

# THE ASIAN AGE

NEW DELHI SATURDAY 2 NOVEMBER 2024



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Rahul Gandhi reveals he is 'not big fan' of 10, Janpath house, recalls father's death



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Sergey Lavrov: Russia and US are 'on brink of direct military conflict'

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Tabu dazzles in black at *Dune Prophecy* premiere in New York



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### WINDOWS



Anti-smog guns being used to sprinkle water amid air pollution in New Delhi on Friday.

Report on Page 2 — PTI

### Delhi cracker ban goes up in smoke; AQI 'very poor'

New Delhi: A thick layer of haze blanketed Delhi, with the national capital's AQI plunging to 362 on Friday as people defied a citywide ban on firecrackers during Diwali celebrations. Delhi also recorded its most polluted Diwali in three years. On Diwali on Thursday, the city's 24-hour average AQI was recorded at 330, compared to 218 in 2023 and 312 in 2022, according to CPCB data. The AQI was recorded in the "very poor" category with a reading of 362 at 9 am on Friday. Most monitoring stations in Delhi showed similar pollution levels, with 37 out of 39 reporting air quality in the "very poor" category. Full report on Page 2

### Iconic fashion designer Rohit Bal passes away

New Delhi: Rohit Bal, one of India's most celebrated fashion designers, died on Friday at a south Delhi hospital following a heart attack. He had been admitted to Aashlok Hospital in Safdarjung Enclave and was being treated by Dr Alok Chopra. He was 63. — PTI Full report on Page 3

### Rajesh Kumar Singh is new defence secretary

New Delhi: Senior bureaucrat Rajesh Kumar Singh took over as defence secretary on Friday. The 1989-batch IAS officer from the Kerala cadre assumed charge at the South Block. Before taking charge, Mr Singh paid homage to the fallen heroes at the National War Memorial. Full report on Page 3

### COUNTERPOINT



No more bomb hoax calls... I have solved the problem once and for all!

### WEATHER

Max: 33°C  
Min: 19°C  
RH: 39%  
Rain: NIL

Forecast: Sunny

### ASTROGUIDE

Krodhi: Dakshinayana  
Tithi: Sharadruthu Karthika Shukla Padyami till 8.19 pm  
Star: Visakha till 5.57 am (Sunday)  
Variyam: 9.40 am to 11.26 am  
Durmuhurtam: 6.18 am to 7.49 am  
Rahukalam: 9 am to 10.30 am  
SUNSET TODAY 5.35 PM  
SUNRISE TOMORROW 8.50 AM  
MOONRISE TOMORROW 2.45 AM  
MOONSET TODAY 6.22 PM

### 2 UP labourers injured in firing by militants in J&K's Budgam

AGE CORRESPONDENT SRINAGAR, NOV. 1

Two non-local labourers were shot at and wounded by suspected militants in the Kashmir Valley late on Friday evening.

Police sources said that victims Usman Malik and Sofiyun Ilyas, both residents of Uttar Pradesh's Saharanpur division, were targeted by gunmen while they were working at a Jal Jeewan construction project on the banks of the Sukhnag river in the Mazhama area of the Valley's central district of Budgam. "Suspected terrorists fired upon the duo. One of them, Usman, 20, received a bullet injury in his right hand and the other, Sofiyun, 25, in the right leg, but both are stable," the sources said.

The security reinforcements have launched an operation in the area to track down the assailants, the officials said.

J&K witnessed a spike in terror attacks over the past fortnight, leaving over a dozen people, including three Army jawans, dead and several others wounded.



People light "diyas" during the Diwali celebrations at Lal Chowk in Srinagar on Thursday night.

— PTI

### MVA, Mahayuti in bid to rein in rebels by Nov. 4

'Most will withdraw; friendly fight in some seats'

BHAGWAN PARAB MUMBAI, NOV. 1

Maharashtra deputy chief minister Devendra Fadnavis on Friday expressed confidence that the aspirants who are upset over not getting an election ticket and have rebelled against the BJP in the upcoming Vidhan Sabha elections will be convinced to work in the interest of the party.

Both the Mahayuti and Maha Vikas Aghadi

LEADERS DENIED tickets by their parties have filed nominations as Independents. The BJP has dropped at least eight MLAs and is now facing a rebellion.

(MVA) alliances are facing a major challenge of pacifying rebels before November 4, which is the last day for nomination withdrawal. More than 50 leaders denied tickets by their parties have filed

nominations as Independent candidates.

The BJP has dropped at least eight MLAs and is now facing a rebellion in most of these seats. The rebels have either filed their nominations as Independents or are willing to campaign against the candidate nominated by the party.

However, Mr Fadnavis said that he is confident of convincing all the rebels to work for the party. Turn to Page 4

### Likely to begin soon in Depsang Plains Army begins patrols in LAC's Demchok

PAWAN BALI NEW DELHI, NOV. 1

The Indian Army on Friday began patrolling in the Demchok sector of the Line of Actual Control, one of the two flashpoints in Ladakh where the Indian and Chinese troops have completed their disengagement. In the Depsang Plains, the patrolling is expected to start soon, said sources in the Indian Army.

"In Demchok, the Indian Army patrolling was carried out as per the operational requirements and as per the agreement between the two sides," Army sources said. Demchok is considered as less contentious of the two flashpoints where disengagement was completed on Wednesday.

Under the agreement, coordinated patrolling will be carried out in Demchok and Depsang, where both sides will know about the schedules of patrols of the other to avoid any kind of face-off. The patrolling modalities are decided during meetings of the ground commanders (brigadier and below).



Indian and Chinese troops exchange sweets at the Hot Springs area of Eastern Ladakh on Thursday.

THE AGREEMENT last month marks a significant development in the pursuit of reduced tensions along the LAC in eastern Ladakh

Indian and Chinese PLA soldiers had on Thursday exchanged sweets at various border points in the Ladakh sector on the occasion of Diwali. The Indian and Chinese Army exchange of sweets took place at Hot Springs, Karakoram Pass, Daulat Beg Oldi, KongkLa and Chushul-Moldo border meeting points in Ladakh. The disengagement at

Demchok and Depsang ended the four-and-a-half-year direct face-off between India and China in the Ladakh sector. Chinese troops were blocking Indian soldiers from patrolling their traditional patrolling points up to India's perceived line in these two friction points since April-May 2020. Earlier, the two sides had disengaged from Galwan, Pangong Tso, and Hot Springs in Ladakh, where no-patrolling buffer zones have been created. India and China are also holding talks on starting Turn to Page 4

### Bibek Debroy, top eco adviser to PM, passes away at 69

A 'towering scholar', says PM

AGE CORRESPONDENT with agency inputs NEW DELHI, NOV. 1

Bibek Debroy, a key economic adviser to the Prime Minister whose prolific work included translations of the Puranas and the Vedas, passed away on Friday. He was 69. Debroy, who had a history of diabetes, hypertension, and a blockage in the heart for which he had a pacemaker, was admitted to the AIIMS emergency late on October 31 and died around 7 am on Friday. "He was admitted with subacute intestinal obstruction. He also suffered from hypertension and diabetes mellitus," an AIIMS source said.

An empirical economist and a Padma Shri recipient, Debroy was the chairman of the Prime Minister's Economic Advisory Council since September 2017.

An alumnus of Presidency College, Kolkata, Dr Debroy studied at Delhi School of Economics and Trinity College, Cambridge. He



Bibek Debroy

IN 2016, the government decided to merge the Railway Budget with the Union Budget from Budget year 2017-18 based on the recommendations of a committee headed by Dr Debroy

worked in Presidency College, Kolkata; Gokhale Institute of Politics and Economics, Pune; Indian Institute of Foreign Trade, Delhi; and was also director of a finance ministry/UNDP project on legal reforms. He was also a member of Niti Aayog up to June 5, 2019. A columnist to several newspapers, he had four days before his death sent a piece to Indian Express with a note: Turn to Page 4

### Kharge to Cong govts: Give 'realistic' guarantees

PM attacks Congress, says it's 'badly exposed' for making 'unreal' promises it can't deliver

AGE CORRESPONDENTS with agency inputs NEW DELHI/BENGALURU, NOV. 1

As political outfits fall over each other to woo the voters with sops in the forthcoming Assembly elections, Congress president Mallikarjun Kharge took a realistic route and told the party's state units to "announce guarantees on the basis of their budgets". The Congress president warned that any unplanned approach and announcement could lead to a "crisis."

Latching on to Mr Kharge's advice to the Congress' state units, the BJP on Friday launched a fierce attack on the Opposition party. Leading the charge for the saffron party, Prime Minister Narendra Modi said that the Congress party stands "badly exposed" in front of people for promising to them what they know they will never be able to deliver.

In a series of posts on X, Mr Modi said, "The Congress party is realising the hard way that making unreal promises



Narendra Modi

is easy but implementing them properly is tough or impossible. Campaign after campaign, they promise things to the people, which they also know they will never be able to deliver. Now, they stand badly exposed in front of the people! #Fake



Mallikarjun Kharge

PromisesOfCongress." Pointing at the "poor" fiscal health of Congress-ruled states, the Prime Minister said any state where the Congress has governments today, be it Himachal Pradesh, Karnataka or Telangana, the developmental trajec-

tory and fiscal health are turning from bad to worse. Mr Modi posted: "Their so-called guarantees lie unfulfilled, which is a terrible deceit upon the people of these states. The victims of such politics are the poor, youngsters, farmers and women, who are not only denied the benefits of these promises but also see their existing schemes diluted." "In Karnataka, the Congress is busier in intra-party politics and loot instead of even bothering to deliver on Turn to Page 4

### J'khand: BJP eyes JMM tribal base

AMRESH SRIVASTAVA NEW DELHI, NOV. 1

As the Jharkhand Assembly elections draw closer, the BJP is going all out in its bid to win over the tribal voters, who have traditionally supported the JMM. Besides pushing the anti-corruption and anti-Bangladeshi infiltration narratives, the saffron party is also banking heavily on the popularity of Prime Minister Narendra Modi, who is set to start campaigning in the tribal state on Wednesday.

The return of former chief minister Babul

Marandi to the BJP fold could be a game changer for the BJP's poll prospects in Jharkhand, as he holds substantial influence among tribal communities. The joining of another influential tribal leader Champai Soren, who defected from the JMM, works to the advantage of the BJP. Both leaders are reinforcing the BJP's appeal in the tribal communities.

In this high-stakes political battle, the issue of Bangladeshi and Rohingya infiltration has taken centre stage in the BJP's campaign. Senior BJP leaders, including Mr Modi and

THE BJP is focusing on an anti-corruption narrative, some strategists within the party are wary of a potential 'sympathy factor' favouring Hemant Soren

Union home minister Amit Shah, have highlighted illegal migrants as a pressing concern, emphasising their impact on the tribal regions of Santhal Parganas and Kolhan region.

Assam chief minister and BJP state co-in-charge Himanta Biswa Sarma has claimed that unchecked migration has turned parts of Santhal Pargana

into "mini Bangladesh", altering local demographics and threatening tribal communities. The BJP's strategists have made this topic central to their campaign messaging, openly accusing the JMM of encouraging immigration to build its votebank.

The BJP also seeks to capitalise on an anti-incumbency wave against the ruling JMM-led alliance. While the BJP is focusing on an anti-corruption narrative, some strategists within the party are wary of a potential "sympathy factor" favouring chief minister Hemant Soren.

### Modi & Rahul greet people in 5 states on formation day

AGE CORRESPONDENT NEW DELHI, NOV. 1

President Droupadi Murmu, Prime Minister Narendra Modi, Union home minister Amit Shah and Lok Sabha Leader of the Opposition Rahul Gandhi greeted the people of Madhya Pradesh, Karnataka, Kerala, Haryana and Chhattisgarh on their states' formation day on Friday.

In a post on X, the President extended her greetings and urged the people of the aforementioned states and UTs to continue to contribute to the country's development. In a series of posts on X, Mr Modi highlighted various features of the states celebrating their formation day as he extended his wishes.

Mr Shah also extended his greetings. In separate messages on X, he expressed hope that the states will continue the journey of development in the coming years. In his message, Mr Gandhi said, "Let us celebrate and safeguard this unity, recognising that each state's unique contribution enriches and strengthens the bonds that hold us together." More on Page 3

### Condemns violence against Hindus, minorities in B'desh Trump vows he will strengthen 'great partnership with India, 'friend' Modi

SRIDHAR KUMARASWAMI NEW DELHI, NOV. 1

Days ahead of the United States presidential polls next Tuesday, former US president and Republican contender Donald Trump on Friday (IST) promised to strengthen the "great partnership" with India and "good friend" Prime Minister Narendra Modi if elected to power. Eyeing the Indian-American vote, he also condemned atrocities



Donald Trump

against Hindus in Bangladesh and vowed to "protect" Hindu Americans against the anti-religion agenda of the radical Left. Wishing the community

on the occasion of Diwali on X, Mr Trump said, "I strongly condemn the barbaric violence against Hindus, Christians and other minorities who are getting attacked and looted by mobs in Bangladesh, which remains in a total state of chaos. It would have never happened on my watch. Kamala (Harris) and (US President) Joe (Biden) have ignored Hindu across the world and in America. They Turn to Page 4



Stock traders and their family members at the BSE auditorium during a special trading session in Mumbai on Friday. Report on Page 7 — PTI

## SHORT TAKES

### Driver killed after hit by constable's car

**New Delhi:** An autorickshaw driver was killed after being hit by a car driven by a Delhi Police constable in east Delhi's Kalyanpuri area, police said on Friday. The incident took place on Thursday night when the vehicles had a head-on collision near the Trilokpur road. According to a police officer, it is suspected that the accident took place as the autorickshaw was coming from the wrong side of the road but it is being further corroborated. The officer said soon after receiving a call, a police team reached the spot and found the damaged vehicles. The autorickshaw driver, Harsh (24), was already taken to a hospital while the driver of the car, constable Varun Yadav, was present at the spot, the officer said. He said Mr Yadav is deployed at the Mayur Vihar police station and was going for a case within his police station's jurisdiction. The constable was sent for a medical examination. "He was not found under the influence of alcohol," another officer said. A case under relevant legal provisions has been filed against Mr Yadav, police said. — PTI

### Kejriwal, wife prayer at Hanuman temple

**New Delhi:** Aam Aadmi Party (AAP) convener Arvind Kejriwal on Friday visited the Hanuman temple in Connaught Place and prayed for the well-being of people. The former Delhi chief minister, accompanied by his wife Sunita Kejriwal, performed a havan at the temple and sought blessings of the deity. "Went to Pracheen Hanuman temple today along with my wife, performed havan-puja and received blessings of the lord. Prayed to Hanuman ji for the well being and prosperity of all," Mr Kejriwal said in a post on X.

### Mahtab Alam JMI's officiating registrar

**New Delhi:** Jamia Millia Islamia (JMI) has appointed Muhammad Mahtab Alam Rizvi as the officiating registrar of the university, according to an official notification issued on Friday. Mr Rizvi serves as honorary director, Nelson Mandela Centre for Peace and Conflict Resolution at the university. He will succeed M. Nasim Haider, deputy registrar-I, who was officiating as registrar of the university for the last few months, the university said. Mr Rizvi has more than 20 years of teaching and research experiences. He joined the JMI in February 2017 and before that he worked as a fellow at the Institute for Defence Studies and Analyses, Delhi. He specialises in international relations, foreign policy and security issues, especially India's strategic relations with the countries in West Asia and North Africa, the notification said.

### COURT ALLOWS NATH'S KIN TO TRAVEL ABROAD

**AGE CORRESPONDENT NEW DELHI, NOV. 1**

A Delhi court has allowed former Madhya Pradesh chief minister Kamal Nath's nephew Ratul Puri, accused in a money laundering case connected to the purported fertiliser scam, to travel abroad. Judge Jitendra Singh allowed Mr Puri to travel to Japan from November 16 to 25; Oman from November 25 to December 1 and Thailand from December 20 to January 4, 2025, respectively. The judge directed Mr Puri to submit an affidavit before the court, detailing a complete itinerary of his abroad travel, and stay along with his phone number and an email-id before leaving the country. The judge directed him to furnish a fixed deposit receipt of ₹25 lakh before the court. "He shall not try to tamper with the evidence or influence any witness connected with the present case while travelling abroad," the judge said. The ED raised apprehensions of Mr Puri not returning to India if permitted to travel abroad while claiming that he could influence witnesses and tamper with the evidence.



Delhi chief minister Atishi (from left) with AAP leader Manish Sisodia and his family during Diwali celebration in New Delhi. Vehicles move on a road amid low visibility due to smog on Thursday. — PTI



## Govt has launched water-sprinkling campaign with 200 mobile anti-smog guns in 70 places, says Gopal Rai Crackers ban goes up in smoke, wind brings relief

**AGE CORRESPONDENT NEW DELHI, NOV. 1**

A thick layer of haze blanketed Delhi as the city's air quality index (AQI) dropped to 362 on Friday, following relentless bursting of firecrackers during Diwali celebrations the previous day. The air quality in Delhi, however, remained in the "very poor" category, thanks to above-normal temperatures and favourable winds that helped in the dispersion of pollutants.

The condition improved and the city's 24-hour average AQI recorded at 4 pm was 339, according to data from the Central Pollution Control Board (CPCB). The capital also saw an increase in the noise-pollution levels between 6 pm and midnight on Diwali, data from the Delhi Pollution Control Committee (DPCC) showed.

It was anticipated that Delhi's air quality would enter the "severe" category due to the bursting of firecrackers on Diwali, but it remained "very poor". Most monitoring stations in Delhi showed similar



A woman lights sparklers to celebrate Diwali in New Delhi on Thursday. — PTI

pollution levels, with 37 out of 39 reporting air quality in the "very poor" category. The air quality in Anand Vihar was in the "very poor" category, with an AQI of 385 at 11 am on Friday.

Areas including Alipur (335), Anand Vihar (385), Ashok Vihar (365), Aya Nagar (316), Bawana (364), Burari (345), Mathura Road (332), IGI Airport, Dwarka (367), Jahangirpuri (361), Mundka (340), Patparganj (339), Rohini (367), Sonia Vihar (370) and Wazirpur

(366) recorded "very poor" air quality, according to the Sameer app that provides hourly updates of the national AQI published by the CPCB. In its report on Diwali, the DPCC said the AQI did not show any significant change, even though many people flouted anti-pollution norms. According to the report, the 24-hour average AQI reached 328 on Thursday, rising to 360 on Friday morning.

A significant reduction in crop residue burning incidents also helped mitigate severe pollution lev-

els. The data revealed a 51 per cent reduction in residue-burning incidents in Punjab, Haryana, and Uttar Pradesh as compared to 2023, contributing to lower overall regional pollution.

Delhi environment minister Gopal Rai expressed gratitude to Delhiites for "largely refraining from bursting firecrackers" on Diwali, which helped prevent the city's AQI from slipping into the 'severe' category. "Thanks to the responsible actions of many residents who avoided using firecrackers, we managed to avoid a severe AQI reading," he said.

The Delhi minister also flagged off the first anti-smog guns to tackle the rising air pollution from the Delhi Secretariat. He said the government has deployed 200 mobile anti-smog guns across all 70 Assembly constituencies to curb dust and improve air quality.

"Given the current AQI levels, we have launched a water-sprinkling campaign across Delhi's roads using 200 mobile anti-smog guns," Mr Rai said.

### 318 fire-related calls, highest in 13 years on Diwali in Delhi

**AGE CORRESPONDENT NEW DELHI, NOV. 1**

The Delhi Fire Services (DFS) experienced a surge in fire-related calls this Diwali with more than 318 such incidents reported across the city, which is the highest in the past 13 years. According to officials, the increase is attributed to the extensive use of firecrackers.

"The figure marks the highest number of Diwali-related fire and emergency incidents in the past 13 years," DFS chief Atul Garg said.

The DFS, which had ramped up its readiness for the festival by deploying fire engines and personnel across the city, reported that most calls were received between 5 pm on October 31 and 5 am on November 1.

According to the data

shared by the DFS, they had received 206 fire-related calls in 2011, 184 in 2012, 177 in 2013, 211 in 2014, 290 in 2015, 243 in 2016, 204 in 2017, 271 in 2018, 245 in 2019, 205 in 2020, 152 in 2021, 201 in 2022 and 208 in 2023.

"This year, we received 318 fire-related calls. The number is the highest in the last 13 years. We were also fully prepared to tackle any and every situation with deployment of all the fire units and officials. We cancelled all the leaves and were ready to help everyone across the city," Mr Garg said.

He said at least 78 calls regarding fire incidents were received between 4 pm and 9 pm, while the peak time of such calls this year was 6 pm to 11.59 pm, when the DFS received 176 fire-related calls.

### BJP: Damaged roads, and not firecrackers polluted the air

**AGE CORRESPONDENT NEW DELHI, NOV. 1**

The BJP on Friday claimed Delhi's air quality had worsened due to AAP and its chief Arvind Kejriwal's failure to repair the city's damaged roads by October 31, and not the firecrackers burst on Diwali.

Delhi BJP chief Virendra Sachdeva said, despite firecrackers being lit all night, Friday's AQI in the city is lower than Thursday, clearly showing that under Mr Kejriwal's direction, the AAP government deliberately defamed the Sanatan tradition of lighting firecrackers on Diwali.

The truth is that dust from vehicles running daily on Delhi's broken roads has a greater impact than firecrackers lit on a single night, he said.

Leader of the Opposition in the Delhi Assembly Vijender Gupta, who visited the Shastrri Park area on Friday, claimed hundreds of roads in the city were lying in disrepair despite promises by AAP leaders. "AAP should stop indulging in politics and blame games, and instead focus on local sources of pollution such as dust that are more responsible for the hazardous air quality in Delhi," Mr Gupta said.

South Delhi BJP MP Ramvir Singh Bidhuri said that the AAP government has been misleading the people of Delhi by blaming the Diwali celebrations as a cause of the worsened air quality.

## Ban not properly enforced, say experts

**New Delhi, Nov. 1:** Gaps in enforcement, limited monitoring, and easy access to firecrackers from the NCR region, where restrictions were slack, were largely responsible for the widespread flouting of the cracker ban in Delhi on Diwali, experts have opined.

Although the Delhi government had set up 377 enforcement teams and spread awareness through local associations to ensure compliance with the firecracker ban, neighbourhoods across the east-

ern and western parts of the city reported large-scale flouting of the restrictions.

Experts highlighted that unchecked sales and an influx of firecrackers from neighbouring regions combined with weak on-ground presence of authorities contributed to the mass violations that left the city shrouded in smog on Thursday.

A senior Delhi Pollution Control Committee (DPCC) official said they conducted several awareness campaigns against

bursting crackers, but enforcing the ban was the Delhi police's responsibility.

However, a senior police official denied the "failure of administration" charge, while asserting that legal actions were taken against people flouting the ban.

The city's air quality dropped to the "very poor" category, with an Air Quality Index (AQI) of 330 at 10 pm on Diwali. Key areas, including Anand Vihar, saw the AQI plunge into the "severe"

category while PM2.5 concentrations soared, creating hazardous conditions for respiratory health.

Many authorities lacked real-time monitoring tools to control the distribution and usage of firecrackers within city limits, making it challenging to uphold the ban effectively, environment experts said.

Rajiv Kakkria, the convenor of a South Delhi-based collective of resident welfare associations (RWAs) said the firecracker ban in Delhi was not enforced effectively. — PTI

### Gurgaon man drowns while taking selfie

**Gurgaon, Nov. 1:** A 26-year-old youth drowned during boating with friends in Damdama lake here while taking selfie on Diwali. His friends tried to save him but they could not succeed, police said. The deceased has been identified as Avinash, a resident of the Abhaypur village.

Avinash went to Damdama Lake with his three friends Deepak, Rohit and Manish on Thursday, they added.

According to police, Avinash lost his balance while taking selfies and fell into the lake. Avinash's body was taken out of the lake after about one-and-a-half hours.

"On the basis of the statements of his friends and on a complaint of his family an FIR was registered under section 194 of the BNS and a probe is underway," police said. — PTI

## Man & nephew killed, son hurt in Shahdara shooting

**City law & order collapsed: AAP; BJP refutes charge**

**BHASKAR HARI SHARMA NEW DELHI, NOV. 1**

A 17-year-old youth was nabbed on Friday for his alleged involvement in a shooting incident in Shahdara's Farsh Bazar area on Diwali evening, in which a man and his teenage nephew were killed, while his 15-year-old son was injured.

According to police officials, the juvenile, a distant relative of the victim, claimed during interrogation that he had a dispute with deceased Akash Sharma involving ₹70,000, which led him to hatch a conspiracy to kill him.

The accused had hired a shooter to commit the crime. CCTV footage purportedly of the shooting incident that surfaced on social media on Friday showed one of the two accused touching Akash Sharma's feet before the

other opened fire on him. The three victims were taken to a hospital where Akash and Rishabh were declared dead, while Krish was undergoing treatment, the police said.

DCP (Shahdara) Prashant Gautam said the juvenile accused, a distant relative of the victim, has been apprehended. "Investigations are still on and we are trying to nab the shooter," the DCP said. According to the deceased's family, they had a rivalry with the accused and his kin over property and money.

Akash's mother, Shashi, told reporters that they were getting threats for the past several days.

Earlier in the day, senior AAP leader and Delhi minister Saurabh Bharadwaj expressed concerns, alleging the worsening law and order situation in Delhi.

"Due to the collapsed law and order situation in the city, two people celebrating Diwali were murdered in public last night. If the BJP had put efforts into improving the law and order situation, then murders, gang wars, and looting would not be taking place every day," Mr Bharadwaj said.

Reacting to the AAP, Delhi BJP President, Virendra Sachdeva said Delhi police apprehends criminals for any criminal case within 24 to 96 hours and solves the case, but it is regrettable that AAP leaders continuously attempt to demoralise police due to their vested political interests.

### Govt declares Nov. 7 holiday for Chhath Puja

**AGE CORRESPONDENT NEW DELHI, NOV. 1**

Delhi chief minister Atishi on Friday declared a public holiday on November 7 for Chhath Puja celebrations. The announcement came hours after Delhi lieutenant-governor V.K. Saxena wrote to the CM requesting her to declare a holiday on November 7.

Chhath is a major Hindu festival celebrated in the states of Bihar and eastern Uttar Pradesh.

"I am happy to inform you that the Delhi government has decided to declare a holiday on November 7 for the festival of Chhath, so that all our brothers and sisters of Purvanchal can celebrate the festival with pomp and show," the Ms Atishi wrote on her X account.

## HC seeks CBFC stand on movie release plea

**AGE CORRESPONDENT NEW DELHI, NOV. 1**

The Delhi high court has sought the stand of the Central Board of Film Certification (CBFC) on a petition seeking to ensure movies released after September 14 follow the accessibility guidelines for persons with hearing and visual disabilities.

Justice Sanjeev Narula issued notice on the plea by Suman Bhokray, who suffers from visual disability, and asked the authorities to file a response within four weeks.

The petitioner said according to the guidelines for accessibility standards in the public exhibition of feature films in cinema theatres for persons with hearing and visual impairment, issued on March 15 by the ministry of information and broadcasting, feature films certified in more

than one language were required to provide at least one accessibility feature each for persons with hearing and visually disabilities, like closed captions and audio descriptions, from September 14.

The petitioner's counsel claimed non-compliance with a high court order with respect to the mandatory accessibility features for persons with disabilities in film exhibitions.

Movies 'Vettaian' and 'Martin,' which were released after September 14, did not fully integrate the mandatory accessibility features, it was illustrated.

The petitioner said movies should be screened on an "accessibility application" which was universally acceptable and provided the mandatory accessibility features in the films certified by the CBFC.

## L-G eases criteria for jobs to anti-Sikh riots victims

**AGE CORRESPONDENT NEW DELHI, NOV. 1**

Delhi lieutenant-governor V.K. Saxena on Friday approved relaxation in qualifications for recruitment of victims of the 1984 Sikh riots to the post of multi-tasking staff.

With the L-G's approval, the minimum educational qualification for the post of MTS has been relaxed from Class 10 to Class 8, making a larger number of

candidates eligible for the job, said a statement from Raj Niwas.

According to the officials, this decision, pending for decades, will enable a larger pool of candidates to secure employment by becoming eligible for the post.

Mr Saxena has also directed the concerned departments to explore the possibility of providing employment to the children of deceased or



V.K. Saxena

aged applicants on humanitarian grounds, it stated. The L-G directed full relaxation in required education qualification to

the post of MTS for the remaining applicants who were identified by the revenue department.

In cases where the applicants have passed away or have crossed the age limit for employment despite the age relaxation, the department will process the applications to grant employment to one of their children, the Raj Niwas said.

The decision comes after a comprehensive review of

the cases which revealed that several applicants had been denied employment despite meeting eligibility criteria, it said.

Various groups, public representatives, the Delhi Sikh Gurdwara Management Committee, and a delegation of the victims had met the L-G and appealed to consider all eligible applicants, including those who may have aged out or passed away, it said.

## Man stabbed, succumbs in hosp in Dwarka; case filed

**AGE CORRESPONDENT NEW DELHI, NOV. 1**

A 38-year-old man died after he was stabbed by a few people early Friday in Delhi's Dwarka area.

According to police, a PCR call was received at 2.53 am about a man being stabbed by some people on Hastals Road in Uttam Nagar. A police team rushed to the spot and learnt that the injured identified as, Gagan Oberoi was taken to a hospital where he died during

treatment, a senior police officer said.

The officer said an FIR has been registered on the complaint made by his nephew Aryan Oberoi and a probe has been launched to find the exact reason behind the murder. "The accused have been identified and teams are on the lookout to nab them," the officer added.

Police said Gagan was a property dealer by profession and was standing outside of his house when the incident occurred.

SHORT TAKES

Goa Speaker rejects plea against 8 MLAs

**Panaji:** Goa Assembly speaker Ramesh Tawadkar on Friday dismissed the disqualification petition filed by the Congress against eight of its MLAs who defected to the ruling BJP. The disqualification petition was filed by former Goa Congress chief Girish Chodankar against MLAs Digambar Kamat, Aleixo Sequeira, Sankalp Amonkar, Michael Lobo, Delilah Lobo, Kedar Naik, Rudolf Fernandes and Rajesh Faldesai. Mr Chodankar, in his petition, had sought that the speaker disqualify these eight MLAs under Para 2 of the Tenth Schedule read with Article 191 of the Constitution on the ground that they had voluntarily given up the membership of the original party (Congress) on the tickets of which they had contested for the 8th Goa Assembly and had won. In his plea, Mr Chodankar said there was no valid merger of the original political party in this case. — PTI

Raut: No fair polls till DGP is replaced

**Mumbai:** Shiv Sena (UBT) leader Sanjay Raut on Friday said that the Assembly elections cannot be free and fair in Maharashtra if Rashmi Shukla continues to lead the state police force. He alleged that she is biased towards the ruling BJP. Mr Raut's remark came a day after the Maharashtra Congress reiterated its demand of removal of Ms Shukla from the post of DGP. The Congress pointed out that when the BJP demanded removal of Jharkhand's DGP and West Bengal's DGP, they were replaced but the Congress' demand was overlooked. Speaking with reporters, Mr Raut said that there are serious allegations against Maharashtra DGP Rashmi Shukla. "In 2019, she acted at the behest of the BJP when our (MVA) government was formed. Our phones were illegally tapped."

Khuntia frontrunner for OPCC chief post

**Bhubaneswar:** Odisha's political landscape is abuzz with speculation as the race for the new Odisha Pradesh Congress Committee (OPCC) president heats up. With Sarat Pattanayak stepping down from the post, accepting responsibility for Congress' setbacks in recent Lok Sabha and Assembly elections, a new leader is anticipated to take charge and rebuild party momentum in the state. Among the contenders, Ramachandra Khuntia, who has led the state unit of the Indian National Trade Union Congress (INTUC) for over four decades, has emerged as a leading candidate. Known for his clean image and strong organisational skills, Mr Khuntia boasts the support of INTUC's 22.59 lakh members.

CONG: U'KHAND A HUB FOR GUJ CONTRACTORS

**PRITHVIRAJ SINGH DEHRADUN, NOV. 1**

The Congress on Friday alleged that Uttarakhand has become a business hub for Gujarati contractors as the BJP government is preparing to sell over 700 acres of land in Chopta Hills of the Kedar Valley, where the bypoll will be held on November 20. The Congress has claimed that all big government contracts in the state were being offered to companies and businessmen from Gujarat by the Pushkar Singh Dhami government. Former Congress MLA and party's nominee for the Kedarnath bypoll Manoj Rawat alleged that all major construction contracts in the state are being handed to contractors from Gujarat. Mr Rawat said if elected, he would raise the issue in the Uttarakhand Assembly and seek an answer from the state government. "All major construction contracts in Kedarnath and Badrinath shrine areas and other parts of the state have been given to firms and contractors from Gujarat. Does that mean BJP's Gujarat model has failed and contractors there don't have enough work? On the other hand, contractors and skilled workers from the state are not getting enough work," Mr Rawat said.

No surprise over EC's clean chit to itself: Cong

AGE CORRESPONDENT NEW DELHI, NOV. 1

The war of words between the Congress and the Election Commission (EC) intensified on Friday as the grand old party targeted the poll body for the "tone" of its communications.

"The EC's recent history does not shroud it with glory and it refuses to take it lightly any more," the Congress said. The Congress said it was "not surprised" that the EC has "given itself a clean chit" through a "generic" response focused on diminishing "specific" complaints about irregularities in 26 constituencies during the recently-concluded Haryana Assembly elections.

In its letter to the EC, signed by nine senior Congress leaders, including general secretary in-charge communications Jairam Ramesh, the party said, "We have carefully studied your response to our complaints. Not surprisingly, the EC has given a clean chit to itself. We would normally have let it be at that. However, the tone and tenor of the EC's response, the language used and the allegations against the INC compel us to submit the counter-response."

"We do not know who is advising or guiding the commission, but it seems that the commission has forgotten that it is a body set up under the Constitution and charged with the discharge of certain crucial functions — both administrative and quasi-judicial," the response by the Congress leaders said.



Fireworks during the Diwali celebrations in Jabalpur on Thursday night. — PTI

BJP banks on PM, Marandi to win JMM tribal votebank

Seeks to woo voters with financial support, jobs for youth

AMRESH SRIVASTAVA NEW DELHI, NOV. 1

As the Jharkhand Assembly elections draw closer, the BJP is going all out to break the traditional tribal support for the Jharkhand Mukti Morcha (JMM). While the BJP is focusing on an anti-corruption narrative, some strategists within the party are wary of a potential "sympathy factor" favouring chief minister Hemant Soren. The saffron party is also banking heavily on the popularity of Prime Minister Narendra Modi, who is set to start campaigning in the tribal state on Wednesday.

Mr Soren's arrest by earlier this year the Enforcement Directorate on the charges of corruption has evoked a strong emotional response from the tribal community. Many view his arrest as politically motivated.

The return of former chief minister Babul Marandi to the BJP fold could be a gamechanger for the party's poll prospects as he has a substantial influence among

**IN THIS** high-stakes political battle, the issue of Bangladeshi and Rohingya infiltration has taken centrestage in the BJP's campaign

tribal communities. He has been highlighting the allegations of corruption within the Soren-led JMM government.

In 2019, Mr Marandi contested the Assembly polls separately under his own party Jharkhand Vikas Morcha but he merged his party with the BJP and later became state president in July 2023.

The defection of another key tribal leader Champai Soren from the JMM adds to the advantage for the BJP. Both leaders are reinforcing the BJP's appeal in the tribal communities. In this high-stakes political battle, the issue of Bangladeshi and Rohingya infiltration has taken centrestage in the BJP's campaign. Senior BJP leaders, including Prime Minister Narendra Modi and home minister Amit Shah, have highlighted illegal migrants as a pressing concern,

emphasising its impact on the tribal regions of Santal Parganas and Kolhan region.

Assam chief minister and BJP state co-in-charge Himanta Biswa Sarma has claimed that unchecked migration has turned parts of Santal Pargana into "mini Bangladesh", altering local demographics and threatening tribal communities.

The BJP's strategists have made this topic central to their campaign messaging, openly accusing the JMM of encouraging immigration to build its vote bank. The JMM, however, has yet to respond publicly to these claims.

The BJP also seeks to capitalise on an anti-incumbency wave against the ruling JMM-led alliance. The Hemant Soren government has been facing growing criticism over issues such as unemployment, corruption, and slow-paced development. The recent arrest of chief minister Soren on corruption charges has provided further ammunition for the BJP's anti-corruption narrative.

Devender, 'voice of Jammu', falls silent

BJP leader dies in NCR hosp; Modi, Omar express grief

**Jammu, Nov. 1:** Jammu and Kashmir BJP MLA Devender Singh Rana, who passed away in a hospital in Haryana, was cremated on Friday with full honours in Jammu, where thousands of people and top political leaders, cutting across party lines, bid adieu to him.

Rana died at a hospital in Faridabad after a brief illness. He was 59 years old.

According to a senior BJP leader, Rana was undergoing treatment at the hospital. He is survived by his wife, Gunjan Rana, their daughters Devyani and Ketki, and son Adhiraj Singh.

The last rites of Rana, known as "voice of Jammu", were performed at the Shastri Nagar crematorium, where his mortal remains were ferried in a flower-decked vehicle and received Union territory (UT) honours.

Amid chants of "Rana sahib amar rahein", thousands of mourners with tearful eyes paid their respects at his residence soon after his body arrived from Faridabad. In the presence of J&K chief minister Omar



Family members of late Nagrota MLA Devender Singh Rana during his last rites in Jammu on Friday. — PTI

Abdullah, Union ministers Gajendra Singh Shekhawat and Jitendra Singh, J&K deputy chief minister Surinder Kumar Choudhary, minister Satish Sharma, BJP Jammu and Kashmir chief Ravinder Raina, BJP MLAs and MP Jugal Kishore, the police paid their respects with the sounding of the last bugle and a salute.

Mr Shekhawat, who flew from New Delhi to attend Rana's cremation, said, "Devender Rana was a senior leader with a deep understanding of the party's ideology. His loss is significant for the BJP."

Political leaders from various parties gathered to bid farewell to Rana, who passed away late on Diwali night. He was a prominent entrepreneur and an influential politician.

Mr Abdullah travelled to Jammu on Friday to bid farewell to Rana, his former aide, and conveyed his condolences to the bereaved family. "Rana's death is an irreparable loss to Jammu and Kashmir and the BJP. He was a political stalwart whose influence extended beyond party and religious lines," Mr Raina said. — PTI

Visits border near Tawang, celebrates Diwali with Indian jawans

Rijiju interacts with Chinese soldiers

**Tawang, Nov. 1:** Union minister Kiren Rijiju on Friday said he interacted with soldiers of China's People's Liberation Army along the Sino-Indian border near Tawang during a visit to an Indian Army post on Diwali.

Mr Rijiju also said he celebrated Diwali with the Army jawans at Bumla in Arunachal Pradesh on Thursday.

In the short video, posted on X, the Union minister of parliamentary and minority affairs was seen talking to three PLA soldiers through an interpreter asking them how they were managing while being posted in such a high-altitude area which



Union minister Kiren Rijiju interacts with soldiers during the Diwali celebrations in Tawang. — PTI

is located 15,000 feet above sea level. The PLA soldiers replied that they had no problems while serving in such

areas and they were comfortable.

Mr Rijiju also praised the kind of infrastructure built and other develop-

ment works being carried out by the government along the international border.

"After talking to Chinese soldiers and seeing the infrastructures, everyone will feel proud of India's border development now," Mr Rijiju said.

The Union minister, who hails from Arunachal Pradesh, also interacted and spent time with Indian Army jawans and celebrated the Diwali with them.

He said Prime Minister Narendra Modi has been celebrating every Diwali with jawans since 2014 and he (Rijiju) has also been doing the same since then. — PTI

'Soothsayer' in MP performs 'yagnas' to win byelections

AGE CORRESPONDENT RAIPUR, NOV. 1

A self-proclaimed soothsayer has grabbed the attention of voters in the Raipur (South) Assembly constituency, scheduled to go to the byelections on November 13, with his unique style of campaigning to "win the polls with divine intervention" by performing "special yagnas".

Niroj Saini, one of the 46 candidates contesting in the bypolls, seems to be heavily relying on his "divine poll strategy".

Fashion icon Rohit Bal dies

**New Delhi, Nov. 1:** Rohit Bal, one of India's most celebrated fashion designers, died on Friday at a south Delhi hospital following a heart attack. Fashion Design Council of India (FDCI) president Sunil Sethi said, He was 63.

Bal had been admitted to the ICU of a private hospital in Gurgaon for cardiac issues in December last year. In October this year, he presented his collection at the Lakme Fashion Week X FDCI 2024 grand finale. "It's true that he

has passed away. He had a cardiac arrest... Heart failure. Rohit was a legend, we are completely shaken right now. We are trying to work out details for the cremation tomorrow," Mr Sethi said. He had been admitted to Aashlok Hospital in Safdarjung Enclave and was being treated by Dr Alok Chopra, he added. Doctors tried their best for two hours to

revive him, a heartbroken Mr Sethi added. The FDCI expressed deep sadness over the loss, honoring Bal as a founding member whose contributions to Indian fashion have left a lasting legacy. "We mourn the passing of legendary designer Rohit Bal... Known for his unique blend of traditional patterns with modern sensibilities, Bal's work redefined Indian fashion and inspired generations," the FDCI wrote on Instagram. — Agencies



Rohit Bal

Sr IAS officer Rajesh Kumar takes over as defence secy

AGE CORRESPONDENT NEW DELHI, NOV. 1

Rajesh Kumar Singh, a 1989-batch IAS officer from the Kerala cadre, took over as the defence secretary on Friday. He had assumed the charge of the officer on special duty (defence secretary-designate) on August 20.

Mr Singh succeeded Giridhar Aramane, a 1988-batch IAS officer of the Andhra Pradesh cadre, who superannuated from service on October 31.

Before taking charge, Mr Singh laid a wreath and paid homage to the fallen heroes at the National War Memorial. "The nation will remain forever indebted to our brave soldiers who make the supreme sacrifice in the service of the motherland. Their extraordinary bravery and sacrifice is a source of strength and inspiration for us to make India a safe and prosperous nation," he said. He has held many other important positions in the Union government.

Sena-UBT MP is booked over 'imported maal' jibe

BHAGWAN PARAB MUMBAI, NOV. 1

Shiv Sena (UBT) MP Arvind Sawant stoked a major controversy after he called Eknath Shinde-led Shiv Sena's candidate Shaina NC an "imported maal". The police has registered a case against Mr Sawant on a complaint lodged by Shaina, who called his remark "outraging the modesty of a woman".

Owing to the seat adjustments, Shaina quit the BJP to switch to its ally Eknath Shinde-led Shiv Sena ahead of the Maharashtra Assembly elections to contest from the Mumbai West constituency. The Opposition Maha Vikas Aghadi (MVA), which comprises the Shiv Sena (UBT),

the Congress and the NCP(SP), has fielded sitting MLA Congress' Amin Patel from the seat.

During the campaigning two days ago, Mr Sawant had said, "She (Shaina) stayed all her life in the BJP and now look at her... When she did not get (ticket) there, she went to another party. Imported 'maal' (goods) are not accepted here. Only original goods are accepted here."

Reacting to Mr Sawant's remark, Shaina complained to Nagpada police station. Based on her complaint, a case was registered against the Shiv Sena (UBT) MP under Sections 79 (linked to outraging the modesty of a woman) and 356(2) (relating to defaming a person) of the Bharatiya Nyaya Sanhita.

Not a big fan of 10 Janpath bungalow: Rahul

**New Delhi, Nov. 1:** Leader of the Opposition in the Lok Sabha Rahul Gandhi, who has spent a lot of time at the 10 Janpath bungalow in Lutyens' Delhi, says he is "not a big fan" of the house.

The reason is that his father and former Prime Minister Rajiv Gandhi was living in the 10 Janpath house when he was assassinated in Tamil Nadu's Sripurambudur on May 21, 1991.



Leader of the Opposition in the Lok Sabha Rahul Gandhi tries his hand at pottery during a visit to a pottery family amid the Diwali festivities. — PTI

Vadra, while working with paint job workers at the 10 Janpath residence ahead of Diwali.

The conversation is recorded as part of a Diwali video that Mr Gandhi released on

Friday in which he interacts with paint job workers and potters. The video also features Raihan Rajiv with whom Mr Gandhi is in conversation. The 10 Janpath bungalow had been allocated to Rajiv Gandhi in 1990. After his death, it was allocated in the name of his wife Sonia Gandhi, who has been living there. Since Rahul Gandhi became an MP, his residence had been 12 Tughlaq Lane. However, he had vacated that house after he was disqualified from the Lok Sabha last year, following his conviction in a defamation case. — PTI

NORTHERN RAILWAY	
E-TENDER NOTICE	
Dy.CS/TE/CP/SP/NDLS, Eastern Railway, New Delhi for and on behalf of the President of India invites open e-tender (Single Packet System) for the following work: -	
1	Name of work & Place: 01 Year Annual Maintenance Contract of Byte Communication System installed in CAO/C office, K. Gate, Delhi. (Only OEM or authorized dealer of OEM is eligible for this tender)
2	Completion period: 12 months from the date of issue of LOA
3	Approx. cost: Rs. 2,82,971/- approx.
4	Earnest money amount: Rs. 5700/- (Rupees Five Thousand Seven Hundred only) (Will be deposited online only)
5	Sale/availability of tender document on Rly. Website: Tender documents will be available on IREPS website i.e. www.ireps.gov.in from 02.11.2024 to 22.11.2024 upto 11.30 hrs.
6	Last date/Time of upload of tenders: Tender documents can be uploaded by the tenderer on IREPS website i.e. 08.11.2024 to 22.11.2024 upto 11.30 hours.
7	Date of opening of tender: Tender will be opened on 22.11.2024 at 11.30 hours
No. 570-Sig-C-PS-AMC-Byte-24 Dated: 01.11.2024 3389/2024	
SERVING CUSTOMERS WITH A SMILE	

SHORT TAKES

2 die after eating mango kernel dishes

**Bhubaneswar:** Two women have died, and six others are in critical condition after allegedly consuming dishes made from mango kernels in Odisha's Kandhamal district. The incident occurred in Mandipanka village under the Daringbadi block. Despite government-provided rations, many tribal communities in the area continue to include mango kernels and bamboo flowers in their diet as part of their traditional food practices. According to reports, the women experienced severe stomach pain and discomfort after consuming the mango kernel dishes. Initially treated at the local Godapur Community Health Centre (CHC), they were later transferred to the MKCG Medical College and Hospital in Bhubaneswar when their conditions worsened. Tragically, one of the women died while receiving treatment, and a young girl passed away en route to MKCG.

10 trains cancelled after wagon derails

**Guwahati:** Movement of trains in Assam's Lumding-Badarpur hill section continued to be affected following the derailment of a loaded wagon of a goods train more than 24 hours ago, an official bulletin said on Friday. The wagon carrying grains derailed inside a tunnel near Mupa around 4 pm Thursday. The accident has completely snapped rail connectivity between Assam's Barak Valley and Tripura for over 24 hours now. Altogether 10 trains have been cancelled, while four have been partially cancelled due to the mishap.

MVA, Mahayuti in bid to rein in rebels

**Continued From Page 1**  
"They are our own people and it is our responsibility to talk to them and convince them. Many times there is displeasure (over ticket distribution), but we are confident of convincing all of them to work for the party," he said in Nagpur. The former chief minister is contesting the November 20 election from the Nagpur South-West Assembly constituency. Mr Fadnavis earlier too had said every party had rebel candidates and the BJP is trying to convince most of the rebels and help them withdraw their nominations. "Rebel candidates exist in every party and we are trying to help most of the rebels understand and withdraw their nominations. However, in some places, it will be a friendly fight," he said. The Maharashtra Vidhan Sabha elections are scheduled for November 20, with counting for all 288 constituencies set for November 23. In the 2019 Vidhan Sabha elections, the BJP won 105 seats, the undivided Shiv Sena 56, the undivided NCP 54 and the Congress 44. In 2014, the BJP secured 122 seats, the Shiv Sena 63, the Congress 42 and the NCP 41.

Met office forecasts warm Nov, with no hint of winter

'Temp will remain 2-5° above normal in north-western plains for 2 weeks'

**New Delhi, Nov. 1:** India experienced its warmest October since 1901 with mean temperature recording 1.23 degrees Celsius above normal, the weather office said on Friday. It predicted a warmer November, giving no indication of the upcoming winter. Addressing a press conference here, India Meteorological Department director-general Mrityunjay Mohapatra attributed the warmer weather to the absence of western disturbances and influx of easterly winds due to active low pressure systems in the Bay of Bengal. The mean temperature in October was recorded at 26.92 degrees Celsius, the warmest since 1901,



The Taj Mahal complex is obscured by smog a day after the festival of Diwali in Agra on Friday.

needed for lower temperatures. The monsoonal flow was also there that does not allow fall in temperature," IMD DG said. He said the temperatures will continue to remain 2-5 degrees above normal in the north-western plains at least for the next two weeks, before a gradual

decline towards normalcy. Mr Mohapatra said the weather office does not count November as a winter month. He said January and February are considered as winter months, while the hints of the cold weather are available in December. In the southern peninsula, the north-east monsoon is expected to bring above normal rainfall in November in Tamil Nadu, Puducherry and Karaikal, Coastal Andhra Pradesh and Yanam, Rayalaseema, Kerala and Mahe and south interior Karnataka. "The above normal to normal rainfall is likely over most parts of the country except northwest India and some areas of central India," the weather office said.

Kanpur bizman, wife, maid choke to death in house fire

**Kanpur, Nov. 1:** A prominent businessman, his wife and their domestic help died allegedly of suffocation inside their house here following a fire that broke out from a 'diya' early Friday, the police said. The couple had installed an electronic lock on their bedroom door but as the blaze erupted, they failed to enter the correct unlocking code in panic and remained trapped, a senior officer said. Sanjay Shyam Dasani (49), his wife Kanika (45) and their domestic help Chhavi Chauhan (24), a resident of the city's Pandu Nagar area, died in the fire. Dasani, a prominent local businessman, owned a biscuit company Ambaji Foods and was involved in

other business ventures. Deputy commissioner of police (Central Kanpur) Dinesh Tripathi said the fire began around 3 am, after the family performed late night prayers, leaving the lamp burning in the temple, made of wood. "Dasani, his wife and their maid had all retired to their bedrooms on the first floor of their three-storey house and were asleep when the fire spread rapidly through the house," the officer

said. "When local officials, including the fire brigade, were alerted, they reached the spot and the trio was rushed to the Regency Hospital where they were declared dead by doctors" he said. DCP Tripathi said the couple apparently tried opening their bedroom door but were unable to do so due to an electronic lock. In the midst of the emergency, they might have struggled to enter the correct code on the lock panel, he said. Around 4 am, their son Harsh Dasani returned home after Diwali celebrations with friends and discovered the house filled with thick smoke and flames, according to the police.

3 dead, many hurt in Odisha fire incidents on Diwali night

**AGE CORRESPONDENT BHUBANESWAR, NOV. 1**  
Diwali celebrations turned tragic in Odisha on Thursday as three people lost their lives and over a dozen others were injured in separate firecracker-related incidents across the state. The mishaps also caused extensive property damage, with losses amounting to lakhs of rupees. In Puri, a youth succumbed to injuries sustained while bursting firecrackers. Three individuals, including a woman from Batagaon under Sadar police jurisdiction in Puri, suffered

severe injuries in a firecracker mishap. All were initially treated at the Puri District Headquarters Hospital (DHH), but one youth's condition worsened and he was transferred to SCB Medical College and Hospital in Cuttack, where he later passed away. The two other injured individuals were transferred to AIIMS Bhubaneswar, where they remain in critical condition. Similar incidents were reported in Bhubaneswar, with several people injured while celebrating with firecrackers.

2 killed after being hit by train while making reel in UP

**Etawah (UP), Nov. 1:** A youth and a teenager were killed after being hit by a train while recording a video on a track near Ikdil Railway Station in Etawah district, police said on Friday. Ikdil station house officer Bhimsen said, "the victims Anuj Kumar (20) and Ranjit Kumar (16) were residents of Hiranpur village in Ikdil." They left home on Friday morning for nature's calls, the SHO said. "The two were making reel on mobile phones when they were hit by Humsafar Express train," he said.

Eco adviser to PM Debroy dies at 69

**Continued From Page 1**  
"Unusual Column. Short of a requiem", according to the daily. In the article, not published yet, he wrote about life after coming out of the cardiac care centre at AIIMS nearly a month ago. "There is a world outside that exists. What if I am not there? What indeed?" he wrote, in the article posted by the newspaper on its website on Friday. In 2016, the government decided to merge the Railway Budget with the Union Budget from Budget year 2017-18 based on the recommendations of a committee headed by Dr Debroy. Prime Minister Narendra Modi consoled Dr Debroy's passing and called him a "towering scholar". Mr Modi said in a post on X: "Dr Bibek Debroy ji was a towering scholar, well-versed in diverse domains like economics, history, culture, politics, spirituality and more. Through his works, he left an indelible mark on India's intellectual landscape. Beyond his contributions to public policy, he enjoyed working on our ancient texts, making them accessible to the youth." Dr Debroy was unique in his wide range of interests and scholarly pursuits. From his deep passion for translation work of Sanskrit texts to

his dedication towards railway reforms, interests in fountain pens to some uncommon research interests like the role of dogs in Indian/Hindu life. Dr Debroy's economic interests and research work covered numerous areas such as economic theory, income inequality, and infrastructure financing. In his long career as economist, within and outside the government, Dr Debroy also courted controversies, including the one when as director (research) of Rajiv Gandhi Institute of Contemporary Studies in 2005, he came out with a research paper, rating Gujarat as the number one state in India in terms of providing economic freedom. He was reportedly shifted thereafter. The research paper was sponsored by the Friedrich-Naumann Stiftung in Germany and published by RGF, which oversees the operations of the institute. In September, Dr Debroy resigned as chancellor of the Gokhale Institute of Politics and Economics (GIPE) after the Bombay high court extended interim relief to vice-chancellor Ajit Ranade, who was earlier removed from his post. He was named chancellor of GIPE, a deemed-to-be university, in July.

'Give realistic guarantees'

**Continued From Page 1**  
development. Not only that, they are also going to roll back existing schemes. In Himachal Pradesh, salaries of government workers are not paid on time. In Telangana, farmers are waiting for the waiver they promised. Previously, in Chhattisgarh and Rajasthan, they promised certain allowances that were never implemented for five years," Mr Modi said, pointing out that there are numerous such examples of how the Congress works. Urging people to be vigilant against the Congress's fake promises, Mr Modi said, "The people of the country will have to be vigilant against the Congress-sponsored culture of fake promises!" Noting that people of Haryana rejected the Congress's lies, the Prime Minister said, "We saw recently how the people of Haryana rejected their lies and preferred a government that is stable, progress oriented and action-driven. There is a growing realisation across India that a vote for the Congress is a vote for non-governance, poor economics and unparalleled loot. The people of India want development and progress, not the same old #FakePromisesOfCongress!"

ed and presented as if the Congress government in the state wanted to withdraw it. "Whatever statement I had made was distorted as if we would stop it (Shakti scheme). I only said some section of people are saying so. There is no question of winding up any guarantee," the Karnataka deputy CM told the media in Bengaluru. Notwithstanding the clarification, the BJP latched on to the Congress president's advice that his party's state units should make only those promises that are fiscally doable and demanded Lok Sabha Leader of the Opposition Rahul Gandhi and Mr Kharge's apology. Mr Kharge's statement is seen by many as an acknowledgement of financial constraints that some of its guarantees face in states. Addressing a press conference in the national capital, former Union minister Ravi Shankar Prasad asked mockingly if Mr Kharge has given his first "gyan" to Mr Gandhi, noting the former Congress president often boasts of "khata khat" (immediate) transfer of money to different population segments during state and national elections in the case of his party coming to power.

India-US spl forces' joint drill in Idaho from Nov. 2

PAWAN BALI NEW DELHI, NOV. 1

The Indian Army's special forces will participate in bilateral military exercises in the US and Indonesia. An Army contingent departed on Friday for the 15th edition of the India-US joint special forces exercise "Vajra Prahar". The exercise will be conducted from November 2 to 22 at the Orchard Combat Training Centre in Idaho, US. The previous edition of the exercise was conducted in Meghalaya's Umroi in December 2023. This will be the second exercise of the year between the two armies. The "Yudh Abhyas 2024" exercise was held in Rajasthan in September 2024. The two contingents participating in the joint exercise will comprise 45

personnel each. The Indian Army contingent will be represented by the special forces units and the US Army contingent will be represented by the Green Berets. The exercise will enhance combined capabilities in executing joint special forces operations in desert/semi-desert environments. The exercise will focus on a high degree of physical fitness, joint planning and joint tactical drills. Meanwhile, a contingent comprising 25 Indian Army personnel departed for Cijantung, Indonesia, to participate in the 9th

edition of the India-Indonesia joint special forces exercise "Garud Shakti 24". The exercise began on November 1st and is scheduled to end on November 12. The Parachute Regiment (special forces) will represent the Indian contingent while the Indonesian contingent, comprising 40 personnel, is being represented by Indonesian special forces Kopassus. The exercise aims to acquaint both sides with each other's operating procedures and enhance mutual understanding, cooperation and interoperability between the special forces of both armies. The drill is designed to develop bilateral military cooperation and strengthen the bond between the two armies through the conduct of discussions and rehearsal of tactical military drills.

MHA award for four STF members of Assam police

MANOJ ANAND GUWAHATI, NOV. 1

The ministry of home affairs has awarded four officers of the Special Task Force (STF) with the Kendriya Grihamantri Dakshata Padak in the "Special Operations Field" category. The ministry has selected these officers to acknowledge their exemplary contributions in addressing Assam's critical criminal challenges from March 21 last year to March 24 this year. The officers bestowed with distinguished awards are IGP Partha Sarathi Mahanta, who is also the head of the STF, additional SP Kalyan Kumar Pathak, Lance Naik Hemanta Kachari, and Constable Rajkumar Kaibartta. It is significant that under IGP Mahanta's stewardship, the STF achieved remarkable outcomes through calculated operations targeting drug trafficking, counterfeit currency, and rhino poaching. The team successfully dismantled extensive drug networks, confiscating substantial quantities of illicit narcotics, including heroin, that permeated Assam. The STF was instrumental in curtailing Rohingya infiltration from Bangladesh into Assam. In March, the force accomplished a significant breakthrough by apprehending ISIS India head Harish Farukhi and his associate, who were orchestrating sabotage activities in the region.



Officials from the Kolkata police use a sniffer dog to inspect the area after a boy was injured when an object he was playing with exploded in Kolkata on Friday.

Tigress from Maha makes 1st kill in Odisha's Similipal

AKSHAYA KUMAR SAHOO BHUBANESWAR, NOV. 1

Tigress Yamuna, recently relocated from Maharashtra, successfully made her first kill on Thursday after being released into an enclosure in the core area of Odisha's Similipal Tiger Reserve (STR) in Mayurbhanj district. According to reports, Yamuna hunted a wild boar to satisfy her hunger. Prakash Chand Gogineni, field director of STR, shared that both a deer and a wild boar had been released into the tigress's enclosure, and she chose to prey on the boar. After the hunt, Yamuna drank water, indicating she is adapting well to her new environment. State forest department sources report that the tigress is healthy and calm.

2 more elephants die in MP's Bandhavgarh, toll jumps to 10

AGE CORRESPONDENT BHOPAL, NOV 1

Two more elephants died in Bandhavgarh Tiger Reserve (BTR) under Umaria district in Madhya Pradesh taking the toll to ten so far, a senior forest officer said on Friday. "Two more elephants died in BTR on Thursday taking the toll to ten. The remaining three pachyderms in the 13-member herd have been found to be healthy", additional principal chief conservator of Forest (APCCF) (wildlife) L. Krishnamoorthy told this newspaper. As per him, veterinary doctors have suggested the possibility of presence of mycotoxins (in stomach) associated with that kodo millet, consumed by the dead elephants.

The two-and-a-half-year-old tigress was brought from Maharashtra's Tadoba-Andhari Tiger Reserve (TATR) on October 28 and released into a two-hectare soft enclosure in Similipal the following day.

'Will strengthen great partnership with India'

**Continued From Page 1**  
have been a disaster from Israel to Ukraine to our own southern border, but we will Make America Strong Again and bring back Peace through Strength! We will also protect Hindu Americans against the anti-religion agenda of the radical left. We will fight for your freedom." Mr Trump added: "Under my administration, we will also strengthen our great partnership with India and my good friend, Prime Minister Modi. Kamala Harris will destroy your small businesses with more regulations and higher taxes. By contrast, I cut taxes, cut regulations, unleashed American energy and

built the greatest economy in history. We will do it again, bigger and better than ever before — and we will Make America Great Again. Also, Happy Diwali to All. I hope the Festival of Lights leads to the Victory of Good over Evil." The Indian-American community in the United States is at least four million-strong and is considered one of the most prosperous immigrant communities. It has traditionally voted for the Democrats, but Mr Trump, like his successful campaign in 2016, has made concerted attempts to woo the community with some success. The partial Indian origins of Ms Harris could tip the scales in her favour within the community.

Nevertheless, the pitch of Mr Trump for great ties with India and his known camaraderie with Mr Modi could strike a chord at least within sections of the community. Mr Trump's bid to woo the Indian-origin voters comes at a time when relations between the Biden administration and the Modi government have seen tensions, particularly due to India's continued friendship with Russia and also in the wake of American allegations of involvement of a (now former) Indian intelligence officer in a foiled plot to kill US citizen and pro-Khalistan extremist Gurbatwant Singh Pannun in New York last year.

Army begins patrols in LAC's Demchok

**Continued From Page 1**  
patrolling in the buffer zones as well. Defence minister Rajnath Singh had said on Wednesday that India will continue the process of peace restoration with China on the basis of a consensus reached by both nations. Speaking to soldiers during a "burra khana" at the Indian Army's 4 Corps headquarters at Tezpur, Assam, Mr Singh had referred to the consensus reached between India and China to restore the ground situ-

ation in certain areas along the LAC. He said: "India and China were in diplomatic and military talks to resolve their conflicts in some areas along the LAC. We have reached a consensus following our continuous efforts. We achieved this success due to your discipline and courage. We will continue this process of peace restoration on the basis of the consensus", Mr Singh had said. He said former Prime Minister Atal Behari

Vajpayee used to say that we can change our friends but not our neighbours. "We believe in keeping cordial relations with our neighbours. This is India's clear policy. However, sometimes situations arise and one has to ensure the safety and security of the borders. Keeping in mind the interests of our forces, the government will take necessary steps in this process of peace restoration," said the defence minister.

THE ASIAN AGE

2 NOVEMBER 2024

US election may be most consequential in history

In the biggest election year in history in which nearly four billion people would have voted before 2024 bows out in two months, the US presidential election on Tuesday (Nov. 5) will be the most consequential. It will be a far-reaching election not just for American citizens, who alone can decide who is to be their leader, but also for citizens of the world because the US still is the most significant international actor in matters of security and peace.

The toss-up between Joe Biden's vice-president Kamala Harris and former President Donald Trump is certain to be a riveting affair as the votes are counted and possible legal challenges of various kinds crop up in the world's oldest formal democracy that dates to 1776. The race is said to be so close that not even the shrewdest pollster is willing to back any forecast with conviction, leaving the field open to crystal ball gazers.

With the US having lost its moral high ground with its double standard on conflicts such as the one raging in Ukraine as opposed to the one in the Middle East involving Israel, besides what is happening in Sudan that has generally been forgotten by the rest of the world, America's power to resolve conflicts may have considerably diminished.

Even so, it will matter much to the world who the next occupant of the White House will be, come January 2025, because the one who resides there can influence the course of history with the heft of the economy and the power of the US military. Both candidates may like to see the conflicts end though Mr Trump is said to have expressed the opinion that Israel "must do what it must" (to secure itself) while Kamala Harris has said that the killing of innocent Palestinians must stop.

The European picture is more clouded with Trump, a known critic of Nato who has constantly threatened to stop funding an organisation on which the US spends almost as much as the other nations put together. Ukraine may have a reason to fret because of Trump's stated antipathy to Volodymyr Zelenskyy as opposed to his love of authoritarian leaders like Vladimir Putin with whom he said he would be ready to seal a deal over Ukraine.

A prominent newspaper in the city of the Capitol Hill may have forsworn its right to express an opinion on the more suitable candidate. That is not a constraint the rest of the world will face in sizing up the race between a racist, misogynist man who proved a maverick President in one term and a more empathetic woman whose record may not be great as Biden's deputy but whose values appear to be far more in sync with what are considered traditional democratic ideals.

The element of chance will be very high indeed as many voters stay undecided till voting day and anyway it will matter more how the seven swing states vote in a nation polarised as never before. While a little more than half the Indian Americans are said to favour Kamala Harris over Trump, the feelings towards the candidates are more ambivalent in India where a section of the people also put their trust in the Trump-Modi friendship.

The stakes are high for the world and may we venture the opinion that for the sake of constancy in world affairs, including trade, and for the good of the United States that has been a beacon to the world through modern history, which may have begun with it joining on the side of the Allies in World War II, Kamala Harris, who is taking a more centrist stand than far-left, is the candidate who promises stability and continuity.

Keep bias out of 'unified' code

Days after Uttar Pradesh chief minister Yogi Adityanath coined his new slogan, "Batenge Toh Katenge" (divided we shall fall) ostensibly aimed at the unity of Hindus, following near-debate for the BJP in the Lok Sabha elections in Uttar Pradesh, Prime Minister Narendra Modi sought to reaffirm his party's policy with his newly-coined phrase — "Ek Hain Toh Safe Hain" (if we are united, we are safe).

The Prime Minister, during his speech on the occasion of the birthday of India's first home minister and freedom fighter Sardar Vallabhbhai Patel, as usual laid stress on oneness in the country and said India is moving towards One Nation, One Civil Code.

Globally, most countries have switched to a common civil code as an expression of equality and non-discrimination. In India, the Constitution's Directive Principles of State Policy, though not justiciable, calls for the promulgation of a uniform civil code for the whole country. As a policy, the uniform civil code may be welcomed if it does not discriminate against one group in favour of the other and if it does not impose a practice of the followers of one religion on those following other religions.

Furthermore, marriage laws in India are based on local traditions — an aspect that gained recognition through the Hindu Marriage Act. As traditions are an inherent part of one's culture, they are protected under Articles 29 and 30 (cultural and educational rights) of the Constitution, which allows any citizen to challenge the validity of uniform civil code if it is discriminatory.

The government must, therefore, resist the temptation to hasten the introduction of Uniform Civil Code and initiate a comprehensive public consultation before preparing its draft to be presented in Parliament.

In fact, a lesson or two could be learnt from the consultation conducted before the Hindu Code was legislated in 1955. The debate on the need for Hindu code was first initiated in 1921 by Mahamahopadhyaya Ganganath Jha, a member of the Viceroy's Legislative Council. The draft was debated between March 1943 and March 1944. Subsequently, the four-member Hindu Law Committee toured the entire country for one year for consultation. Finally, the Hindu Code Bill was introduced to the Constituent Assembly on April 9, 1948, and was debated extensively during 1948-1951 before being enacted four years later in 1955.

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Farruk Dhondy  
 Cabbages & Kings



"Ugliness, crime and disaster Proclaim Darwin the master Of theories of creation. If these three are attributed to God It should seem to believers pretty odd That these are things of divine gestation."

— From **Sticky Stuff**, by Sue Puglu, Tr. from Esperanto by Bachchoo

OCI card trauma: Tortuous forms & IT procedures must be reformed

My UK passport and my Overseas Citizen of India (OCI) card were taken from me during my recent visit to Spain. I won't say stolen because I carelessly left them in a cotton shoulder bag on a seat as I went to retrieve baggage from the carousel at Majorca airport, where I was on a work trip.

I came back from Spain, having got a temporary passport from the British consulate, and now thought I have to get a new passport and a new OCI card as I am invited to the Tata Literary Festival in Mumbai in mid-November and then a week later, to the Goa film festival to conduct a master-class. I set about applying for both documents. The application for a replacement UK passport took half an hour to fill and send. It was immediately acknowledged and the fresh passport arrived by post within five days.

And then the saga of the OCI card began. I asked Google what I should do and was directed to an

online form to fill. This form didn't just require a photograph of my lost OCI card and a few personal details. It asked me for a copy of my report to the police about the theft. I went to the cop shop and got one. First step done.

The form then reasonably asked for my name, gender, date, country and town of my birth. It then asked for "distinguishing marks". I took this to mean not the pirate's eye-patch that I constantly wear to declare my maritime inclinations, but whether I had a red birthmark between my eyebrows, like a *bindi*. I said "none".

Then my father's name and profession and my mother's name and profession (?) and of course both their nationalities. The next question was "Relationship with the Root Indian". What??? I chose daddy and filled in "Father".

Then the form demanded not only my present passport number but my previous passport numbers, my occupation and my employer's name and address. A third sheet asked me 16 questions. Some pointedly absurd.

The second of these asked: "Have you surrendered/got your previous Overseas Citizen of India card cancelled?" If, gentle reader, you were filling in a form which started with your reporting your OCI card as lost or stolen, what would your answer to this question be?

There were other questions about criminal convictions, engagement in "human trafficking/drug

trafficking/child abuse/ crimes against women/economic offense (*sic*) /espionage/genocide/cyber-crime/financial fraud/ terrorist activities/ political killing/other acts of violence?"

Genocide?? Are Putin or Netanyahu applying for OCI cards?

Then the form asked, in "Section B", for a photograph and signature to be uploaded. I tried uploading both, which were stored in my computer, but was repeatedly told that neither of them was consistent with the very obscure, undecipherable (by me at last) technical specifications for the size and quality of either. I thought I had to seek the help of a friend who was a bit of an IT-walla and so I'd have to resume filling in the form at a later time. I pressed the "resume later" option and a reply came giving me a twelve-digit number to use when recalling my incomplete application to the screen.

When I resumed my quest, I tried using this number. Nothing. The computer directed me back to the very start. I started again. Yes, all the same absurdities and dead ends!

Gentle reader, I did this seventeen times. No exaggeration. It felt like what Delhi University males called KLPD. My IT-walla friend came over and spent four hours with me encountering the same problems, but finally got all the docs uploaded and sent.

Great! I got an appointment the next day to go to

the visa-issuing office of the Indian high commission. I went, carrying the filled-in forms which they had acknowledged and returned, and the documents such as my passport and cancelled old passports, etc. The bureau was being stormed like the Bastille.

After an hour and a half in a queue, I presented my filled in forms, etc, to the lady at the single desk devoted to OCI applications. The queue behind me was, by then, at least thirty strong. Would the last man or woman get home by dinner time?

My turn came and the lady at the desk looked at my application and remarked that the spelling of Pune as my city of birth had suffered from a typo and was rendered "Pube". I leant over and corrected it in pen.

No, that wouldn't do. I had to start all over again. When I protested, she relented a bit and sent me to another operative who said nothing could be done and I should return in a week with the same papers. I didn't point out that the form they had made me fill in and now rejected because of a typo, also had a spelling typo: "offense" instead of "offence".

Of course, I appreciate that with more than a billion citizens, the Indian bureaucracy is overstretched, but doesn't this tortuous format of forms and this relentlessly frustrating IT procedure urgently require intelligent reform?



Delhi vs Mumbai: When'll the 'vacuous' debates end?



Shobhaa's Take

One whirlwind *chakkar* to *Dilli*... and so much to digest (after taking care of the indigestion, of course). Just as there are multiple *Mumbais* (a new version gets born every day), there are diverse and countless *Delhis*. Both cities struggle to make sense of the concentric circles that never meet. If in Mumbai, the main divide is between the rich versus the poor, in Delhi it's power versus power. Poseurs thrive in such environments. But even the most dedicated poseurs from both cities look and act differently. The Delhi ones are more obvious. They stick out in a crowd of hundred. The Mumbai ones are more deceptive and merge with whichever social set they wish to slither their way into. I vastly prefer the brash *Dilliwallas* to Mumbai's *chi chi* crowd. Being obvious, upfront and out there is not considered crass conduct in Delhi — a city that has bred ace hustlers for centuries.

Both cities are obsessed with one another. The main difference is the *Dilliwallas'* Bollywood fixation. In Mumbai, we take our mega stars for granted — treat them more like *padosis* with flashier cars. Nobody gets overawed, *kyunki* in a crazy city like Mumbai, it is understood that fame comes with a sell-by date. If only *Dilliwallas* felt that way about the politicians! Power works on the same principle. The puffed-up neta of today becomes a forgotten nobody the moment he/she loses the coveted position. The sharpened

I vastly prefer the brash *Dilliwallas* to Mumbai's *chi chi* crowd. Being obvious, upfront and out there is not considered crass conduct in Delhi — a city that has bred ace hustlers for centuries.

A bit of similarity with Mumbai in this regard. It happens with veteran movie stars whose homes would be filled with *guldastas* and gifts from fans and producers, but are completely ignored today. If a top movie star, who has not been seen in a film for twenty years, walks into a *Diwali* party these days hoping to be mobbed, chances are nobody will recognise him or her. It happens a lot. Faded movie stars cut tragic figures in public. As do faded *netas* who once wielded enough power to make or break governments. Watch them amble into a *Dilli* *Diwali*, expecting the crowd to dive for their feet and grovel, and feel their "dard".

Since it's *Diwali*, which will be followed by Xmas and New Year, the tension over gifting is on! In Delhi, the size of the gift hamper is important, for sure. Size always matters! But the real "hampers" are never displayed! The *asli* *Diwali* gifts are delivered discreetly, and are generally very, very, very tiny! Think flawless coloured diamonds from the best mines in Russia. Handing over gold or silver Lakshmi coins is not just passe, it's cumbersome, heavy and attracts robberies. Now that silver has outstripped and outperformed gold during this festive season, check the quality of what you believe are silver gifts but may be plated. Dry fruits, *badam pistas*, cashew nuts are from another *zamana*. In Mumbai, the gifts have to be "curated" to show how socially aware you are. I have received kilos

of foxtail millets this week — making me feel like a cow put to pasture. Old fashioned chocolate boxes are a big no-no, especially if gifted to a household with young children who have never tasted *choccies*! Remember, the aware parent of today, can happily down 10 tequila shots in the presence of *bachchas*, but will be conscientious enough to snatch a creamy cupcake out of the eager hands of a four-year-old, lecturing everyone about "bad habits" starting early.

Oh well... these silly comparisons have spun an entire industry out of the so-called *Dilli*-Mumbai rivalry, so at least, that can be considered a worthwhile spin-off that can be capitalised on by the creative folks hoping to milk the potential of this fun premise. Note... Not ALL wives are "vacuous" (the word is trending with good reason), and some are more vacuous than the others. This is one round that Delhi is winning effortlessly, thanks to a *Passi* who is making the rest look painfully "passe" in this delightfully tinsel show.

Here I am beating myself up for not recognising so many *VVIPs* at a rambunctious, charged-up *Dilli Diwali* party, complete with a celebrity DJ (ahem... From Mumbai, *natch*), a glittering marquee, *taash* tables, and great *khaana peena*. I definitely know they were at the same venue — I counted the number of commandos and bodyguards beadyly surveying the scene as invitees danced to "*Kaala Chasma*", and other Bollywood hits. Sigh. There is no escaping *Aamchi Mumbai* and Bollywood... not even in *Apni Dilli*. And no, Arvind Kejriwal was not on the guest list. That makes it fair to guess... *pehley AAP, pehley AAP* is rapidly running out of favour with the power elite.

Happy *Diwali*, dear readers!

Instagram handle @ShobhaaDe; Twitter handle @DeShobhaa

LETTERS ANTI-BENGALI HATE

Sabir Mallick, a migrant worker from Bengal, was lynched by cow vigilantes in Haryana two months ago said to be under the suspicion that he had consumed beef. Now, a laboratory report on a meat sample taken from his shanty has confirmed that it is not beef. After Sabir was killed, his uncle said the reason behind his killing was the suspicion revolving around his origins stemming from his mother tongue and not anything about beef eating. The lab report on a meat sample corroborated what his uncle had said. A dangerous design has been orchestrated in many parts of India to label Bengalis from West Bengal as Bangladeshis, especially if they are Muslim. From Haryana to Odisha, Bengali speaking migrant workers are being attacked. Stringent action must be taken against the criminals and their supporters who want to divide the country.

Sujit De Kolkata

SOUND, NOT LIGHT

OVER the past few years, the impact of vehicular pollution is often equated with firecrackers. In the absence of clearcut legislation, illegal sales flourish. Both compliance and enforcement is abysmal. Given the tendency to portray fire crackers role as an onslaught on Hindu faith and culture, it is of utmost importance to generate a consensus on firecrackers being solely a pollution problem. Playing down their ill-effects by comparing them with everyday vehicular pollution also needs to be called out. And, too, better burst *Diwali* bombs than set off crackers that emit colourful light as they contain metals that create those hues.

Vijay Singh Adhikari Nainital

HILARIOUS ELECTION

ARE DONALD Trump's campaign speeches written in the BJP headquarters of India? Never before in an US election campaign have communal issues in far-off countries been taken up so aggressively. Nor did anyone hear about Hindu-Muslim quarrels being discussed in a the US election. If Mr Trump is so concerned about the plight of Hindus in Bangladesh and the US, will he have the guts to stop all military aid to Israel if the rogue state doesn't heed to a ceasefire in the Gaza region or is this love only a bait to lure the Hindu community to vote for him in the upcoming election?

Syed Abdul Monim Navri Mumbai



SHORT TAKES

**SEISMIC CHANGE IN BOTSWANA AFTER ELECTIONS**

Gaborone, Nov. 1: Botswana's President Mokgweetsi Masisi conceded defeat in the general election Friday, in a seismic moment of change for the country that ended the ruling party's 58 years in power since independence from Britain in the 1960s. Masisi's concession came before final results were announced, with his Botswana Democratic Party trailing in fourth place.

**HALLOWEEN PRANK TRICKS THOUSANDS**

Dublin, Nov. 1: Thousands of would-be revellers in Dublin went home disappointed on Thursday after a much-publicised Halloween parade turned out to be a hoax. Information about the hoax parade was posted on an anonymous event website and shared on social media platforms like TikTok and Instagram. Large crowds flocked to the city's main boulevard O'Connell Street in anticipation of a spooky treat, causing temporary disruption to the tram network until police intervened.

**MAURITIUS BLOCKS SOCIAL MEDIA AFTER TAPPING ROW**

Port Louis, Nov. 1: The Indian Ocean island of Mauritius blocked access to social media on Friday, just days ahead of a general election, as tensions mounted over a wire-tapping scandal. Mauritius has been gripped by scandal since secret recordings of phone calls by politicians, journalists, members of civil society and even foreign diplomats began being leaked online last month. "Following the publication of certain audio tracks on social media, there is a real risk that the national security and integrity of our Republic may have been compromised," said the Prime Minister said.

**ADANI REDUCES POWER SUPPLY TO BANGLADESH**

Dhaka, Nov. 1: India's Adani Power Jharkhand Limited (APJL), a wholly-owned subsidiary of Adani Power, has stopped half of its power supply to Bangladesh because of outstanding bills of USD 846 million, according to a local media report on Friday. Data from Power Grid Bangladesh PLC showed the Adani plant reduced supply on Thursday night, *The Daily Star* newspaper said. Bangladesh reported a shortfall of more than 1,600 megawatts (MW) on the intervening night of Thursday and Friday as the 1,496 MW plant is now producing 700 MW from a single unit.

**GERMAN LAW EASES CHANGING OF GENDER**

Berlin, Nov. 1: Germans will be able to change their legal gender more easily from Friday thanks to a new law hailed as a "historic" step for the LGBTQ community. Under the Gender Self-Determination Act, anyone will be able to change their name or legal gender by making a simple application to their local registry office. The legislation replaces a law known as the Transsexuals Act dating back to the early 1980s, under which Germans who wanted to change their legal gender had to submit two psychological reports and wait for a court decision.

**DEATH TOLL FROM SPANISH FLOODS RISES TO 205**

Chiva, Nov. 1: Three days after historic flash floods swept through towns in Spain and killed at least 205 people, the initial shock was giving way to anger, frustration and a wave of solidarity on Friday. Spanish emergency authorities raised the death toll to at least 205 victims, 202 of them in Valencia alone. Many streets are still blocked by piled-up vehicles and debris, in some cases trapping residents in their homes. Some places still don't have electricity, running water, or stable telephone connections. "The situation is unbelievable. It's a disaster and there is very little help," a local said.

**US swing states drown in poll ads**

Candidates spending billions on air time; flurry of court battles between Republicans and Democrats

New York, Nov. 1: Voters in a key part of swing state Pennsylvania have been subjected to a deluge of campaign ads ahead of Tuesday's vote, with candidates spending billions of dollars to boost their chances nationally. Alongside roadside billboards, newspaper ads and targeted online campaigns, TV ads remain vitally important to candidate efforts to boost their profiles and attack their rivals. During the 8.00 pm to 11.00 pm primetime slot on the last Wednesday before election day, viewers of the NBC affiliate serving Philadelphia and key surrounding swing counties were shown 22 political ads. Of those, eight were explicitly pro-Harris or anti-Trump, six were anti-Harris and pro-Trump, while eight were for local races such as the Senate and attorney general. Under the US electoral college system, seven battleground states — and sometimes individual counties within those states — carry outsized influence over the overall result of the presidential election. The ads, which sometimes run back-to-back and create the bizarre spectacle of an anti-Harris attack ad following a spot highlighting her achievements, ran throughout three dramas set in Chicago. Former South Carolina journalist and blogger Brad Warthen said that he only encounters the TV political ads when watching live sports. "I love the baseball, but could do without the ads. They're depressing," he said. In the US, major TV networks including NBC, ABC, CBS and Fox cover the entire country, but are operated by local affiliates that sell their own ad space, meaning campaigns can target specific regions

**HOW ARE THE ELECTIONS HELD?**

**Step 1: PRIMARIES AND CAUCUSES** People with similar ideas belong to the same political party. Candidates must win the favour of their party members. In a caucus, party members select the best candidate through a series of discussions and votes. In a primary, party members vote for the best candidate who will represent them in the general election.

**Step 2: NATIONAL CONVENTIONS** Each party holds a national convention to select a final presidential nominee. State delegates from the primaries and caucuses selected to represent the people will now "endorse" their favourite candidates and the final presidential nominee from each party will be officially announced.

**Step 3: General Election** People in every state across the country vote for one President and Vice President. This activity will start on November 5. When people cast their vote, they are actually voting for a group of people called electors.

**Step 4: Electoral College** The Electoral College is a process in which electors or representatives from each state in number proportional to the state's population cast their vote and determine who will be president. The newly elected President and Vice President are inaugurated in January.

**REQUIREMENTS FOR A CANDIDATE:**

- Natural-born citizen (born in the US or parents were born in the US).
- Should be at least 35 years old.
- Should be a US resident for 14 years.

Simply does not respect the freedom of women. — **KAMALA HARRIS**, Democratic candidate

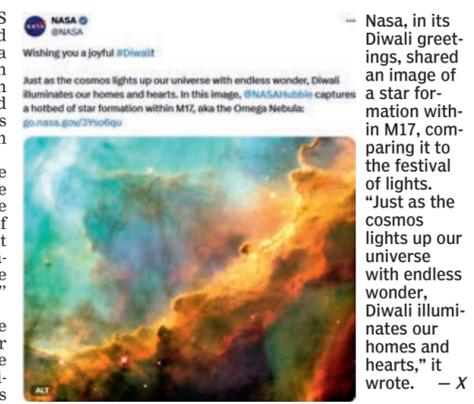
She destroyed our economy. — **DONALD TRUMP**, Republican candidate



(Left) US President Joe Biden, accompanied by First Lady Jill Biden, lights a lamp to mark Diwali at the White House in Washington. (Right) Vice president Kamala Harris' campaign released a video of her bursting crackers on the occasion. — PTI, X

**Biden, President hopefuls greet Hindus for Diwali**

Washington, Nov. 1: US President Joe Biden and Vice President Kamala Harris led Americans in celebrating Diwali on Thursday as temples and many iconic places across the country decorated in lights. "This Diwali, may we show the power in the gathering of light. The light of knowledge, of unity, of truth. The light for freedom, for democracy, for an America where anything is possible," Biden said in a post on X. Earlier this week, he hosted the largest ever Diwali at the White House by inviting some 600 eminent Indian-Americans from across the country. "Tonight, we join more than 1 billion people across America and around the world lighting diyas and celebrating the fight for good over evil, knowledge over ignorance, and light over darkness," Harris said on a post on X from her campaign trail. "Happy Diwali to everyone celebrating the Festival of Lights!" said the vice president who had been hosting Diwali at her official residence for the past several years but could not do so because of her hectic campaign. Secretary of State Tony Blinken said for many, the Diwali season represents the victory of light over darkness and the triumph of good over evil. "It serves as a reminder of the ability of each and every one of us to bring more light into our communities. We celebrate alongside families and friends all around the world including millions of people here in the United States who are gathering together, sharing sweets, decorating homes, and lighting diyas," he said. — PTI



Nasa, in its Diwali greetings, shared an image of a star formation within M17, aka the Omega Nebula. Just as the cosmos lights up our universe with endless wonder, Diwali illuminates our homes and hearts. In this image, NASA's Hubble captures a hotbed of star formation within M17, aka the Omega Nebula. — NASA

**WITH ELECTIONS JUST DAYS AWAY, COURT BATTLES TAKE CENTRESTAGE**

Washington, Nov. 1: The 2020 US presidential election saw dozens of legal challenges by the losing candidate, Republican Donald Trump, summarily tossed out by the courts. This year's nail-biter of a White House race between the former president and Democratic nominee Kamala Harris has seen a deluge of lawsuits from both parties even before Election Day. Democrats claim Republicans are setting the stage for Trump to contest the results if he loses and declare victory anyway — as he did four years ago. "Trump uses litigation to create a grievance structure that will allow him to claim he is a victim when he loses fair and square," Marc Elias, a top Democratic Party lawyer, said. — AFP

**2L TRANS PEOPLE MAY NOT VOTE**

Washington, Nov. 1: Nine US states have tightened voter ID laws since the last presidential election — rules that risk locking out hundreds of thousands of transgender voters, many in battleground states. "Community members may have an outdated ID or one that no longer lines up with who they are today, and because of that it really creates further barriers for them to show up," said Jazmyne Cruz, communications director at Equality North Carolina, an LGBTQ group. — Reuters

and demographics. Industry monitor Emarketer estimates that by the end of the 2024 election, \$12.32 billion will have been spent on political ads, up from \$9.57 billion done in 2020. — AFP

**COLLINS NAMES 'BRAT' THE WORD OF 2024**

London, Nov. 1: Brat, the word redefined by singer Charli XCX and adopted by supporters of US presidential candidate Kamala Harris, was on Friday named the Collins Word of the Year 2024. "Brat" was the name of the UK singer's hit sixth album, and the word has now come to represent a "confident, independent, and hedonistic attitude", said Collins, rather than simply a term for a badly-behaved child. "Inspired by the Charli XCX album, 'brat' has become one of the most talked about words of 2024," said the UK-based dictionary. "More than a hugely successful album, 'brat' is a cultural phenomenon that has resonated with people globally, and 'brat summer' established itself as an aesthetic and a way of life," it added. The 32-year-old pop star, whose real name is Emma Aitchison, described the typical brat girl as someone "who is a little messy and likes to party and maybe says some dumb things sometimes, who feels herself, but then also maybe has a breakdown, but kind of parties through it". — AFP

**25 killed in Gaza, 13 in Lebanon**

Deir al-Balah, Nov. 1: The death toll from Israeli strikes in the central Gaza Strip rose to 25, including five children, as more bodies were recovered, while officials said that 13 people were killed in airstrikes in Lebanon on Friday. Sixteen people had initially been reported killed in two strikes on Thursday on the Gaza Strip's central Nuseirat refugee camp, but officials from the Al-Aqsa hospital said bodies continued to be brought in. Overall, the hospital said they had received 21 dead from the strikes, including some transferred from the Awda hospital, where they had been brought the day before. One of the strikes killed an 18-month-old and his 10-year-old sister. The children's mother was missing as of Friday while the father was killed by an Israeli airstrike four months ago, the family told The Associated Press at Aqsa hospital. Strikes on a motorcycle in Zuiraid and on a house in Deir al-Balah on Friday killed four more people, the hospital officials said, bringing the overall toll to 25. The Israeli military told the AP that it had hit a Hamas infrastructure site and a militant who was operating in the area of Nuseirat, but did not comment on the other strikes.



A firefighter stands near a damaged car amid the destruction in the aftermath of overnight Israeli airstrikes that targeted the neighbourhood of Kafaat in Beirut's southern suburbs on Tuesday. — AFP

It said it was aware of reports of civilian casualties and was investigating. Israel's blistering offensive on the Gaza Strip has killed more than 43,000 Palestinians since October 7, 2023, say health officials inside Gaza who do not distinguish between civilians and combatants. They say more than half of the dead are women and children. The Health Ministry in Hamas-run Gaza said Friday that a total of 55 people had been killed in the past 24 hours and that another 196 had been wounded. Israel began bombarding Gaza after the Hamas attack on Israel Oct. 7, when the militants killed roughly 1,200 people and took some 250 hostages back to Gaza. Despite growing pressure from the United States and others in the international community for a cease-fire both in Gaza and Lebanon, Israel's air force launched multiple attacks in Lebanon Friday. In an attack in the northeastern Baalbek-Hermel region, eight people were killed when a home was hit in the village of Amhaz and two more were killed in the village of Taraya, Lebanon's southern National News Agency reported. In recent days, Israel has intensified its airstrikes on the northeastern city of Baalbek and nearby villages, as well as different parts of southern Lebanon. — AP

**HAMAS-RUN MIN. SAYS 43K KILLED**

Gaza, Nov. 1: The health ministry in Hamas-run Gaza said on Friday that at least 43,259 people have been killed in the year-long war between Israel and Palestinian militants. The toll includes 55 deaths in the previous 24 hours, according to the ministry, which said 101,827 people have been wounded in the Gaza Strip since the war began when Hamas militants attacked Israel in 2023. — AFP

**ISRAELI CABINET OKAYS BUDGET**

Jerusalem, Nov. 1: The Israeli cabinet approved a long-delayed wartime budget package on Friday that includes a raft of tax increases and spending cuts to pay for a war that has entered its second year with no immediate end in sight. This week, the finance ministry cut the 2024 growth outlook for the second time this year to just 0.4 per cent from an earlier estimate of 1.1 per cent. The cost of fighting and the absence of tens of thousands of reservists serving at the front and exclusion of regular workers weighed. — Reuters

**US, Russia on 'brink' of direct conflict: Lavrov**

Ankara, Nov. 1: The United States and Russia are very close to engaging in "direct military conflict," Russian Foreign Minister Sergei Lavrov warned in an interview published Friday in a Turkey daily just days ahead of a US presidential election. "Under the current president (Joe Biden), who has taken the downward spiral of Russophobia in the US to its logical conclusion, our countries are on the brink of direct military conflict," he told the Hurriyet daily, without elaborating. Asked about next week's US election pitting former Republican president Donald Trump against Democratic nominee Kamala Harris, Lavrov said the outcome would make little difference to Russia. "We have no preference. When the Trump administration was in power, it adopted the highest number of anti-Russian sanctions compared to its predecessors," he said. "No matter who wins the elections, we don't think the United States' anti-Russian bent can change." Although Trump has previously made clear his fondness for Russia's Vladimir Putin, the two men are not close and have maintained a deliberately ambiguous relationship. Last week, the Russian president said his relationship with Washington would depend on what attitude it adopts after the vote. He welcomed Trump as sincere. — AFP

**COSMOROME BREACH**

- A French man and a German man have been arrested for unauthorised entry to the Baikunur cosmodrome in Kazakhstan that Russia uses for space launches.
- A court in Russia's far-eastern Vladivostok convicted a former US consulate worker charged with cooperating with a foreign state and sentenced him to four years and ten months in prison.
- North Korea will stand by Russia until its "victory" in Ukraine, Pyongyang's foreign minister said in Moscow amid growing fears the reclusive country will enter the Ukraine conflict.
- North Korea has now boasted of a new inter-continental ballistic missile, calling it "the world's strongest." Pyongyang is believed to have acquired nuclear-tipped missile systems.

**MYSTERIOUS DEATH 19-year-old Gursimranr found dead on Oct. 19 in walk-in oven**

**Canada cops role under lens in PIO's death**

Toronto, Nov. 1: Several days after an Indian-origin woman was found dead in a walk-in oven in the bakery section of a Walmart in Canada, an employee said that the 19-year-old might have been forced into the oven by someone else. Gursimran Kaur was found dead on October 19 inside one of the store's appliances in Halifax. According to reports, her mother, who has worked at the store for two years, found her daughter's charred body. Last week, police stated that the investigation has not yet confirmed the

"cause and manner" of death. The Halifax Regional Police said, "The investigation is complex and involves several partner agencies. An investigation of this nature may take a significant amount of time." Meanwhile, Walmart employees have speculated that she was locked inside a walk-in oven and "baked to death." According to The Mirror, a co-worker Chris Breezie shared a TikTok video where she said that the oven Gursimran Kaur used at Walmart could be turned on from the outside and had a door handle that

was "really hard" to open. While demonstrating how the oven at Walmart works in the video, Breezie who is 5 foot 1, said, "I don't even know if I would fit in here. I would have to crouch down to get in." She also said that the oven had an emergency latch inside and men-

tioned that no tasks required workers to physically enter the oven. "I would never be in here, whether I'm cleaning it or not," she added. Breezie claimed that to lock the oven, one would need to push the latch with all their strength. "There is no way possible somebody could lock themselves in there," she added in the video. She expressed her belief that Gursimran Kaur was forced into the oven by another person. Another employee, Mary, told The Mirror that it "doesn't make any sense" since the

door does not close on its own. "It's designed not to do that. You have to push it, hear the click," Mary said. "I'm not trying to theorize or form a conspiracy, it's just hard to wrap my head around it when Walmart's bakery ovens are so safe to use," she added. A stop-work order has been issued for the bakery and for "one piece of equipment" at the Walmart store. In a statement, Walmart Canada expressed heartbreak over the incident and shared that their thoughts are with the woman's family. — Agencies

## quick BITES

INDICATORS	%
Sensex	79,724.12 +0.42
Nifty 50	24299.55 +0.39
S&P 500*	5,705.45 --
Dollar (₹)	84.08 -0.0118
Pound Sterling (₹)	108.4823 -0.625
Euro (₹)	91.3855 0.00
Gold (10gm)* (₹)	78,778.89 0.11
Brent crude (\$/bbl)*	74.52 +2.35
IN 10-Yr bond yield	+6.841 +0.014
US 10-Yr T-bill yield*	+4.289 +0.005

### Commercial LPG, aviation turbine fuel prices rise

Jet fuel, or ATF, price on Friday was hiked by 3.3 per cent and rate of commercial LPG used in hotels and restaurants increased by ₹62 per 19-kg cylinder in the monthly revision done in line with international oil price trends. The aviation turbine fuel (ATF) price was increased by ₹2,941.5 per kilolitre, or 3.3 per cent, to ₹90,538.72 per kl in the national capital, according to state-owned fuel retailers.



### Itaru Otani new chair of Yamaha Motor India

India Yamaha Motor on Friday said it has appointed Itaru Otani as the new chairman. Otani brings over three decades of experience with Yamaha Motor, having held key leadership roles across global markets, including Australia, Brazil and Japan, the company said. Prior to this role, he served as chief general manager, leading the land mobility business operations based out of Japan, it added.

### Coal production rises by 7.4% to 84.45 MT in Oct.

Coal production rose by 7.4 per cent to 84.45 million tonnes (MT) in October compared to 78.57 MT in the corresponding month of the previous fiscal, the coal ministry said. Coal production from captive and other entities rose to 16.59 MT in Oct. over 11.70 MT in the corresponding month of the previous fiscal. Coal dispatches witnessed a boost in Oct. reaching 82.89 MT compared to 79.25 MT recorded in Oct. last fiscal.

### Power usage surges by 1% to 140.47 billion units

India's power consumption rose marginally by about one per cent to 140.47 billion units (BU) in October compared to a year ago, mainly due to heavier base effect. In the year-ago period, the power consumption grew by over 22 per cent to 139.44 BU from 113.94 BU in October 2022. The highest supply in a day (peak power demand met) dipped to 219.22 GW in Oct. 2024 from 221.53 GW in the year-ago month.

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## Debt MFs give higher returns over bank FDs

One-year returns for some debt fund categories range between 8-14%

RAVI RANJAN PRASAD  
MUMBAI, NOV. 1

Selected debt mutual fund scheme returns this year are far superior to bank fixed deposits, and with the upcoming rate cut cycle, the attractiveness of debt mutual funds is likely to increase.

The one-year returns for some debt fund categories range between 8 to 14 per cent, but these returns often moderate over longer durations of 3 to 5 years due to their volatile nature.

For example, the SBI Magnum Gilt Fund has a one-year return of 10.58 per cent, while its 3-year and 5-year returns are 7.35 per cent and 7.65 per cent, respectively.

Similarly, the SBI Dynamic Bond Fund (Direct Plan) has a one-year return of 10.52 per cent, while its 3-year and 5-year returns are 7.38 per cent and 7.36 per cent, respectively.

The Axis Regular Saver Fund, with a one-year return of 14.01 per cent, stands out in the debt category, delivering a 3-year return of 7.74 per cent and a 5-year return of 10.26 per cent.

### POPULAR DEBT FUND SCHEMES BY NO OF FOLIOS

Scheme	Folios In Sept. 2024	Folios In Sept. 2023
Dynamic Bond Fund	2,20,354	2,27,917
Gilt Fund	2,02,816	1,80,961
Overnight Fund	8,59,383	7,87,375
Liquid Fund	18,00,818	17,97,810
Ultra Short Duration Fund	6,39,768	6,44,072
Low Duration Fund	8,36,038	9,16,847
Money Market Fund	4,31,111	4,39,558
Short Duration Fund	4,39,391	4,89,352
Corporate Bond Fund	5,31,965	6,04,977

Debt mutual fund returns are volatile but typically offer slightly higher returns compared to bank fixed deposits.

The popularity of debt funds is on the rise, though the massive rally in the equity market post-Covid has slightly diminished their attractiveness.

However, as mentioned earlier, debt mutual fund returns are volatile but typically offer slightly higher returns compared to bank fixed deposits.

Currently, State Bank of India's fixed deposit interest rate for 1 to 2 years is 6.80 per cent for the general public and 7.30 per cent for senior citizens.

For 2 to 3 years, FD rates are 7.00 and 7.50 per cent for the general public and

senior citizens, respectively. FDs of 3 to 5 years offer 6.75 and 7.25 per cent, while for 5 to 10 years, SBI offers 6.50 per cent and 7.50 per cent for the general public and senior citizens, respectively.

SBI FDs over ₹1 crore but less than ₹3 crore, where premature withdrawal is not allowed, offer 30 basis points over the card rate for a 1-year tenor and 40 basis points

over the card rate for a 2-year tenor.

The popularity of debt funds is on the rise, though the massive rally in the equity market post-Covid has slightly diminished their attractiveness. Over the past year, monthly data from the Association of Mutual Funds in India shows an increase in the popularity of some debt mutual funds.

## SUV sales increase in October as buyers prefer premium cars

MICHAEL GONSALVES  
PUNE, NOV. 1

Sales of sports utility vehicles (SUVs) surged last month as top Indian carmakers dispatched more SUVs to dealers to cash in on festive demand in October, company data showed on Friday.

This trend highlighted car buyers' increasing preference for larger and premium cars with over ₹10 lakh tag.

Maruti Suzuki posted a 19.4 per cent rise in SUV sales in October to hit a record high at 70,644 units.

Mahindra recorded its highest monthly sales at 25 per cent last month at 54,504 units last month.

Mahindra, which has a portfolio comprised entirely of SUVs, reported a rise in sales every month this year ending March 2025, mostly supported by new launches such as the Thar Roxx SUV.

"We are excited to have clocked the highest-ever SUV sales of 54,504 vehicles in October, a growth of 25 per cent and highest ever total volume of 96,648, a growth of 20 per cent," said Veejay Nakra, president, automotive

TOP GEAR	
Maruti Suzuki posted a 19.4% rise in SUV sales in Oct. to hit a record high at 70,644 units	Mahindra recorded highest monthly sales at 25% at 54,504 units last month.
	Toyota Kirloskar Motor sales soared 41% at 30,845 units
	JSW MG Motor sales jumped 31% at 7,045 units, including its EVs in October.

SUVs remain a cornerstone of our lineup, representing an impressive 68.2% of our total monthly sales in October 2024, with similar penetration in urban as well as rural markets.

— Tarun Garg, COO, Hyundai Motor India.

division, M&M. Nakra noted that the festive month began on a fantastic note with Thar Ross garnering 1.7 lakh bookings in the first 1 hour.

Hyundai Motor India Ltd (HMIL) also clocked its highest-ever monthly SUV sales at 37,902 units, including hi-ghest ever monthly domestic sales of Hyundai Creta at 17,497 units October.

"SUVs remain a cornerstone of our lineup, representing an impressive 68.2 per cent of our total

## Google revamps Maps app with AI features

California, Nov. 1: Alphabet's Google announced new features for its two mapping apps, part of the search giant's ongoing effort to revamp products with its Gemini artificial intelligence models.

Users of Google Maps will be able to ask natural-language questions about places on the map and see

AI-generated summaries of human-written reviews, the company said.

Waze users will be able to verbally report traffic issues on the go, without having to type or use specific commands.

Google also said it would allow developers building products with AI models to verify responses using

the company's vast database of places. Executives said this would help combat hallucinations, when language models deliver inaccurate information in convincing fashion.

Google has long dominated consumer mapping, and Alphabet chief executive officer Sundar Pichai said this week that Google

## Markets register gains in Muhurat trading, NSE launches mobile app

RAVI RANJAN PRASAD  
MUMBAI, NOV. 1

Market benchmarks Sensex and Nifty-50 gained close to half a per cent in the Muhurat trading session despite negative global cues.

The Sensex gained 335.06 points or 0.42 per cent to close at 79,724.12 while the Nifty-50 index gained 99 points or 0.41 per cent to close at 24,304.35.

Market investors' wealth increased by ₹3.39 lakh cr as broader gains along with benchmark indices.

The start of the auspicious one hour Muhurat trading session marking the beginning of the new business year Samvat 2081 for brokers and investors.

The broader market outperformed with BSE mid-cap index up 0.69 per cent and BSE small-cap index up 1.16 per cent.

All sectoral indices



closed in the green with BSE auto (1.15 per cent), realty (0.90 per cent), oil & gas (0.91 per cent) and consumer durables (0.82 per cent) being the top gainers while BSE IT underperformed with 0.21 per cent gain largely on negative global cues from the US market.

Advance-decline ratio was in favour of gainers as on BSE 3038 stocks gained while 539 stocks declined and 71 closed unchanged.

"Muhurat Trading at the NSE this year holds

unparalleled significance, commemorating 30 years of NSE's operations," said Ashishkumar Chauhan, MD and chief executive officer, NSE.

The equities trading commenced in NSE on Nov. 3, 1994, even-ing during Diwali puja. On this occasion the stock exchange launched NSE mobile app and its web portal in additional 8 languages.

"We have launched a mobile app as well as websites in 8 additional languages i.e. Assamese, Bengali, Kannada, Malayalam, Oriya, Punjabi, Tamil and Telugu to the existing English, Hindi, Marathi, and Gujarati, taking the total number of languages being supported on NSE to 12," Chauhan said.

This linguistic expansion provides greater accessibility for investors across India, NSE said.

## GST collection in Oct. rises by 9% to over ₹1.87 L-cr

New Delhi, Nov. 1: Gross GST collection in October rose 9 per cent to over ₹1.87 lakh crore, the second-highest ever, on pickup in domestic sales and improved compliance.

The Central GST collection stood at ₹33,821 crore, State GST at ₹41,864 crore, Integrated GST at ₹99,111 crore and cess at ₹12,550 crore during the month.

As per the government data released on Friday, the total gross goods and services tax (GST) revenue grew 8.9 per cent to ₹1,87,346 crore. In October 2023, the mop-up was at ₹1.72 lakh crore.

October 2024 recorded the second-best GST mop-up. The highest ever collection was in April 2024 at over ₹2.10 lakh crore.

During the month under review, GST from domestic transactions grew 10.6 per cent to ₹1.42 lakh

crore, while revenues from tax on imports rose about 4 per cent to ₹45,996 crore.

Refunds worth ₹19,306 crore were issued during the month, registering 18.2 per cent growth over the year-ago period.

After adjusting refunds, net GST collection grew 8 per cent at over ₹1.68 lakh crore.

Deloitte India Partner MS Mani said the buoyancy in GST collections is on account of an excellent combination of festive season sales and increased compliance.

The GST Council, chaired by the union finance minister and comprising state counterparts, are slated to meet this month and take up the recommendations of the group of ministers (GoM) on the rate rationalisation on over 100 items. —PTI

## Facebook India profit up by 43% to ₹504.9 crore in FY24

New Delhi, Nov. 1: Social media major Meta's advertisement unit, Facebook India online services, has posted a 43 per cent growth in profit to ₹504.9 crore in the financial year ended on March 31, 2024, according to documents shared by Tofler.

The company had posted a profit of ₹352.91 crore in FY2023.

Facebook India Online Services Private Limited



is engaged in the business of selling advertising inventory to customers in

India and providing IT-enabled support services and design support services to the Meta Platforms Inc.

The company reported a 9.33 per cent increase in turnover to ₹3,034.82 crore in FY24 against ₹2,775.78 crore in FY23.

"The company's total expenses for the fiscal were reported as ₹2,350 crore," Tofler said in a report. —PTI

### TECH BUZZ ChatGPT Search to use 4o model and will be available for paid users

## OpenAI adds search features to ChatGPT

San Francisco, Nov. 1: OpenAI is adding a new set of search features to its flagship product ChatGPT, escalating the artificial intelligence (AI) start-up's challenge to Alphabet's Google.

The option, called ChatGPT Search, will let the chatbot's users search for timely information much as they would on the web and get responses with in-line attribution to news publishers and other data sources, OpenAI said.

The company rolled out a prototype of the product

in July called SearchGPT, which was separate from its ChatGPT app and only available to a limited number of users.

The new search capabilities, which use OpenAI's 4o model, will go live beginning with paid ChatGPT Plus and Team users for mobile and web. OpenAI's enterprise and educational customers will be able to get access to the features in the coming weeks and free users sometime in the coming months.

With ChatGPT Search,



OpenAI is poised to bring similar AI search functionality to the 250 million people who use the chatbot each week.

"People want answers when they search for things, and getting an

answer is difficult on the internet right now. It takes multiple searches and you have to go through a bunch of links," Varun Shetty, head of media partnerships at OpenAI, said. "We think that being able to ask in a conversational way with all of that relevant context and high-quality sources on the other side just makes this a better experience."

In a demo ahead of the release, OpenAI's team used the feature to ask ChatGPT about weekend events in San Francisco.

The app showed a summary list of activities pulled from local news websites. For a follow-up question about looking for restaurants, ChatGPT showed a map listing local eateries. While ChatGPT has previously included some citations in its responses, the new search feature shows summaries of sources and preview images more prominently.

OpenAI said its tool won't preference news publishers who partnered with the company.

—Bloomberg

## Apple India's income grows double-digit

New Delhi, Nov. 1: iPhone maker Apple has set an all-time revenue record in India and observed a double-digit growth in iPad sales in the country in the September 2024 quarter, senior officials of the company said on Friday.

The company reported an over 6 per cent growth in total net sales to ₹94.93 billion during the reported period from ₹89.49 billion a year ago.

"We also set September quarter segment revenue records in the Americas, Europe, and the rest of Asia Pacific, as well as in a large number of countries, and we continue to be excited by the enthusiasm we're seeing in India, where we set an all-time revenue record," Apple CEO Tim Cook said during the company's earnings call.

Cook said Apple also opened two new stores - one in Mumbai and the other in Delhi - in the country during the quarter. "We can't wait to bring four new stores to customers in India," he



said. Apple's revenue from sales of products grew by 4.12 per cent during the reported quarter to \$69.95 billion from \$67.18 billion in the Sept. 2023 quarter with iPhone sales growing by about 5.5 per cent to \$46.22 bn from \$43.8 bn on year-on-year (y-o-y) basis.

The services sales grew faster than product sales at around 12 per cent on a YoY basis and reached an all-time high at \$24.97 bn during the quarter from \$22.31 bn in Sept. 2023 quarter. The iPad sales of the company grew by about 8 per cent to \$6.95 billion in Sept. quarter against \$6.44 bn. —PTI

SHORT TAKES

**Sudarsan, Dev rebuild India 'A'**

**Mackay, Australia:** Rising youngsters Sai Sudarsan and Devdutt Padikkal struck fighting fifties after Mukesh Kumar's searing six-wicket haul to put India 'A' in command with a 120-run lead against Australia 'A' on day two of their first 'Unofficial Test' here on Friday. Mukesh stole the show, claiming 6/46 to help India 'A' restrict Australia 'A' to 195 in their first innings but despite the Bengal seamer's heroic efforts, the hosts secured a crucial 88-run lead. The visitors had scored 107 in their first essay. India 'A' once again suffered a jittery start in their second innings with skipper Rituraj Gaikwad (5) and fellow opener Abhimanyu Easwaran (12) getting out cheaply to have India down to 30/2 in 8.5 overs. — PTI

**Brief Scores:** India 'A' 107 and 208/2 in 64 overs (Sai Sudarsan 96 batting, Devdutt Padikkal 80 batting) vs Australia 'A' 195 in 62.4 overs (Nathan McSweeney 39, Mukesh Kumar 6/46, Prasidh Krishna 3/59).

**Pak assures fast visas to Indians**

**Lahore, Nov. 1:** PCB Chairman Mohsin Naqvi, who is also the Federal Interior Minister, on Friday assured a brisk visa issuance policy for Indian fans wanting to visit Pakistan for the ICC Champions Trophy early next year. He made the assurances during a meeting with a group of Sikh pilgrims from the United States. "The PCB was expecting a positive response from Indian fans to visit Pakistan for the Champions Trophy. We will be keeping a special quota of tickets for Indian fans and we will try to make the visa issuance policy brisk," Naqvi was quoted as saying by a newspaper. Naqvi said that the PCB would like to see Indian fans visit Pakistan and watch the Indian and Pakistan match in Lahore. Pakistan is scheduled to host the ICC mega event in February-March 2025 but until now the ICC has still not released the tournament schedule as they wait on confirmation if the Indian government would allow its team to travel to Pakistan for the event. The BCCI has made it clear it has to follow any policy decision of their government when it comes to visiting Pakistan. — PTI

**Lewis leads WI to a big victory**

**North Sound, Antigua:** Evin Lewis smashed a scintillating 94 as West Indies routed England by eight wickets in a rain-hit one-day international on Thursday. After dismissing England for just 209, the West Indies raced to 81 for no loss in 15 overs when rain brought a lengthy delay at Sir Vivian Richards Stadium. Set an adjusted target of 157 from 35 overs, the 32-year-old Lewis hit England's attack to all parts of the ground, making his runs off just 69 balls. His innings included five fours and eight huge sixes after dominating an opening stand of 118 with Brandon King (30). — AFP

**Brief Scores:** England 209 in 45.1 overs (Liam Livingstone 48, Sam Curran 37, Gudakesh Motie 4/41) lost to West Indies 157 for 2 (Evin Lewis 94, Brandon King 30) by DLS method.

**Shashank vows to prove mettle**

**Chandigarh:** Uncapped Shashank Singh, one of the two players retained by Punjab Kings, on Friday said he will prove the team owners' decision to keep him for the 2025 season right by putting up a stellar show in the next edition when they restart their quest for that elusive title. Shashank established himself as a fine finisher for Punjab Kings in the last season where he was their top run-getter with 354 runs at a strike rate of 164.65. He averaged 44.25. "I am extremely grateful to the franchise as they have given me an opportunity again and shown their faith in me. Having been in the circuit for the last five years, this opportunity they have given me is something I'll be forever grateful for. Now, it's my time to prove them right," Shashank said after the retentions were announced. At the IPL 2024 auction, Punjab Kings secured the services of Shashank at his base price of ₹20 lakh, but then claimed it was a 'mistake'. They later clarified that the confusion arose due to another player sharing the same name being on the auction list. — PTI

# FIRST DAY FLOP

India hand New Zealand control after batting collapse in third Test

**Mumbai, Nov. 1:** India's batters lost the plot in a matter of 20 minutes, leaving the side at a jittery 86/4 after Ravindra Jadeja and Washington Sundar gave the hosts the early bragging rights by dismissing New Zealand for 235 on an eventful Day One of the third and final Test here on Friday. Jadeja (5/65) and Sundar (4/81) did their job to perfection but India's batting continued to be a weak link as the side lost three wickets in the space of eight balls, starting with Yashasvi Jaiswal's (30) inexplicable reverse slog sweep. With his 14th five-for in Tests, Jadeja also moved ahead of former pace bowler teammates Zaheer Khan and Ishant Sharma to climb to the fifth spot in the list of highest wicket-takers for India in the format. With 314 wickets so far, Jadeja is now behind Harbhajan Singh (417 wickets) in the all-time list. India, who lost by eight wickets in Bengaluru and by 113 runs in Pune, are in a desperate position to remain alive in the race to the World Test Championship final but the contest seems to be slipping away. If Virat Kohli (4) missed an innocuous full toss to be cleaned up in first innings at Pune was an aberration, the batting maestro ran himself out in ending stages of the first day's play which left India staring at a mountain to climb. India's rapid fall displayed their fast eroding confidence with the bat as Rohit Sharma (18) too was among those who fell without making a significant dent. In between the loss of



New Zealand batsman Daryl Mitchell plays a shot on way to his half-century against India on the first day of the third Test match at the Wankhede Stadium in Mumbai on Friday. — DEBASISH DEY

the team's batting pillars, Jaiswal and Shubman Gill (31 not out) forged a 53-run stand for the second wicket before the closing stage collapse. Rohit, playing only his second Test on his home turf of the Wankhede Stadium, dazzled with a few attractive strokes to get off the blocks quickly but failed to make the most of a reprieve. Rohit played awkwardly at a back of a length ball, looking to work it on the leg side but the ball flew to his counterpart Tom Latham at second slip. — PTI

SCOREBOARD	
<b>New Zealand 1st Innings:</b> Tom Latham b Washington Sundar 28, Devon Conway lbw b Akash Deep 4, Will Young c Sharma b Jadeja 71, Rachin Ravindra b Washington Sundar 5, Daryl Mitchell c Sharma b Washington Sundar 82, Tom Blundell b Jadeja 0, Glenn Phillips b Jadeja 17, Ish Sodhi lbw b Jadeja 7, Matt Henry b Jadeja 0, Ajaz Patel lbw b Washington Sundar 7, William O'Rourke not out 1. Extras (B-1, LB-3, NB-9) 13. <b>Total (allout in 65.4 overs) 235.</b>	<b>India 1st Innings:</b> Yashasvi Jaiswal b Patel 30, Rohit Sharma c Latham b Henry 18, Shubman Gill batting 31, Mohammed Siraj lbw b Patel 0, Virat Kohli run out 4, Rishabh Pant batting 1. Extras (NB-2) 2. <b>Total (for 4 wickets in 19 overs) 86.</b>
<b>Fall of wickets:</b> 1-15, 2-59, 3-72, 4-159, 5-159, 6-187, 7-210, 8-210, 9-228.	<b>Fall of wickets:</b> 1-25, 2-78, 3-78, 4-84.
<b>Bowling:</b> Mohammed Siraj 6-0-16-0, Akash Deep 5-0-22-1, Ravichandran Ashwin 14-0-47-0, Washington Sundar 18.4-2-81-4, Ravindra Jadeja 22-1-65-5.	<b>Bowling:</b> Matt Henry 5-1-15-1, William O'Rourke 2-1-15-0, Ajaz Patel 7-1-33-2, Glenn Phillips 4-0-25-0, Rachin Ravindra 1-0-8-0.

# Pant parts ways with Capitals

Klaasen pips Kohli as top retention at ₹23 crore as teams keep aces

**New Delhi, Nov. 1:** Flamboyant keeper-batter Rishabh Pant's nine-year association with Delhi Capitals officially ended on Thursday while South African Heinrich Klaasen with ₹23 crore valuation pipped none other than peerless Virat Kohli (₹21 crore) to emerge as the top-most retention for the upcoming IPL season. KKR's IPL winning captain Shreyas Iyer is also back in the auction pool after his discussions with the management failed while Mumbai Indians retained all their five star players, including skipper Hardik Pandya, national captains Rohit Sharma, Suryakumar Yadav, pace ace Jasprit Bumrah and young N. T. Tilak Varma. They exhausted full retention purse of ₹75 crore. Punjab Kings have spent just ₹9.5 crore, the least amount for retention, on two uncapped players Shashank Singh and Prabhshimran Singh. They would go into the auction with highest purse of ₹110.5 crore and also four RTM (Right To Match) cards. DC's ownership structure is a complete one with co-owners GMR and JSW getting powers to control management for two years at a time. Hence Pant, who is a JSW recruit, wasn't the top choice for GMR management headed by co-owner Kiran

Grandhi. Moment GMR took charge, they removed earlier coaching management including former Director of Cricket Sourav Ganguly and brought in Venugopal Rao. If sources are to be believed, Pant wasn't exactly pleased with appointment of Rao and Hemang Badani, who possibly would have been given powers to overrule the skipper. Discussions over the last month didn't yield any result and Pant didn't want to work with unfamiliar coaching staff thrust on him by the new management. M u m b a i Indians didn't have much of a choice save one slot where they could pick fresh blood. They have paid Jasprit Bumrah the top retention price of

₹18 crore while India T20 captain Suryakumar Yadav (₹16.35 crore) and franchise skipper Hardik Pandya (₹16.35 crore) were paid equal retention price. Virat Kohli and Royal Challengers Bengaluru are inseparable and hence if there would have been one retention, it would be the iconic India batter. Not getting into the play-offs for 10 straight years means that Punjab Kings never had a settled look. They retained only two uncapped players — keeper-opener Prabhshimran Singh and finisher Shashank Singh.



Rishabh Pant

**KKR KEEP THEIR CORE**

Shreyas Iyer must have thought that he is worth way more than his current value of ₹12.25 crore after leading KKR to IPL title. However not being an automatic India T20 choice and a poor strike rate of less than 140 meant that KKR was never going to shell out big bucks for him. The franchise has released him and he is DC's No.1 captaincy target. The franchise is believed to have kept ₹20 crore minimum for him. Heinrich Klaasen at ₹23 crore is value for money as he probably is one of the best hitters of Indian spinners on slow tracks, a rare USP among foreign batters. CSK didn't have too many surprises except giving same retention amount to both skipper Rituraj Gaikwad and veteran Ravi Jadeja. M. S. Dhoni, for whom uncapped player rule was created, was retained for ₹4 crore. RR had room for all the talent that it groomed over the years with no place for Jos Buttler, R. Ashwin and Yuzvendra Chahal. They kept Nicholas Pooran at ₹21 crore. T20 league's premier bowler Rashid Khan was given top billing at ₹18 crore while Shubman Gill was second highest retention for the franchise. — PTI

**AUSTRALIA | TOUR**

# India nix squad match to train

**New Delhi, Nov. 1:** India have decided to cancel a planned three-day intra-squad match with the 'A' side during the upcoming Test tour of Australia as the team management wants to focus on additional net practice to prepare for the marquee five-match showdown starting November 22 in Perth. India were scheduled to begin their tour of Australia with a closed-door warm-up match against the Rituraj Gaikwad-led India 'A' at the WACA in Perth from November 15 to 17. India A are currently in Australia for an unofficial Test series. However, it is learnt that head coach Gautam Gambhir and some senior players want more time in the nets instead. Rohit Sharma and his men will head to Australia after a shocking home series loss to New Zealand. Vying for a third straight Test series victory in Australia, the tourists will face added pressure, as a place in the World Test Championship final is also at stake. It is understood that since the bounce of the WACA centre strip resembles that of the Perth Stadium track, all top order batters would prefer more time in the middle. An intra squad match might not work in that scenario as if a batter gets out cheaply, then he might not immediately get a chance to bat again on the centre strip. This marks a change from India's last two tours of Australia when the side played practice games ahead of the main series. In the lead-up to the 2018-19 series, the 'Men in Blue' played a four-day match against Cricket Australia XI. For the 2020-21 tour, they started the red-ball leg with a three-day game against Australia A. India 'A' and the senior team played an intra-squad match in Johannesburg prior to the first Test against South Africa in Centurion on Boxing Day last year. Despite the match, the Indian batting came short in the Test. It's not known whether the outcome of this experiment influenced their decision-making for the Australia series. — PTI

# AGARTALA COULD BE KKR'S SECOND HOME

**Agartala, Nov. 1:** "The under-construction international cricket stadium at Narsingarh in Tripura could become Kolkata Knight Riders' second home ground for the 2025 IPL season since the iconic Eden Gardens in Kolkata is set for a massive makeover next year," a Tripura Cricket Association (TCA) official said on Friday. The construction at the international stadium at Narsingarh began way back in 2017 with an estimated cost of ₹185 crore but the stadium is not yet ready. "IPL chairman Arun Kumar Dhumal recently visited the proposed international stadium at Narsingarh on the outskirts of the state capital. He said if the stadium's is ready before February next year, it could be made second home ground of KKR or some other state will get the benefit," TCA secretary Subrata Dey said. "Since it is a golden chance to host IPL matches at the proposed stadium, we have summoned a reputed construction agency to expedite work and get it completed by February 2025. The TCA will review the construction work and if the agency fails to meet the deadline, we will terminate it and engage a new firm to complete the remaining work," he said. — PTI

# Amorim appointed Man United coach

**London, Nov. 1:** Ruben Amorim was Friday named as the new manager of Manchester United, replacing the sacked Erik ten Hag. The 39-year-old Portuguese coach, who won two Spanish league titles with Sporting Lisbon, has signed a deal until 2027 and will join the club on November 11. "Manchester United is delighted to announce the appointment of Ruben Amorim as head coach of the men's first team, subject to work visa requirements," the club said on its website, adding, "He will join until June 2027 with a club option of an additional year, once he has fulfilled his obligations to his current club." United described Amorim as "one of the most exciting and highly rated young coaches in European football". Ten Hag won the League Cup and FA Cup during his spell at Old Trafford but the club have not won the Premier League since 2013, in Alex Ferguson's last season in charge. Ferguson won the Premier League title 13 times but since his departure five permanent managers have come and gone without adding to the club's 20 top-flight titles. — AFP



Ruben Amorim

**IPL RETENTIONS, AUCTION PURSE AND RIGHTS TO MATCH CARDS**

Team	Retention	Auction Purse	RTM
<b>DELHI CAPITALS</b>	Suryakumar Yadav (₹18 crore), Suryakumar Yadav (₹16.35 crore), Hardik Pandya (₹16.35 crore), Rohit Sharma (₹16.30 crore), N. T. Tilak Varma (₹8 crore) — <b>₹75 crore.</b>	₹76.25 crore.	2.
<b>CHENNAI SUPER KINGS</b>	Rituraj Gaikwad (₹18 crore), Matheesha Pathirana (₹13 crore), Shivam Dube (₹12 crore), Ravindra Jadeja (₹18 crore), M. S. Dhoni (₹4 crore) — <b>₹65 crore.</b>	₹55 crore.	1.
<b>MUMBAI INDIANS</b>	Jasprit Bumrah (₹18 crore), Jasprit Bumrah (₹16.35 crore), Hardik Pandya (₹16.35 crore), Rohit Sharma (₹16.30 crore), N. T. Tilak Varma (₹8 crore) — <b>₹75 crore.</b>	₹110.5 crore.	4.
<b>ROYAL CHALLENGERS BENGALURU</b>	Virat Kohli (₹21 crore), Rajat Patidar (₹11 crore), Yash Dayal (₹5 crore) — <b>₹37 crore.</b>	₹83 crore.	3.
<b>PUNJAB KINGS</b>	₹9.5 crore.	₹110.5 crore.	4.
<b>SUNISERS HYDERABAD</b>	Pat Cummins (₹18 crore), Abhishek Sharma (₹14 crore), Nitish Reddy (₹6 crore), Heinrich Klaasen (₹23 crore), Travis Head (₹14 crore) — <b>₹75 crore.</b>	₹45 crore.	1.
<b>RAJASTHAN ROYALS</b>	Sanju Samson (₹18 crore), Yashasvi Jaiswal (₹18 crore), Riyan Parag (₹14 crore), Dhruv Jurel (₹14 crore), Shimron Hetmyer (₹11 crore), Sandeep Sharma (₹4 crore) — <b>₹79 crore (to be adjusted).</b>	₹41 crore.	0.
<b>LUCKNOW SUPER GIANTS</b>	Nicholas Pooran (₹21 crore), Ravi Bishnoi (₹11 crore), Mayank Yadav (₹11 crore), Mohsin Khan (₹4 crore), Ayush Badoni (₹4 crore) — <b>₹51 crore.</b>	₹45 crore.	1.
<b>KOLKATA KNIGHT RIDERS</b>	Rinku Singh (₹13 crore), Varun Chakravarthy (₹12 crore), Sunil Narine (₹12 crore), Andre Russell (₹12 crore), Harshit Rana (₹4 crore), Raman-deep (₹4 cr) — <b>₹57 crore.</b>	₹69 crore.	0.
<b>GUJARAT TITANS</b>	Rashid Khan (₹18 crore), Shubman Gill (₹16.5 crore), B. Sai Sudharsan (₹8.5 crore), Rahul Tewatia (₹4 crore), M. Shahrulkhan (₹4 crore) — <b>₹51 crore.</b>	₹69 crore.	1.

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**glam sham**

Standout celebrity Halloween costumes this year

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# delhi THE AGE

SATURDAY | 2 NOVEMBER 2024

**the buzz**

More chartbusters from Sandeep Reddy in the offing?

10 >>



# NO Clean Shave, LOVE THEN!

Don't underestimate the power of razor romance because Indore's "No Clean Shave, No Love" dating trend is turning heads and sparking conversations



**ROCHELLE CRASTO**

As no shave November (aka Movember) approaches, in the bustling streets of Indore, a bold new trend is shaking up the dating scene: the "No Clean Shave, No Love" movement. This cheeky slogan has taken social media by storm, prompting women to declare their preference for clean-shaven partners in a city known for its rich culture and vibrant community. What started as a light-hearted call-out has quickly evolved into a full-fledged debate about personal grooming and its influence on modern relationships.



**CUT TO LOVE**

The movement gained traction when several young women in Indore took to social media to share their thoughts on men's grooming habits. Armed with hashtags and selfies, they proclaimed that if a guy wants to catch their eye, he better keep his face clean and smooth. "I just feel more attracted to a guy who takes care of himself,"



**HAIRY TALES**

**78%**

of young adults aged 18-35 believe good grooming is crucial in a partner (IISWBM survey)

**45%**

of women in urban areas prefer clean-shaven partners over those with facial hair (IIM, Indore survey)

**40%**

of men are willing to adapt their grooming habits to meet the preferences of their partners (IIM, Indore survey)



**"I JUST FEEL MORE ATTRACTED TO A GUY WHO TAKES CARE OF HIMSELF."**

— DHANASHREE SUBHEDHAR, SEO specialist



**"IF A GUY CAN'T TAKE THE TIME TO GROOM HIMSELF, HOW WILL HE TAKE CARE OF OTHER IMPORTANT THINGS?"**

— EVETTE JOHN, Marketing Executive

says Dhanashree Subhedhar, a SEO specialist leading the charge. "A clean shave shows effort, and who doesn't love a little extra polish?" But it's not just about the aesthetic appeal; it's a reflection of broader societal norms and expectations surrounding masculinity. A recent survey conducted by the Indian Institute of

Social Welfare and Business Management (IISWBM) found that 78% of young adults aged 18-35 believe good grooming is crucial in a partner.

TURN TO PAGE 10



## KL RAHUL SNUBBED, SANJIV GOENKA JUSTIFIES DECISION

The IPL franchise owner's statement, "Need players with a mindset to win," draws flak

Lucknow Super Giants have released KL Rahul, the team's captain and star batsman, back into the auction pool, ahead of IPL 2025. This was expected, given the IPL team owner's outburst at his captain after the team lost one of the matches last year.

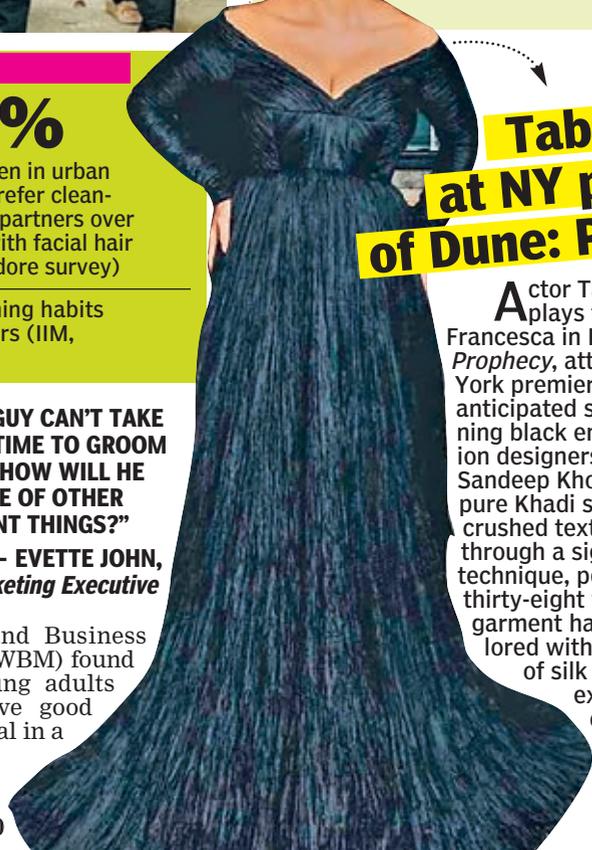
But Sanjiv Goenka's explanation, "It was a simple mindset to go in for players, who have a mindset to win, who put the team before their personal goals and personal aspirations," hasn't gone down well with social media. Reacting to the explanation, one Netizen pointed out that "he released selfless player KL Rahul who used to play for the team." Another responded sharply – "What a silly thing to say. Throwing all the players, not retained under the bus."

**WHAT A SILLY THING TO SAY. THROWING ALL THE PLAYERS NOT RETAINED UNDER THE BUS**

COMMENT BY A NETIZEN

Actor Tabu, who plays the role of Sister Francesca in HBO series *Dune Prophecy*, attended the New York premiere of the highly-anticipated series in a stunning black ensemble by fashion designers Abu Jani Sandeep Khosla. Crafted from pure Khadi silk, it boasts a crushed texture achieved through a signature artisanal technique, perfected over thirty-eight years ago. "The garment has been hand-tailored with over fifty metres of silk that finds elegant expression in a mix of Indian heritage and Western style," they said in the note.

## Tabu shines at NY premiere of *Dune: Prophecy*



Actor Tabu, who plays the role of Sister Francesca in HBO series *Dune Prophecy*, attended the New York premiere of the highly-anticipated series in a stunning black ensemble by fashion designers Abu Jani Sandeep Khosla. Crafted from pure Khadi silk, it boasts a crushed texture achieved through a signature artisanal technique, perfected over thirty-eight years ago. "The garment has been hand-tailored with over fifty metres of silk that finds elegant expression in a mix of Indian heritage and Western style," they said in the note.

— PTI

## More chartbusters from Sandeep Reddy in the offing?

Director starts brainstorming with composer Harshavardhan Rameshwar

B.V.S. PRAKASH

THE ASIAN AGE

After providing mellifluous numbers in his latest film *Animal*, director Sandeep Vanga Reddy has commenced work for his next, *Spirit* – he has started music sittings with composer Harshavardhan Rameshwar.

The director announced on X that music work commenced on Diwali.

“Sandeep’s romantic songs *Hua Mein* and *Pehle Bhi Main* and theme song *Saari Duniya Jala Denge* as well as *Arjan Vailly*, became a rage among music lovers the world over,” says a director, adding that he expects more chartbusters from him in collaboration with Harshavardhan. “He could be



roping in a top heroine opposite Prabhas. So their duets have to stand the test of time,” he adds.

*Spirit* is billed as an intense cop drama with Prabhas set to appear in a Khaki avatar for the first time. Regular shooting will commence next year and the movie will hit the screens in 2026.

## Samantha lauds rise of women in action films

‘It’s amazing to see women take control’, she says.

It’s inspiring that female actors like Alia Bhatt, Deepika Padukone, and Anushka Shetty are fronting major action movies, says South star Samantha Ruth Prabhu, who has also dived into the genre with her upcoming series, *Citadel: Honey Bunny*.

“I’m glad I discovered a new facet or genre that gets me excited, which is action. Many actresses are indulging or diving into action, like Alia is doing action, Deepika and Katrina (Kaif) have always done action, Dishika (Patani) and

Kiara (Advani) are doing it now, and Kangana (Ranaut) has done action. Anushka (Shetty) has done action. It is amazing for women to take control,” the actor told *PTI* in an interview.

A major name in Tamil and Telugu cinema, Samantha is known for her performance in films like *Ye Maaya Chesave*, *Eega*, *Neethaane En Ponvasantham*, *Mahanati*, and *Super Deluxe*.

Samantha, whose debut Hindi series *The Family Man season 2*, also directed by Raj & DK, featured her in the role of the main antagonist, said most of her action sequences in the show were almost cut. “I’m glad they kept it,” she said.



**“WHO DOESN'T WANT TO DO A LOT OF COOL ACTION AND PLAY A SPY, I THINK THAT'S ON EVERY ACTOR'S DREAM LIST. JAMES BOND IS THE ULTIMATE ROLE TO PLAY, SO THAT'S JUST A GIVEN,” SAYS AN EXCITED SAMANTHA.**



CONTINUED FROM PAGE 9

Talk about a grooming revolution! Clean-shaven men are becoming the darlings of the dating scene, while their bearded counterparts may need to reconsider their strategy — or risk finding themselves single.

### BEARDS, BONDS, BREAKUPS

It turns out that personal grooming is not merely a matter of vanity; it's a love language too. The movement highlights how grooming preferences can signal self-care, attention to detail, and even a certain level of sophistication. Who knew that a little razor could wield such romantic power?

Grooming is a reflection of lifestyle choices and values, and as societal expectations evolve, so do the standards of attraction. In a world where appearances often speak louder than words, a clean shave has become the new heartthrob. Gone are the days when ruggedness was synonymous with masculinity; the modern man is all about the sleek, sophisticated look. A well-groomed man might just get the green light in the dating game.

### GROOMING GAINS GROUND

The “No Clean Shave, No Love” move-



# NO Clean Shave, LOVE THEN!



**“MEN ARE BECOMING INCREASINGLY AWARE OF THEIR APPEARANCE, WHICH IS A POSITIVE SHIFT.”**

— BRENDEN MATHEW, UI UX Designer



ment has prompted many men to rethink their grooming habits. As the trend spreads, some men are embracing the challenge of clean-shaven appearances, while others are staunchly defending their beards. For many women, it's not just about their physical appearance; it's a reflection of personal values.

“If a guy can't take the time to groom himself, how will he take care of other important things?” expresses Evette John, a marketing executive.

However, the movement has sparked conversations about the pressure to conform to certain looks. Not every man feels comfortable sporting a clean-shaven face,



and the debate raises questions about individuality versus societal expectations. In the quest for love, it seems some men may feel they have to compromise their personal style. According to a survey conducted by the Indian Institute of Management Indore, 45% of women in urban areas express a preference for clean-shaven partners over those with facial hair. The same survey also indicated that 40% of men are willing to adapt their grooming habits to meet the preferences of their partners.

Additionally, fashion experts can shed light on how grooming trends have evolved over the years. Grooming styles are reflective of societal changes. What's trendy now may not have been the case a decade ago,” says Brenden Mathew, a UX UI designer. “Men are becoming increasingly aware of

their appearance, which is a positive shift.”

### SHAVE, SHARE, SWOON

As the “No Clean Shave, No Love” movement continues to gain momentum in Indore, it serves as a reminder of the impact that personal grooming can have on relationships. While preferences may vary, the underlying message is clear: self-care matters, and so does the effort put into maintaining one's appearance.

Whether you're clean-shaven or sporting a beard, what ultimately matters is authenticity. Grooming trends will come and go, but confidence and self-acceptance will always remain attractive qualities. So, gentlemen, if you're feeling the pressure to pick up a razor, remember: love isn't just about looks; it's about the connection you build. And who knows? You might just find that the right partner appreciates you for exactly who you are—beard or no beard!

ROCHELLE CRASTO

**✓** If you haven't noticed, flamingo pink is strutting into our lives with flair this spring. From runways to living rooms and even kitchen accessories, this bold hue has become an instant favourite. While some shades of pink may whisper "soft and subtle," flamingo pink says, "I'm here, and I'm fabulous." It's a colour that's hard to ignore — and that's exactly the point.

**THE POWER PINK**

Flamingo pink isn't just another colour in the pink family. It's lively, unapologetically vibrant, and stands out without needing glitter or shimmer. Imagine the beautiful pinks of a sunset combined with the exotic flair of the tropical flamingo. It's a blend of warm undertones that lifts any look or space with a single swatch. This colour started popping up on the fashion radar last year, with brands like Valentino, Gucci, and Jacquemus embracing it in their collections. But flamingo pink hasn't limited itself to high fashion — streetwear, interior decor, and even nail art are all getting a dose of this delightful shade. For many, it's the fun, joyful colour that brings life back into our wardrobes and homes after a long stretch of neutrals and subdued tones.

According to a 2024 report by the Pantone Colour Institute, consumer interest in "flamingo pink" surged by 35% from 2023 to 2024, with searches for bold pinks hitting new highs across fashion and home decor. This trend is part of what experts are calling 'dopamine dressing,' where people use colour to lift their mood and express individuality. Flamingo pink, with its joyful and energizing effect, has become the colour of choice for many seeking a fresh start this spring.

**FASHION FORWARD**

Whether you're a minimalist or a maximalist, flamingo pink can work its magic in your wardrobe. For the adventurous, a flamingo pink coat or jumpsuit

# Take a fancy flight with flamingo pink

From clothes, shoes, and accessories to walls and make-up, flamingo pink has become an irresistible colour choice for designers and everyday folks alike

is a statement piece that radiates confidence and joy. If bold statements aren't your thing, you can still join the pink parade with a subtler approach — a pair of flamingo pink shoes, a bag, or even a scarf can give a nod to the trend without overwhelming your look. It's one of those colours that pairs unexpectedly well with so many others.

Try it with neutrals, like beige or white, to let the pink take centre stage, or pair it with deep greens and blues for a tropical vibe.

**HOME SWEET PINK**

Flamingo pink is finding its way into home decor in a big way. A 2024 report by Houzz, a leading platform for home renovation and design, revealed that the use of bright pinks in interior decor projects rose by 40% in the first quarter of 2024 compared to 2023. From flamingo pink throw blankets to accent walls, homeowners are embracing this colour as a way to bring joy and personality into their living spaces. Paired with cool tones like teal or gray, flamingo pink adds vibrancy without overwhelming the senses. Mixed with earthy tones, it offers a modern twist to classic comfort.

**"PINK WAS NEVER MY STYLE. IT WAS SOMETHING I STARTED OUT AS A SUBCONSCIOUS CHOICE AND IT ENDED UP BEING MY GO-TO COLOUR."**  
— RICHELLE FERNANDES, Student

**PINK PERFECTION**

And let's not forget accessories. From tableware to phone cases, sunglasses to planners, small splashes of flamingo pink can brighten your day in unexpected ways. Want to try something fun? Try a flamingo pink manicure to liven up your look. It's a playful touch that's both sophisticated and eye-catching. "You can never go wrong with pink. It's such a safe and happy colour," says Khushi Darji, a student.

**THE COLOUR'S SECRET CHARM**

What is it about flamingo pink that makes it such a crowd-

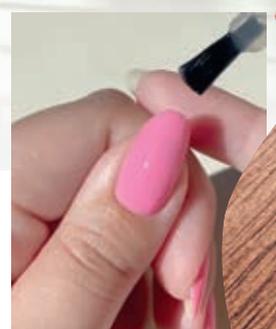


**SPLASH OF PINK**

So, how can you bring a bit of flamingo pink into your life? You don't need to remodel your whole house or overhaul your closet. Start small — a flamingo pink candle here, a throw pillow there, a notebook with a pink cover on your desk. Or maybe try flamingo pink lipstick or nail polish for a low-key way to join the trend. The best part about this colour is its versatility. "Pink was never my style. It was something I started out as a SUBCONSCIOUS choice and it ended up being my go-to colour," says Richelle Fernandes, a student.

**FLAMINGO PINK FEVER**

In a season often associated with renewal and fresh starts, flamingo pink is the perfect shade to spark joy and creativity. This season, let your colours fly as bright and free as a flamingo in flight. After all, life is better when it's a little pinker.



# tarot speak

ARIES | MARCH 21 TO APRIL 20



Dear Aries, This week, you may encounter some financial challenges or instability. It could be due to overspending, poor money management, or difficulty in building lasting wealth. Take a moment to reassess how you handle your finances — seeking professional guidance might help. Developing better financial habits will lead you toward greater stability, prosperity, and long-term success. On another note, you might feel a sense of stagnation or being stuck in a rut. If that's the case, it's time to shake things up. Spend quality time with friends, treat yourself to something fun, and engage in

activities you love.

**LUCKY NUMBER:** 8 | **LUCKY COLOR:** DEEP PURPLE | **AFFIRMATION FROM LIGHT SEERS TAROT:** I DREAM MY LIMITLESS POTENTIAL INTO EXISTENCE WITH STEADY DESIRE AND LOVE MY UNIQUE INTELLIGENCE WISELY

TAURUS | APRIL 21 TO MAY 21



Dear Taurus, This week serves as a reminder to stay positive and avoid unnecessary worry. Imagine waking up from a bad dream and realizing it was all just in your head. The heavy clouds of worry and anxiety are starting to lift, and clarity is on the horizon. Remember the time you stressed about a project, only to find out it wasn't due for another week? That's the vibe here. The fears that seemed so big are shrinking, giving you space to think clearly. Use this newfound clarity to address any lingering concerns. You have the strength to tackle them and move forward with confidence. Good things are coming your way!

**LUCKY NUMBER:** 9 | **LUCKY COLOR:** WHITE | **AFFIRMATION FROM LIGHT SEERS TAROT:** I SEE MY FEARS AS THE ILLUSIONS THEY ARE.

GEMINI | MAY 22 TO JUNE 21



Dear Gemini, This week, it's important to take things a bit slower and think things through before making any big decisions. If you're feeling unsure, don't hesitate to reach out to others for advice and guidance. You might also want to share your thoughts and feelings but remember to be mindful of how those around you might react. Lady of Tarot is telling us to be more cautious and thoughtful in our actions and thoughts. By taking a moment to reflect on your situation and considering all the available options, you can make better decisions and avoid unnecessary conflicts and complications.

**LUCKY NUMBER:** 3 | **LUCKY COLOUR:** LIGHT PINK | **AFFIRMATION FROM LIGHT SEERS TAROT:** I EXPAND MY CONSCIOUSNESS AND I OPEN UP NEW OPPORTUNITIES.

CANCER | JUNE 22 TO JULY 23



Dear Cancer, This week might feel like you're stuck in a maze with no clear exit. You might face situations where you feel trapped or restricted, but remember — it's mostly in your mind. Imagine you're tied up, but the knots aren't as tight as you think. If you take a step back, you'll see a way out. Think of the story of the bird that didn't realise the cage door was open. This week, challenge those self-imposed limitations. Look for opportunities to break free from doubts, whether it's speaking up in a meeting or tackling a project you've been avoiding. You have the power to untangle your-

self.

**LUCKY NUMBER:** 8 | **LUCKY COLOR:** NAVY BLUE | **AFFIRMATION FROM LIGHT SEERS TAROT:** I AM FREE TO CHOOSE MY HEALING AND MY LIGHT.

LEO | JULY 24 TO AUGUST 23



My Dear Leo, This week will be one of transition and healing. Picture yourself on a calm river, moving away from rough waters. The cards indicate you're leaving behind challenges, and moving towards a more peaceful phase. Perhaps you have been stressed at work or in relationships; now, you'll find some relief. Like a traveler on a journey, you're heading towards calmer shores. It's a week to embrace change and trust that better times are ahead. Remember, transitions can be bittersweet, but they lead to growth and new beginnings. Focus on self-care and let go of what no longer serves you. Travel is also indicated.

**LUCKY NUMBER:** 6 | **LUCKY COLOR:** OCEAN BLUE | **AFFIRMATION FROM LIGHT SEERS TAROT:** I ACCEPT HELP AS I EASILY MOVE THROUGH THIS TRANSITION.

THE SWORD OF TRUTH MAY BE SHARP, BUT IT LEADS TO FREEDOM.

— ANONYMOUS

## YOU ASK WE ANSWER

### The cards favour positive outcomes



By MAANYA KOHLI

**MAANYA, A RENOWNED TAROT CARD READER, BELIEVES THAT TAROT IS A TOOL FOR DIVINITY AND THE CARDS CAN BE A SPIRITUAL GUIDE IN VARIOUS LIFE SITUATIONS**

**Q** My son Prateek has completed his master's in the US and is working for a UK-based company online. When will he get married? Where will he settle?

Gen Shankar.

Dear Gen Shankar, The cards reveal that your son, Prateek, is on the path to a joyful, fulfilling marriage. His future spouse will be a strong, ethical woman and they are likely to tie the knot by July 2025. This union will not only bring happiness but also a stroke of good luck, giving a boost to his career. While Prateek may face a few challenges until April, things will start improving career-wise, especially after he enters a committed relationship or gets married. By May 2025, his career will take off. God Bless!

**Q** We have been continuously searching for matches for my brother but not been able to find any suitable match. Please let me know when he will get married?

— Renuka

Dear Renuka, I see wonderful, positive signs in the cards regarding your brother's marriage! They represent tradition, commitment and spiritual guidance, suggesting that marriage is indeed on the horizon. It seems likely that the match will come through more traditional means — perhaps through family connections. I also sense that seeking advice or blessings from elders or spiritual figures in your family may play a key role in finding the right person. As for the timing, it looks like wedding bells could be ringing by March 2025. God Bless!

**Q** My pension has been delayed for almost a year and a half now. I have been sending emails regularly but no proper response. When will I get my money?

Anonymous

I completely understand how frustrating and stressful these delays must be, especially when you're putting in so much effort to move things forward. While it feels like you've been stuck in a waiting phase, there is a positive outcome ahead. Keep nurturing the process, and hold on to hope. I recommend continuing to follow up but also remember to take care of your emotional well-being during this time. Rest assured, you'll receive your funds before the end of 2025, bringing you the abundance and support you need. God Bless!

VIRGO | AUGUST 24 TO SEP 23



Dear Virgo, This week, just remember that everything starts with love. Your life will be full of love, romance and emotional fulfillment. You will be able to plant the seed of love in your life. The seed may or may not blossom, depending on how you nurture it. The cards predict the start of a relationship that is full of great potential and may ultimately lead to true love and happiness. Remember that if a relationship starts well, it is up to you and your partner to nourish it. The cards do not guarantee happiness but guarantee that you will have the chance to create happiness for yourself if you desire.

**LUCKY NUMBER:** 1 | **LUCKY COLOR:** OCEAN BLUE | **AFFIRMATION FROM LIGHT SEERS TAROT:** MY HEART IS OPEN AND FILLED WITH LOVE.

LIBRA | SEP 24 TO OCT 23



Dear Libra, This week you have drawn the card of FATE. Just as you can see the apple falling from a tree but cannot see gravity, you can experience the results of fate but fate itself is invisible to us. As the wheel of fate turns, it brings major change. If you are up, you shall go down and if you are down, the wheel shall turn in your favor. My only advice to you dear Libras, is try to find a place in the center of the wheel, where the changes are not that noticeable. Find peace and tranquility within you and you shall remain unaffected by the turning of this wheel.

**LUCKY NUMBER:** 10 | **LUCKY COLOR:** BRIGHT YELLOW | **AFFIRMATION FROM LIGHT SEERS TAROT:** WITH EVERY SPIN, I EXPAND.

SCORPIO | OCT. 24 TO NOV. 22



Dear Scorpio, This week is all about victory and recognition, so get ready to bask in some well-deserved glory. Maybe you've been working hard on a project at work or finally tackling a personal goal — whatever it is, others are going to notice and celebrate your success. Picture this: you're the star player in a big game, and the crowd is cheering just for you. Enjoy every bit of the applause, but remember to stay humble. Share the spotlight with those who helped you along the way. Keep that positive energy flowing, and this week will feel like a triumphant parade in your honor. Go get 'em!

**LUCKY NUMBER:** 6 | **LUCKY COLOR:** BRIGHT PINK | **AFFIRMATION FROM LIGHT SEERS TAROT:** I AM WORTHY OF SUCCESS.

SAGITTARIUS | NOV. 23 TO DEC. 21



Dear Sagittarius, This week you have inner strength, personal power, strong will and determination. It is time to face your fears head-on, understand all the joys and pains in the world that make you who you are, and transform these into something useful, something that can benefit you. True strength is about how you react to the stuff life keeps chucking at you, and choosing to respond with something positive, powerful and useful. It's about taking responsibility for your actions. Those who are coupled, accept their beloved as they are, practice patience, and demonstrate the strength of love.

**LUCKY NUMBER:** 8 | **LUCKY COLOR:** SUNSHINE YELLOW | **AFFIRMATION FROM LIGHT SEERS TAROT:** I DELIBERATELY SHINE MY COMPASSION AND STRENGTH

CAPRICORN | DEC. 22 TO JAN. 20



Dear Capricorn, This week change is heading your way, a positive change — the wheel of life is now turning in your favor. You will experience a lucky streak in all areas of your life. You can be sure that whatever challenges you may have recently gotten yourself into is on the way out. The Wheel of Life promises that the changes heading your way are happy ones, will tug you out of whatever rut you're in and thrust you deeper into the bigger, richer themes of your life. Your relationships, business and career, finances, health and spiritual well-being will all begin to improve.

**LUCKY NUMBER:** 10 | **LUCKY COLOR:** GOLDEN | **AFFIRMATION FROM LIGHT SEERS TAROT:** WITH EVERY SPIN, I EXPAND.

AQUARIUS | JAN 21 TO FEB 19



Dear Aquarius, This week you will be faced with a lot of opportunities and offers that might appear very lucrative. However, the cards suggest that you weigh each option, and evaluate the pros and cons before you select any opportunity. The cards also suggest that you will be tempted by situations, you might be offered a bribe, or you might be tempted to have an extra-marital affair. You must understand that the pleasures associated with temptations are short-lived and lead to a long-term impact.

**LUCKY NUMBER:** 7 | **LUCKY COLOR:** LIGHT GREEN | **AFFIRMATION FROM LIGHT SEERS TAROT:** MY WILDEST IMAGINATION IS A TOOL THAT I CAN USE TO INFORM MY FUTURE IN A DOWN TO EARTH WAY.

PISCES | FEB 20 TO MARCH 20



Dear Pisces, This is a week of intuition and exploration. Embrace the unknown, for hidden truths may surface. Trust your instincts; they will guide you through uncertainties. It's a time to navigate your path with sensitivity and creativity. Don't be afraid to dream big. While the Moon casts shadows, it also illuminates possibilities. Embrace the magical energy around you; it's a week for self-discovery and tapping into your subconscious wisdom. By week's end, you'll have uncovered valuable insights. Let your intuition be your guide, and may the cosmic mysteries lead you to a week filled with enchantment and self-discovery!

**LUCKY NUMBER:** 18 | **LUCKY COLOR:** BABY PINK | **AFFIRMATION FROM LIGHT SEERS TAROT:** I TRUST MY INTUITION AND I FLOAT.

## IN THE NEWS

### Daft Punk's Interstella 5555 set for exclusive one-night screening

The French house music duo will treat fans worldwide to a special edition of their iconic 2001 album *Discovery*

Daft Punk will throw special screening of their 2003 anime film *Interstella 5555: The Story of the Secret Star System* in over 800 theaters across 40 countries. The event coincides with the release of a special edition of their acclaimed 2001 album *Discovery*.



The film, a collaboration between Daft Punk, creative director Cédric Hervet, renowned Japanese artist Leiji Matsumoto, and animation studio Toei Animation, features a soundtrack made up of every track from *Discovery*, including hits like *One More Time*, *Harder, Better, Faster, Stronger*, and *Digital Love*. While the film has previously been cut into individual music videos, this screening offers a rare chance to see it in its entirety on the big screen.

Adding to the excitement, the day after the screenings, *Discovery: Interstella 5555 Edition* will be released, featuring 5,555 copies of the album on gold vinyl, along with 5,555 numbered CDs and a limited run of black vinyl with the original Japanese edition artwork.

### As Singham 3 and Bhool Bhulaiyaa 3 lock horns...

...will the hype translate to box office numbers? The real test is post Monday after the festive weekend

Rohit Shetty's multi-starrer *Singham 3* may have opened to a full house, but its roar has not loud enough to garner positive reviews. "Just saw #SinghamAgain, and honestly, it's nothing but hype. Bad acting, worse direction, and absolutely no excitement. #SinghamAgainReview", wrote a netizen.

The movie, which is eyeing over Rs 35 crore as its opening day collection, has had 54 per cent more screens than Kartik Aaryan's *Bhuliyaan 3* allotted to it. "With tickets selling as high as Rs 2700 at some of the PVR chains, it's not tough for both films to get a good opening. *Bhool Bhulaiyaa 3* is likely to make Rs 30 crore," says a trade analyst, adding that the litmus test will be to see if they can sustain in terms of ticket sales after the opening weekend. "Post Monday one will get the real picture — whether there is a strong word of mouth or not will determine whether both these hyped films can draw audiences in, irrespective of reviews," he says.



**Tarot Tip for Attracting Wealth and Fortune:** Wearing an energized Yellow Sapphire ring or bracelet can be a powerful way for business owners and working professionals to attract wealth, success and good fortune.

### Embrace the Ace of Swords, it's a powerful symbol

We've just celebrated Diwali, the festival of lights, which marks a new year or fresh beginnings for Hindus. So, today, let's talk about the seeds of change. In Tarot, the Aces embody new beginnings and the raw energy of the four elements — Wands, Swords, Cups and Pentacles. The Ace of Swords, in particular, is a powerful symbol, bringing clarity, truth and a burst of mental energy. This card is like a sharp blade that cuts through confusion, revealing clear, sometimes uncomfortable truths. When we see the Ace of Swords in a reading, it's as if the universe has handed us a sword, a tool to cut away doubts and illusions. Think of it as that "Aha!" moment when

everything finally clicks. Whether it's a new idea for a project, a revelation about a situation, or a hard truth that needs to be acknowledged, the Ace of Swords encourages us to embrace this clarity, even if it feels a bit sharp. I recall a time when the Ace of Swords appeared in a reading for one of my clients. She was struggling to decide on her career, feeling lost and overwhelmed. The Ace of Swords

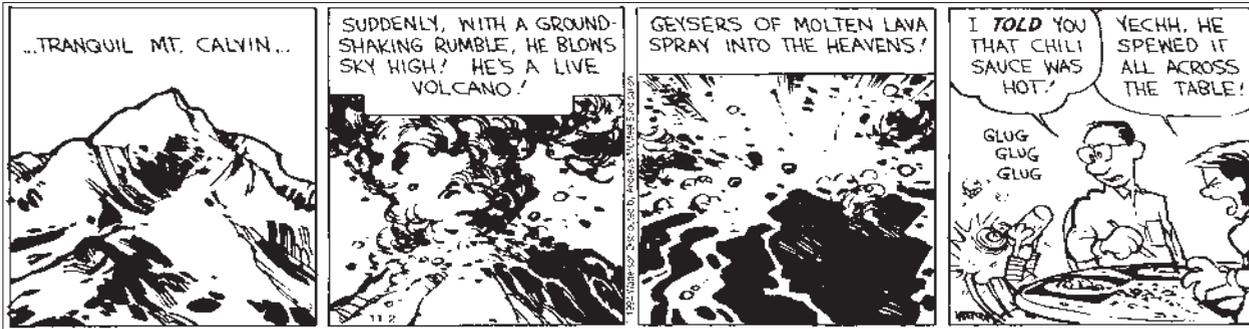
showed up, and soon after, she had a moment of piercing clarity — she realized she had been holding onto a job that didn't align with her true passions. It wasn't an easy truth to accept, but it paved the way for her to pursue something more fulfilling. The Ace of Swords had given her the mental energy to confront reality and make a brave choice. Not every Ace of Swords moment is so dramatic. Sometimes it's as simple as

realizing a mistake and making a small but significant adjustment. Like when you notice an error in your bank statement — nothing catastrophic, but it requires your attention and action. The card reminds us that even minor truths deserve to be addressed. My dear readers, Aces signal potential, but they are also just the beginning. They provide the energy and insight, but the rest is up to us. The Ace of Swords offers a newfound clarity to cut through the fog and move forward. So, when the Ace of Swords comes your way, embrace its sharpness — it's the tool you need for a breakthrough. (Next up in this series: Ace of Cups!)

WHEN WE SEE THE ACE OF SWORDS IN A READING, IT'S AS IF THE UNIVERSE HAS HANDED US A SWORD, A TOOL TO CUT AWAY DOUBTS AND ILLUSIONS. THINK OF IT AS THAT "AHA!" MOMENT WHEN EVERYTHING FINALLY CLICKS.

# coffee-break

**CALVIN AND HOBBS** | Bill Watterson



**DOONESBURY** | Garry Trudeau



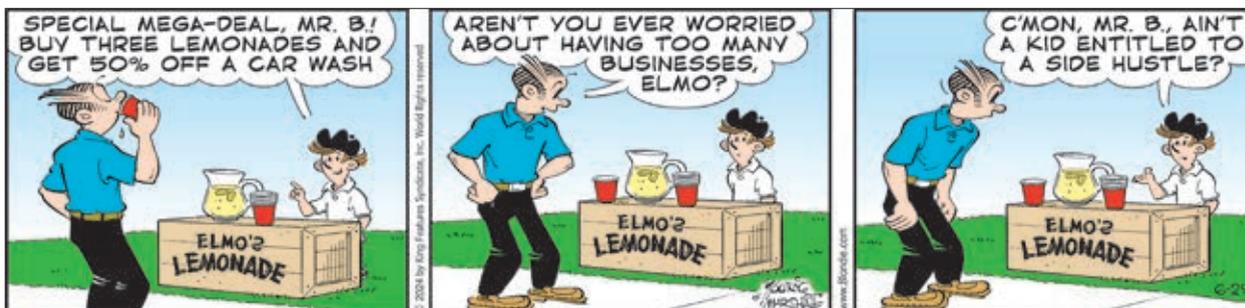
**B.C.** | Johnny Hart



**UP AND RUNNING** | Gray and Shack



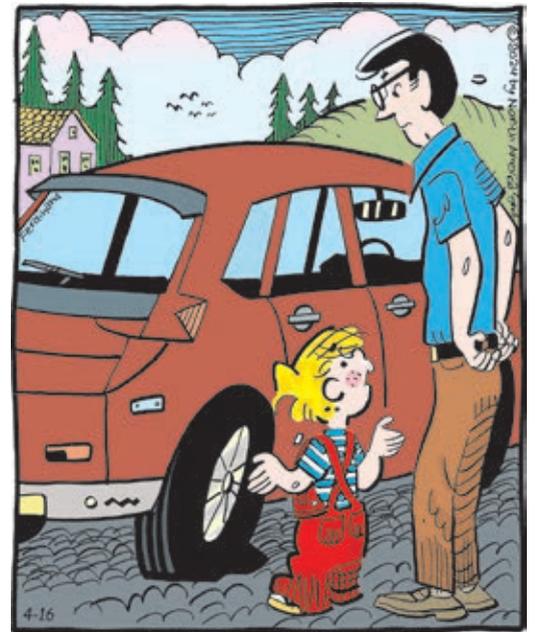
**BLONDIE** | Dean Young and John Marshall



**ANDY CAPP** | Reg Smythe



**Dennis the Menace**



**hocus focus**



Find at least six differences in details between panels.



Differences: 1. Fingers are showing, 2. Nose is different, 3. Box is taller, 4. Drip is added, 5. Outlet is moved, 6. Man is thinner.

**jumble**

LIRLG

CAXTE

OCRWDA

DWEPOR



Now arrange the circled letters to form the surprise answer, as suggested by the above cartoon.

(Answers Monday)

Thursday's Jumbles: OMEGA COMFY STYLUS REBUKE  
 Answer: The owners of the new store hoped that customers would be -- EASY TO COME 'BUY'