal deserves to be granted... The leave petition is allowed," the court stated in its order, while admitting the plea.

The high court also admitted an appeal by the victim, Sheila Kaur, challenging the acquittal order and directed the registry to report on the existence of any other appeals related to the 1984 riots involving the current accused.

Last year, a special court acquitted Kumar in the case, citing "benefit of doubt" and noting that the prosecution "failed to prove the charge against the accused persons beyond reasonable doubt".

The court also acquitted two other accused, Ved Prakash Pial and Brahmaand Gupta, finding that the pro-

secution did not establish the case of murder and rioting against them.

A Sikh man, Surjit Singh, was killed in Sultanpuri amid the anti-Sikh riots that rocked the capital. Kumar was accused of various offences punishable under the Indian Penal Code (IPC), including promoting enmity between different groups on grounds of religion, race, etc, (section 153A), abetment of any offence (section 109), murder (section 302), and rioting (section 147).

The riots erupted following the assassination of then Prime Minister Indira Gandhi by her Sikh bodyguards on Oct 31, 1984. Kumar is currently in Tihar Jail, serving a life term after a conviction in a separate case related to the riots.

Hosabale nixes speculations of rift with BJP

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New Delhi: Ahead of state elections in Maharashtra and Jharkhand, RSS has dispelled notions of discord with BJP, particularly following remarks by party president J P Nadda which suggested that BJP was "self-sufficient" and did not require RSS's support. RSS general secretary Datatreya Hosabale addressed

the issue in Mathura, clarifying that the Sangh understood Nadda's intentions. "We understand the sentiment behind his comments. It's about fostering independence, not about severing ties. I visited him for a meal at his residence, highlighting our familial bond. Differences in a family are natural and are resolved privately. The Sangh does not engage in public disputes." Hosabale's comments

came in the wake of BJP's below par performance in Lok Sabha elections, where some analysts suggested that a perceived lack of enthusiasm from RSS might have contributed to the party's reduced numbers. However, Hosabale clarified Nadda's stance and said, "His message was about BJP standing on its own feet, which is a reflection of strength, not a sign of division." He dismissed media re-

ports of friction between the two organisations as attempts to sow discord, asserting that unity was paramount for any organisation's success.

The clarification could bolster BJP's campaign in Maharashtra and Jharkhand, where RSS enjoys grassroots support. The strategic alignment is poised to influence the polls, showcasing a united front between BJP and RSS, which can resonate with voters.

DMK political enemy, BJP an ideological foe, says Vijay

Vikravandi: Tamil actor and Tamilaga Vetti Kazhagam founder Vijay laid out Sunday a political roadmap for his party, declaring DMK as TVK's political enemy and BJP as its ideological adversary. The 50-year-old actor

launched TVK in Feb, promising to add a new dimension to Tamil Nadu politics before the 2026 state elections, report V Mayilvaganan & Yazhiniyan. He said his party aims to be the primary force for change in Tamil Nadu, not merely an alternative to existing political players. Speaking at TVK's maiden political conference at Vikravandi, Vijay criticised DMK's portrayal of BJP as a fascist force. He said DMK was not fundamentally different: "You always keep screaming fascism, fascism, and continue scare-mongering among minorities. If they are practising fascism, are you any different?"

Vijay accused DMK of masking corruption with ideological rhetoric and fooling people by branding their administration as a "Dravidian model govt". "Corrupt forces are governing Tamil Nadu," he said.

Addressing speculation about TVK's political alignment, Vijay rejected any claims that TVK was aligned with others. "None can paint TVK with a certain colour or call us a 'B team' of another party. Because everyone knows who we are against when we declared our fundamental principle as Pirapokkum ella uyirkum (all are equal by birth)," he said. However, he expressed openness to alliances ahead of 2026 polls.

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LEWANDOWSKI (IN PIC) SCORES TWICE AND YAMAL PILES ON TO RUIN MBAPPÉ'S FIRST CLASICO AS BARCA ROUT REAL MADRID 4-0 20

PMs & CMs do attend social events at judges' homes: CJI

'Judicial Matters Not Discussed At Such Meetings'

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New Delhi: Terming the controversy over the PM's visit to his residence for Ganpati puja last month as "unnecessary, unwarranted and illogical", Chief Justice of India D Y Chandrachud on Sunday said heads of political executive visit judges' homes for social occasions but independence of judiciary is so deeply entrenched that judicial matters are "never ever discussed".

While the PM and chief ministers do visit the residences of the CJI and chief

"We know our duties in the democratic system...and the political executive know theirs"
No judge, least of them the CJI or (HC) chief justices, can even remotely invite any threat, actual or perceived, to independence of judiciary



PM Modi during Ganpati puja at CJI Chandrachud's residence in Sept

As CJ of Allahabad HC, I came to know of a tradition — the CJ after taking oath, meets the CM and discusses infrastructural issues faced by the judiciary. The second meeting with the CM always takes place at the residence of the CJ — CJI D Y Chandrachud

justices (CJs) of high courts and judges on occasions like children's weddings or festivities, "I cannot recount a single occasion where either the CJI or judges of the SC ever discussed any judicial matter with the executive heads of the Union or states. Except for exchange of pleasantries, no other matter

is discussed", CJI Chandrachud told TOI.

"There is enough maturity among judges of constitutional courts and heads of the executive to firmly keep judicial matters out of the purview of any discussion," he said.

► **Talks on judicial infra', P 12**

'Federalism does not force states to toe Delhi line'

The concept of cooperative federalism, which is at the core of India's democratic governance, does not mandate states to toe the Centre's line of policy, CJI D Y Chandrachud has said, reports Dhananjay Mahapatra.

At the Loksatta series of lectures in Mumbai on Saturday, he said, "It is necessary to view Indian federalism as a dialogue in which states and the Union engage in conversations... it could be easy-going or it could cause friction... The easy-going conversations must not be viewed as the 'good', and the friction, as the 'bad'." P 12

1984 riots: HC to hear plea against Sajjan acquittal

Delhi HC has admitted an appeal by CBI challenging the acquittal of former Congress MP Sajjan Kumar and others in a murder and rioting case linked to the 1984 anti-Sikh riots. The matter is to be heard in Dec. The court also admitted an appeal by the victim, Sheela Kaur, challenging the acquittal order and directed the registry to report on the existence of any other appeals related to the 1984 riots involving Kumar. P 22

Shah does not meet RG Kar victim's family

The RG Kar victim's parents could not meet Union home minister Amit Shah on Sunday. Bengal BJP sources said meeting the parents was not on Shah's itinerary. Shah, however, referred to R G Kar, when he alleged that women's honour was at stake in Bengal. P 4

Missing DSP GM found dead in plant after 16 hrs

Samit Bhattacharya, 54, a general manager of the Raw Material Handling Plant at Durgapur Steel Plant (DSP), was found dead on Saturday morning, after being missing for 16 hours, during which plant officials had lodged a missing person's complaint. His body was discovered below a lift inside the plant. P 6

Indian dies in bid to cross Eng Channel

An Indian man died on Sunday in northern France after the inflated boat he and other migrants had boarded to cross the English Channel deflated. The migrants swam back to the beach but the Indian suffered a cardiac arrest and died. P 18

Ratul Sood, bespoke designer for men, dies playing golf

Tamaghna Banerjee, Udit Prasanna Mukherjee & Priyanka Dasgupta | TNN

Kolkata: Menswear designer Ratul Sood, 56, died of a sudden cardiac arrest while playing golf at RCGC in south Kolkata's Tollygunge on Sunday morning.

Sood — who, along with his wife, Komal, owned the designer label "Sood" on Park Street — was rushed to MR Bangur Hospital, about 200m from the club, in a golf cart but he could not be revived, said club officials.

"Sood reached the club early on Sunday and was playing golf when the incident occurred," said a club official. "Around 11.45am, he was approaching the third hole when he suddenly collapsed. His teammates and others rushed to him and without

wasting time, took him to the nearest hospital in a golf cart. But he couldn't be revived and was declared dead by an attending doctor."

The official said the club would soon hold a condolence meet for the two-decade-old member.

Sood was known for his proficiency in bespoke tailoring, often merging "Savile Row" tailoring with traditional Indian styles. He was well-known in Kolkata's social circles, admired for his well-groomed style and passion for sports, particularly golf and badminton. He was also recognised for his collaborative work with wife Komal, combining their expertise in menswear and womenswear.

Apart from Komal, his immediate family comprises his sons Armaan and Angad, who study in the US (Port-

land, Oregon) and Mussoorie, respectively.

The last rites will be performed after Armaan arrives from the US.

"He was a strong and disciplined man, who loved to party but used to be up by 5 every morning to start his fitness routine," said Diwakar Sharma, Sood's manager for 15 years. "On Sunday as well, he left home at 5.30am for the club and was playing golf with friends and other club members when the incident happened. He was like a father figure to all of us and I feel like an orphan after his death. He never had any complications and was a perfectly fit man," Sharma added.

Friends and family members have flooded social media with condolence messages, expressing grief and shock.

► **'Warm & generous', P 4**

CPM suspends ex-MLA after journalist accuses him of molesting her

Sanjib Chakraborty | TNN

Kolkata: CPM on Sunday suspended Tannoy Bhattacharya, its former MLA, after a journalist accused him of sexually molesting her.

The journalist, on Facebook, accused the 66-year-old of touching her inappropriately and sitting on her lap without her consent when she had gone to his home in Baranagar to take an interview. CPM took note of her complaint and referred the case to the party's internal complaints committee (ICC). Later in the evening, the journalist also lodged an FIR against Bhattacharya at the Baranagar police station.

Bhattacharya, who represented the Dum Dum (North)

assembly seat between 2016 and 2021, has claimed that he was being made the victim of a conspiracy.

"We are deeply anguished," CPM state secretary Mohammed Salim said. "Tannoy usually gives television interviews from home, though I do not know why he does this. The ICC will investigate it. The timelines will be announced on Monday. The party does not take these allegations lightly, as no one should. The party will act with probity that its workers and supporters expect it to do. Such incidents are condemnable. There is no question of forgiving anyone who has done such a thing."

► **'Touched several times', P 9**

Govt will have to decide on 4 key appts soon

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New Delhi: The Centre will have to decide on four key appointments in as many months, starting with a replacement for G S Murmu, whose term as Comptroller and Auditor General is due to end in Nov. A trusted Modi govt bureaucrat is likely to bag the coveted assignment to keep watch over the Centre's spending and accounts.

While Murmu can't be given a fresh term, the other three incumbents — RBI governor, chief economic adviser and Sebi chairperson — can be reappointed. After CAG, govt has to decide if it wants to give another stint to Shaktikanta Das in Dec or look for a replacement for the crucial job on Mumbai's Mint Road.

► **Sebi pick dilemma, P 14**

A year after her death, Kolkata woman wins Emmy for docu film on homeless kids in NYC

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Kolkata: Kolkata-born US-based filmmaker Sriyanka Ray, who passed away last year at 33, on Saturday posthumously clinched her inaugural independent Emmy as a director and producer for 'Homeroom Dreams', a first for a Kolkataan.

Ray passed away from a sudden illness on May 30 last year while she was holidaying in Bolivia.

Ray, an alumna of La Martiniere for Girls and Presidency University, studied film studies at JU for a year before shifting to New York in 2012, where she did a master's programme in 'The New School'. She joined BRIC — an arts



(Left) Sriyanka Ray; (above) a still from 'Homeroom Dreams', for which she won the inaugural independent Emmy as director and producer

and media institution anchored in downtown Brooklyn — in 2014. Along with working on her feature film (about Ghoramara Island in the Sunderbans), she also produced the award-winning documentary 'Crossroads' — about the FedEx shootings in 2021. At

BRIC, her films 'Sweatshop of Wall Street', 'Highway Mike', 'The Database' and 'Mothers of Flat Bush' were critically acclaimed and received multiple awards.

The short documentary for which she won the Emmy delves into the harrowing cri-

sis of New York City's homeless students. During the 2020-21 school year, a staggering 10,400 New York City public school children — or 1 in 10 — were homeless. Thousands of these vulnerable children found shelter in shelters, were "doubled up", a euphemism for living with other families, or were unsheltered, seeking refuge in cars, abandoned buildings, or out on the streets.

Ray's film, which won the Emmy in the 'education/school — short or long form content' category, is set in Riverdale Avenue Middle School in Brownsville, Brooklyn, where 18% of the student population lacked permanent housing.

► **'Social message', P 4**

Why WHO took 7 yrs to agree that India's ended trachoma

It's The No.1 Infection Globally That Can Cause Blindness. Constant Surveillance And Proactive Steps Have Seen India Bring Down Prevalence To Negligible Levels

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World Health Organization (WHO) has certified India as having eliminated trachoma, an infectious disease that can cause blindness if left untreated. The tag from the global health body comes almost seven years after Indian govt declared the country free from 'infective trachoma' and 18 years after it said that it had ceased to be a public health problem. With this, India joins 19 other countries, including China, Nepal, Pakistan and Myanmar, which have eliminated the disease.

Eliminated At Last
Elimination means stopping the transmission of a disease in a specific area or country, but not worldwide. After elimination, any cases that occur are regarded as having been imported from outside that region or population. It's not the same as eradication, which refers to a disease being eliminated worldwide, barring some viral cases in a few labs.

WHO says a disease is eliminated when it is no longer a public health problem in a specific geographic area. To be certified as having eliminated a disease, countries must meet measurable targets set by WHO. After the targets are met, countries must continue to take action to maintain elimination or to further interrupt transmission because an eliminated disease can always return.

To meet WHO's definition of trachoma elimination, the incidence of trachoma trichiasis — a condition caused by eyelashes rubbing against the eyeball to cause scarring — has to be less than 0.2% among adults aged over 15 years. Further, the incidence of trachomatous inflammation among children less than 10 years has to be less than 5%.

It Thrives In Poor Quarters
Trachoma is caused by the bacteria chlamydia trachomatis. It is contagious and spreads through contact with the eyes, eyelids, and nose or throat secretions of infected people. It can also be passed on by handling infected items, such as handkerchiefs. People



living in crowded conditions amid poor sanitation and inadequate access to water resulting in unclean faces and hands are at risk of contracting the disease, which is also carried by eye-seeking flies.

In areas where it is active, children are the primary reservoir of the infection. Women are susceptible, too, since they have the main responsibility of childcare. Symptoms include mild itching and irritation in the eyes and eyelids, swollen eyelids and pus draining from the eyes, eye pain, etc. Repeated infection can lead to conjunctival inflammation and scarring, which make the eyelid turn inwards and cause eyelashes to rub against the eyeball. That can cause the cornea to become opaque, causing blindness.

Top Infection Behind Blindness
A WHO survey of 2012 found that, globally, the main causes of blindness are cataract (51%), glaucoma (8%), age-related macular degeneration or AMD (5%), childhood and corneal opacities (4%), uncorrected refractive errors and trachoma (3%), and diabetic retinopathy (1%). It also found that 21% of blindness is caused by undetermined causes.

Cataract is neither an infectious disease nor is it caused by bacteria, virus, fungi or parasites. But trachoma is the leading infectious cause of blindness in the world, and it occurs mostly in the poorest parts of the world. Untreated, repeated infection can cause visual impairment and blindness.

The National Blindness and Visual Impairment Survey 2015-2019 found that cataract was the key cause of blindness, accounting for 66.2% of all cases. Trachoma was behind 0.8% of cases of blindness and visual impairment in those aged 50 years and above.

Faced Constant Vigil In India
India launched the National Programme for Control of Blindness (NPCB) in 1976 as a centrally-sponsored programme — the first country to do so. Data from 1959-1963 showed six current states in which the prevalence of active trachoma in children aged less than 10 years exceeded 50%: Punjab, Haryana, Rajasthan, UP, Uttarakhand and Gujarat.

The National Trachoma Control Programme was launched in 1963 and was later integrated into NPCB. WHO's 1986-89 survey on blindness in India showed that the prevalence of trachoma in these states was less than 10%. Rapid assessments in the same six states in 2006 revealed that less than 10% of children had active trachoma, while the proportion of adults who had the disease ranged from 0.03% to 0.5%. It was thus inferred that trachoma had ceased to be a public health problem even though cases were found in all six, mainly concentrated in a few districts — Bikaner (Rajasthan) and Pauri (Uttarakhand). A trachoma rapid assessment on Car Nicobar Island in 2010 showed that 51% of children had active trachoma, which was tackled

by mass administration of azithromycin over the next three years. That brought down the prevalence to 6.8%. According to WHO, trachoma was responsible for 4% of all cases of blindness in India in 2005. By 2018, the prevalence was down to 0.008%.

2017 Marked A Win
In Dec 2017, the National Trachoma Survey Report (2014-17) showed overall prevalence of active trachoma infection was only 0.7% among surveyed children. The govt announced that since this was well below the WHO target of less than 5% active infections among children below 10 years, India could be declared free from 'infective trachoma'.

WHO Checked The Claims
Certification or validation by WHO is a long-drawn process. After a country deems a disease eliminated, it has to seek validation from WHO. But surveillance continues, as India did for trachoma cases in all districts from 2019 onwards. The National Trachomatous Trichiasis (TT) Survey was also carried out in 200 endemic districts under National Programme for Control of Blindness and Visual Impairment during 2021-24 as part of the WHO mandate to certify India as having eliminated trachoma as a public health problem.

After scrutiny by its country office, WHO finally declared that India had eliminated trachoma as a public health problem. It said the country has also developed a post-validation surveillance plan, based on WHO guidelines, for sustained elimination efforts.

TOI Explains

India to launch 1st electric propulsion-run satellite in Dec

New Delhi: To make its satellites lighter in future, Isro is going to launch its first home-grown electric propulsion-led spacecraft in Dec, space agency chairman **S Somanath** announced while also specifying new deadlines for its upcoming key missions like Gaganyaan, Chandrayaan-4 and-5, and Indo-US NISAR satellite project, reports **Surendra Singh**.

Delivering Sardar Patel Memorial Lecture at Akashvani, Somanath said Technology Demonstrator Satellite

(TDS-1), which will be steered in space to its desired orbit with electric propulsion rather than fuel-run thrusters, is ready. "TDS-1 and Isro's first spacecraft docking experiment (SPADEX), which will help in setting up India's own space station in future, are ready and will be launched in Dec. Both these satellites will be launched by a PSLV, and in space, they will dock with each other."

A four-tonne communication satellite carries more than two tonnes of liquid fuel which is used to fire thrusters to steer it from the launch orbit to the desired geostationary orbit. In case of electric propulsion, fuel requirement reduces to just 200 kg.

The Isro chairman said India has its own navigation system NavIC under which nine satellites have been launched till now. These satellites have been using the L5 band largely restricted for strategic services by armed forces. "However, now we are introducing L1 band in satellites that will allow civilians to easily access our own navigation system in their mobiles. We are going to launch five more satellites with L1 band," Somanath said.

Urdu Ramayan sets an example of amity in desert

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Jaipur: Diwali in the desert city of Rajasthan's Bikaner is a spectacle of light illuminated by an epic tradition of heralding the festival with a recital of the Urdu Ramayan, a Muslim professor's labour of love and scholarship dating back to 1935.

Over the past 12 years, this event centred on Maulvi Badshah Shah Hussain Rana Lakhnavi's presentation of the story of Ram in Urdu has become an indispensable part of Bikaner's annual celebration of the triumph of good over evil in more ways than one.

Urdu Ramayan, seen as a testament to the spirit of Ram's legend transcending faith, was born out of a nationwide competition organised by Banaras Hindu University (BHU) 89 years ago to commemorate Tulsidas Jayanti.

Rana Lakhnavi, a professor of Urdu in Bikaner at the time, participated in the competition and won a gold medal from the university.

The erstwhile Maharaja Ganga Singh arranged a ceremony at Nagari Bhandar



Recitation of Urdu Ramayan in Bikaner ahead of Diwali

to listen to Rana Lakhnavi's version. The Urdu litterateur Sir Tej Bahadur Sapru presented the gold medal to him on BHU's behalf at the same event.

Rana Lakhnavi used to be an employee of the royal family of Bikaner between 1913 and 1919, during which time he was entrusted with the responsibility of translating orders issued by the Mughal rulers from Persian to Urdu.

The erstwhile ruler of Bikaner, Ganga Singh, later appointed him as an Urdu teacher at Dungan College. He also wrote poetry and continued to be involved in literary activities until his death in 1943 in his native village of Sandli near Lucknow.

Dr Zia-Ul-Hasan Qadri, an Urdu teacher and organiser of the Bikaner event, said Rana Lakhnavi's Urdu Ramayan was the only available complete version of the epic in Urdu. Its beauty lies in the couplets that vividly describe scenes from Ramayan, including the battle against Ravan.

At this year's recitation days before Diwali, Qadri recited couplets from Rana Lakhnavi's translation that captivated the audience.

"Thode din mein jang ke bhi saaz osaman ho gaye, khon se rangeen biyaban ho gaye/ Ye bhi kuch zakhmi ho gaye, kuch woh bhi zakhmi ho gaye, kat-e-Ravan ke sab aasaa-numayan ho gaye," reads one of the couplets.

The Bikaner Paryatan Lekhak Sangh's "Mehfil-e-Adab" is as much a call for amity as it is a homage to the legend of Ram and Rana Lakhnavi's craft.

Mukul Chaturvedi, a professor at Delhi's Zakir Husain College has reproduced the text of Rana Lakhnavi's book in English. It was published in the Sahitya Akademi's bimonthly journal in March-April 2022.

Tourists miss glimpse of marble wonder as Agra smog blankets Taj

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Agra: Visitors to the Taj Mahal were met with a disheartening sight on Sunday as the Unesco World Heritage Site was shrouded in a blanket of smog due to increased air pollution in Agra, making it barely visible. On Friday, the Union health ministry had urged states and UTs to curb stubble burning and encouraged people to use public transport and minimise exposure to pollution.

On Saturday, the AQI in Agra was categorised as



Taj Mahal was barely visible on Sunday, thanks to thick smog

"moderate" at 106. AQI in the "moderate" category can cause "breathing discomfort to the people with asthma, lungs and heart diseases", a Central Pollution Control Board report said.

Many tourists com-

plained of difficulty in breathing, coughing, and a burning sensation in their eyes. Vikram Gujral, an NRI from Canada visiting Agra with his wife and parents, said, "We could not see the Taj properly as it is engulfed in smog. My elderly parents are complaining of irritation in the eyes and shortness of breath."

Cathrine Emanuel from France, who was with her fiancée, added, "We wanted to see the sunrise around the Taj and click some memorable pictures, but pollution has ruined it."