

# THE ASIAN AGE

NEW DELHI SUNDAY 3 NOVEMBER 2024



## NATION | 3

Police vehicles being used to provide financial aid to Mahayuti nominees: Pawar



## WORLD | 6

Ex-Russian President Medvedev warns US to avoid World War 3

## DELHI AGE | 9

Cyber experts call for stronger security against 'digital arrest' and caution of possible pitfalls



www.asianage.com

RNI No. 57290/94, Regd No: DL-SW-05/4189/15-17

Vol. 31 No. 258 | 16 PAGES | ₹5.00



Fireworks during the Diwali celebration at Shivaji Park in Mumbai on Saturday. — PTI

## Delhi air pollution slips to 'very poor' category yet again

New Delhi: The pollution situation deteriorated in Delhi on Saturday, with the air quality falling into the 'very poor' category again after showing improvement in the morning. The capital's 24-hour average air quality index (AQI), recorded at 4.00 pm every day, stood at 316, worsening from 290 recorded in the morning. Air pollution levels reached the 'severe' category (AQI above 400) at Anand Vihar while the 27 other monitoring stations in the city recorded the AQI in the 'very poor' category, with levels above 300. Full report on Page 2

## Cops launch probe after bullet found on AI flight

New Delhi: The Delhi police are probing a case of security breach after a live cartridge was found in a pocket seat of an Air India flight landing from Dubai recently, officials said. An Air India staff found the live round of ammunition during routine cleaning on a flight on October 27. Full report on Page 2

## Jaishankar to visit Oz, Singapore from Nov. 3-8

New Delhi: External affairs minister S. Jaishankar will visit Australia and Singapore from November 3 to 8 during which he will meet leaders of the two countries and address the 8th Roundtable of Asean, an official statement said on Saturday. Full report on Page 3

## COUNTERPOINT



Rebels from all parties have formed a new party and are contesting in the polls!

## WEATHER

Max: 33°C  
Min: 18°C  
RH: 42%  
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 5.34 PM  
SUNRISE TOMORROW 6.35 AM  
MOONRISE TOMORROW 9.06 AM  
MOONSET TODAY 6.31 PM

## Army begins verification patrolling in Depsang area

AGE CORRESPONDENT NEW DELHI, NOV. 2

The ministry of external affairs on Saturday said verification patrolling by the Indian Army has begun at Depsang, the second friction point in eastern Ladakh. Patrolling at Demchok had begun on Friday, a day after the Indian and Chinese troops completed disengagement at the two friction points in eastern Ladakh.

Replying to a query at a weekly press briefing, MEA spokesperson Randhir Jaiswal said, "On October 21, the last phase of disengagement was agreed upon between India and China. As a result, verification patrolling has commenced on mutually agreed terms in Demchok and Depsang." The areas and patrolling status are expected to be moved back to the pre-April 2020 level.

Foreign secretary Vikram Misri had on October 21 said that an agreement was finalised between India and China following negotiations over the past several weeks and that it will lead to a resolution of the issues that arose in 2020. The agreement

Turn to Page 4

## MEA lodges protest, warns of consequences Baseless: India dismisses Canada's charge on Shah

VINEETA PANDEY NEW DELHI, NOV. 2

The Indian government on Saturday said it has lodged a protest over "absurd and baseless" references made by Canadian deputy minister David Morrison about Union home minister Amit Shah in the Hardeep Singh Nijjar murder case. India also cautioned that such irresponsible actions will have serious consequences for bilateral ties.

The ministry of external affairs said a Canadian high commission representative was summoned to lodge India's protest. According to foreign ministry spokesperson Randhir Jaiswal a diplomatic note was handed over in reference to the proceedings of the Canadian standing committee on public safety and national security in Ottawa on October 29.

"The government of India protests in the strongest terms to the absurd and baseless references made to the Union home minister... In fact, the revelation that high Canadian officials deliberately leak unfounded insinuations to the international media as part of a conscious strategy to discredit India and influence other nations only confirms the view the government of India has long held about the current Canadian government's political agenda and behavioral pattern," Mr Jaiswal said, adding,

## MEA: Firms sanctioned by US did not violate domestic laws

AGE CORRESPONDENT NEW DELHI, NOV. 2

India has defended its nationals and business houses sanctioned by the United States of America for technology and material trade with Russia, which the USA perceives to be aiding war against Ukraine. India said the sanctioned transactions and companies are not in violation of Indian laws. However, it is working with all relevant departments to sensitise Indian companies on applicable export control provisions and is in touch with the US government to clarify the issues.

Ministry of external affairs spokesperson

"Such irresponsible actions will have serious consequences for bilateral ties."

India and Canada diplomatic relations have hit a low after Canadian Prime Minister Justin Trudeau accused India of carrying out the killing of Khalistani separatist Nijjar. The relations between the two countries are in a downward spiral as the Canadian side makes fresh allegations and targets the Indian diplomats. Both India and Canada have already withdrawn senior diplomats.

Randhir Jaiswal said India has a "robust legal and regulatory framework" on strategic trade and non-proliferation controls. "We are also members of three key multilateral non-proliferation export control regimes. In keeping with India's established non-proliferation credentials, we are working with all relevant departments and agencies to sensitise Indian companies on applicable export control provisions and also inform them on new measures being implemented, which could impact Indian companies in certain circumstances," he said.

More on Page 4

diplomats continue to be under high surveillance by Canada. Some of the Indian consular officials were recently informed by the Canadian government that they are under audio and video surveillance and that their communications have also been intercepted.

"We have formally protested to the Canadian government as we deem these actions to be a flagrant violation of relevant diplomatic and consular conventions. By citing technicalities, the Canadian government cannot justify the fact

Turn to Page 4

## Shah to unveil BJP's J'khand Sankalp Patra, will hold 3 election rallies today

Finalise poll plan ■ JMM delivers more than promised: Soren

AGE CORRESPONDENT NEW DELHI, NOV. 2

As the battle for Jharkhand gets intense, the BJP heavyweight and Union home minister Amit Shah is set to hold three rallies in the poll-bound state on Sunday and unveil the party's manifesto and sops to woo the voters. Prime Minister Narendra Modi is also scheduled to be in Jharkhand on Monday to address rallies. Defending his bulwark, chief minister Hemant Soren is focusing on matching the BJP sops with the JMM's poll doses but finds himself embroiled in "distractions", the latest being controversy related to his age.

With barely 10 days to go for the first phase of



Union home minister Amit Shah with his wife Sonal at his residence in Ahmedabad on the occasion of Gujarati New Year on Saturday. — PTI

polling in the tribal-dominated state, the BJP's top leadership has shifted its focus from Maharashtra to Jharkhand. Apart from campaigning, Mr Shah's visit is also to give impetus to the BJP's poll efforts and rejuvenate the cadre.

Mr Shah is also expected to take stock of the poll strategy, which includes the micromanagement of

Turn to Page 4

## Clear J'khand's ₹1.36L-cr coal dues, urges CM

New Delhi/Ranchi, Nov. 2: Ahead of the scheduled visits of Prime Minister Narendra Modi and home minister Amit Shah to poll-bound Jharkhand, the chief minister Hemant Soren on Saturday requested the Centre to clear ₹1.36 lakh crores of coal dues to the state, while the Bharatiya Janata Party alleged that the JMM-led government has failed to properly utilise Central funds. Mr Soren also appealed to BJP MPs to facilitate clearance of the amount.

More on Page 3

## Modi, Greece PM review progress in bilateral ties

New Delhi, Nov. 2: Prime Minister Narendra Modi and his Greece counterpart Kyriakos Mitsotakis have appreciated the momentum in bilateral ties following recent high-level exchanges.

An official statement said on Saturday that the two leaders reiterated their firm commitment to further strengthening the India-Greece strategic partnership.

In his call to Mr Modi, Mr Mitsotakis congratulated him on his re-election in the elections. They reviewed the progress in a number of areas of bilat-



Narendra Modi Kyriakos Mitsotakis

al cooperation, including trade, defence and shipping, in a follow-up to Mr Mitsotakis' visit to India earlier this year. The two leaders also exchanged views on regional and global issues, including the India-Middle East-Europe Economic Corridor and developments in West Asia, the statement said. — PTI

## BJP blackmailed: Cong seeks probe into Ajit Pawar's move to NDA fold

AGE CORRESPONDENT NEW DELHI, NOV. 2

The Congress on Saturday called for a probe into alleged "blackmail" and "coercion" tactics used to bring NCP leader Ajit Pawar into the NDA fold.

Taking a swipe at the BJP, the Congress also said the BJP's "washing machine" was nowhere more powerful than in Maharashtra. Senior Congress leader Jairam Ramesh cited Maharashtra deputy chief minister Ajit Pawar's recent remarks to claim that the issue involved not just the use of "coercion and blackmail" but also breach of the oath of confidentiality and the Official Secrets Act.

"The BJP's washing machine is an all-India phenomenon but perhaps nowhere was it more powerful than in Maharashtra," he said. "The use of the term 'washing machine' by the Opposition in political parlance refers to the pattern of allegedly sullied leaders being inducted into the BJP and portrayed as clean."

When in Opposition before 2014, the BJP raised allegations about massive corruption by Ajit Pawar, then the state's irrigation and water resources minister and the allegations claimed corruption to the tune of ₹70,000 crores, Mr Ramesh pointed out.

More on Page 6

More on Page 3

## Focus on battleground states ■ Voting on Tuesday Harris, Trump go toe to toe in frenzied final campaign weekend for Prez polls

Washington, Nov. 2: Kamala Harris and Donald Trump enter the final weekend of the most tense US presidential campaign of modern times with a flurry of swing-state rallies that will test their stamina and ability to persuade the country's last undecided voters.

Ms Harris, bidding to become the country's first woman president, will use rallies in Georgia, North Carolina and Michigan to drive home her message that Mr Trump is a threat to US democracy. Mr Trump — seeking a



Donald Trump



Kamala Harris

sensational return to the White House after losing in 2020 and then becoming the first presidential nominee to have been convicted of crimes — promises a radical right-wing makeover of the government and aggressive trade

wars to promote his policy of "America first."

In an interview, Mr Trump took a swipe at the state of the economy under the Biden-Harris administration, calling the disappointing job numbers released Friday

"a gift to me." The candidates' frantic schedules will run right into Monday, culminating with late-night rallies — in Grand Rapids, Michigan, for Trump and Philadelphia, Pennsylvania, for Ms Harris.

Elections is Tuesday, but Americans have been voting early for weeks, with more than 72 million ballots already cast. — including a record four million in Georgia, where Democrats seek to pull out all the stops to keep the state in their column.

More on Page 6

More on Page 3

## SHORT TAKES

## 3 booked for firing at house in Welcome

New Delhi: In separate incidents, miscreants fired at a house and pelted stones, a youth was shot at while a minor was stabbed following an altercation in northeast Delhi on Friday evening. In the Welcome area, the victim Akram (50) called the police and informed them that three youths arrived at his home and started abusing him and even pelted stones. When he looked out of the window, Faizan fired a gun shot at him and later all the trio fled away. The accused have been identified as Faizan, Irfan and Bhoora and efforts are being made to nab them, the police said. On Friday, they reached Akram's house and hurled abuses at him. "When he and his wife objected to them, Faizan opened fire and Irfan and Bhoora pelted stones at their ho-use," the police said. The victim's family told the police that the accused would often indulge in fights with people in the locality after getting drunk.

## Nepali man held for killing doctor

New Delhi: A 38-year-old Nepalese man, on whom the Delhi police has put a reward of ₹50 thousand for killing a doctor in south Delhi's Jangpura area during a robbery bid, was arrested from Uttarakhand-Nepal border. DCP (crime) Sanjay Kumar Sain said, the accused Vishnuwaroop Shahi a native of Kallikot, Nepal, was absconding in a murder cum robbery case of PS Hazrat Nizamuddin. The DCP said, in May earlier this year, a doctor was killed during a robbery. During the probe, it was found that there were many accused persons behind the crime. A tip-off was received that the accused was presently in Sunder Nagar, Himachal Pradesh and trying to flee to Nepal. In the meantime he boarded a bus to Banbasa, Indo-Nepal border from where he was nabbed.

## Man run over by tanker, driver held

New Delhi: A tanker driver was arrested for mowing down a 40-year-old man in the CR park area of south Delhi. The deceased, identified as Mukunda Hazra, was working as a car cleaner and was living with his family at T-camp, Govindpuri. The 25 year old accused driver has been nabbed. According to the police, on Saturday morning, a PCR call regarding the admission of a man, at HAH Centenary Hospital. On reaching the hospital, it was revealed that the victim had been brought in dead following which the body was shifted to the AIIMS trauma center. When the police reached the spot near Alaknanda Market, CR Park, it was revealed that the deceased was hit by a water tanker coming from the GK side toward Govindpuri while crossing the road in front of Alaknanda Market.

## '18K METRIC TONS OF C&amp;D WASTE REMOVED IN OCT'

New Delhi: Delhi mayor Dr Shelly Oberoi on Saturday said that the MCD has removed over 18,152 metric tons of waste from the prominent locations in October under the drive to address construction & demolition (C&D) waste accumulation across various zones in the city. "By geo-tagging waste clearance sites, the AAP government in MCD has enhanced transparency and accountability, ensuring precise data on waste removal across each location. We will continue to clear the C&D waste from all over Delhi and residents can report instances on MCD311 App to get waste lifted from their surroundings," she said. Over 2,800 metric tons of waste was cleared in the central zone, while in Keshavpuram Zone, the MCD removed nearly 2,350 metric tons of waste. In the west zone, over 2,700 metric tons of waste was removed. Over 1,700 metric tons of waste was removed from Karol Bagh Zone. In Shahdara north Zone, MCD removed approximately 900 metric tons of waste from high-density residential, said the MCD. Meanwhile, the Shahdara south zone recorded nearly 1,500 metric tons of waste cleared and over 1,250 metric tons of waste were cleared from the Civil Lines zone.

## I am not a politician like leaders from other parties: Kejriwal 'Form AAP govt, I will waive inflated water, power bills'

AGE CORRESPONDENT NEW DELHI, NOV. 2

AAP national convenor Arvind Kejriwal on Saturday promised to waive inflated bills for water and electricity if he comes to power again following next year's Delhi Assembly elections.

Addressing a gathering on the occasion of Vishwakarma Day, Mr Kejriwal said, "I am not a politician like leaders from other parties. For the past 10 years, I have worked for the development of the people. I have been educated by the institute of the country, so I know how to work."

The former chief minister said that when he was in jail in connection with a case related to the Delhi liquor policy scam case, the lieutenant-governor was running the city government and people got inflated water and electricity bills.

"Do not worry. Now I am out and your bills will be waived when the AAP comes into power in February," he said.

The AAP supremo claimed that the party's government in Delhi has achieved all-round development in the national capital that ranges from education to health along with free buses for women.

"Vote for those who have worked. I am not saying to vote for the AAP. Ask the

## Man who threw stub among 50 grilled in Rohini school blast

AGE CORRESPONDENT NEW DELHI, NOV. 2

The Delhi police has questioned over 50 people spotted near the CRPF school in Rohini before a blast occurred there last month. Those rounded up include a local resident who dropped a cigarette butt at the spot few minutes before the explosion. "Whether the blast took off due to the cigarette butt is yet to be established as we still don't know the exact composition of the explosive," a senior police officer said on Saturday, adding that forensic reports from the national security guard (NSG) and forensic science laboratory (FSL) are still awaited.

He also said it is yet to be confirmed if the white powdery material found at the spot after the blast was industrial waste. The police said they are yet to find any leads in the probe into the explosion.

According to the officer, over 50 people were spotted near the school in the CCTV footage of 10 days preceding the blast, but none of them have been identified as suspects.

A man walking with his dog was found to be the last person at the spot, which is usually used for dumping waste and public urinal. He was seen smoking a cigarette, after which he threw the butt and left. A few minutes later, the blast took place, according to the CCTV footage, the officer said.

## Festive spirit: Delhi pre-Diwali liquor sales set a new record

New Delhi, Nov. 2: Liquor sales in the national capital in the fortnight leading to Diwali set a record with over 3.87 crore bottles sold, mopping up a revenue of ₹447.62 crore for the excise department of Delhi government, officials said on Saturday. From October 15 to October 30, a whopping 3.87 crore bottles were sold from the liquor stores run by four corporations of Delhi government, including 2.98 crore bottles of Indian Made Foreign Liquor (IMFL) and 89.48 lakh beer bottles, officials showed.

Diwali celebrated on October 31 was a 'dry day'. On Diwali eve on



Former Delhi chief minister Arvind Kejriwal addresses people on the occasion of 'Vishwakarma Puja' at Sanjay Gandhi Transport Nagar in New Delhi. — PTI

BJP what they have done for your children. I challenge them to show one single work that they have done for the people of Delhi," he said.

"Ten years ago, during Sheila Dikshit's government, there used to be power cuts lasting eight hours. The lights would stay out the entire night. People had to buy inverters and generators and replace their batteries every year. We have ensured 24-hour electricity in Delhi. Ensuring 24-hour power in Delhi wasn't easy," he said.

The AAP convenor said, "Before our government in Delhi, only 60 flyovers were built in 65 years. But in nine years, we have built 38 flyovers all over Delhi. Previously, Delhi had only 5,000 buses. Now we have purchased 7,700 high-quality AC buses for Delhiites and bus travel is free for all women."

"Now the elections are coming in Delhi. Vote for the party that has worked here. Don't vote for the one who hasn't done anything. I'm not saying you should vote for me; just see for

yourself. The BJP and its Central government is also in Delhi and so is the AAP and the Delhi government. You can see whether the Central government has done anything for Delhi," he said.

"I have listed so many works I've done. Just list one thing the Central government has done for Delhiites. If the Central government has done any of this, go and vote for them. But if they haven't, they have no right to ask for votes," Mr Kejriwal added.

## After row, wife chops off hubby's pvt parts

AGE CORRESPONDENT NEW DELHI, NOV. 2

A man alleged that his wife cut off his private parts after a fight between them in north Delhi, the police said on Saturday. The victim is admitted to Safdarjung Hospital, where his condition is said to be out of danger, the police said.

According to a police officer, on the intervening nights of October 31 and November 1, information was received at the Roop Nagar police station regarding the incident.

The victim's statement was recorded on Saturday where he told the police that he is a native of Bihar and had shifted to Delhi with his wife a couple of months ago. He works as a helper in a paying guest accom-

modation in Shakti Nagar, the police said. On the night of the incident, he was drunk and had a quarrel with his wife, they said.

"After the quarrel, his wife left the house and he fell asleep. Later, the woman entered the house and attacked him with a sharp and pointed object on his private part and fled," the officer said.

It's the third marriage for both of them, he said.

The victim was taken to Bara Hindu Rao Hospital in injured condition and was later shifted to Safdarjung Hospital for further treatment, the police said.

The accused woman is currently absconding, and efforts are being made to arrest her, police said.



Passengers wait for their trains at the Anand Vihar Railway station in New Delhi Saturday as they prepare to leave for Bihar ahead of the 'Chhath Puja' festival. — PTI

## Around 98% schools in India have separate toilet facilities for girl students: Centre to SC

AGE CORRESPONDENT NEW DELHI, NOV. 2

Over 97.5 per cent schools in the country, including government, government-aided, and private ones, have provided separate toilet facilities for girl students, the Centre has informed the Supreme Court. In an affidavit, the Union government has told the apex court that states and Union Territories such as Delhi, Goa, and Puducherry have achieved 100 per cent targets and complied with the earlier orders of the court.

As many as 16 lakh toilets for boys and 17.5 lakh toilets for girls have been con-

structed in more than 10 lakh government schools and 2.5 lakh toilets for boys and 2.9 lakh toilets for girls have been made available in government-aided schools, the affidavit said.

The Centre has pointed out that in West Bengal, separate toilet facilities have been provided for girl students in 99.9 per cent of schools and in Uttar Pradesh 98.8 per cent of

## After brief relief, pollution slips to very poor category

PM2.5 levels up by 13% on Diwali night this yr: Report

AGE CORRESPONDENT NEW DELHI, NOV. 2

The pollution situation deteriorated in Delhi on Saturday, with the air quality falling into the 'very poor' category again after showing improvement in the morning.

The capital's 24-hour average air quality index (AQI), recorded at 4.00 pm every day, stood at 316, worsening from 290 recorded in the morning.

Air pollution levels reached the 'severe' category (AQI above 400) at Anand Vihar while the 27 other monitoring stations in the city recorded the AQI in the 'very poor' category, with levels above 300.

Neighbouring Ghaziabad (330) also recorded the AQI in the 'very poor' category. However, Gurgaon (209), Greater Noida (250), and Noida (269) recorded slightly better AQI levels, falling in the 'poor' category while Faridabad's AQI (166) was in the moderate category, according to the Central Pollution Control Board's (CPCB) data.

Meanwhile, a report by the Centre for Science and Environment (CSE) has revealed that the national capital's PM2.5 levels hit a peak by midnight on Diwali this year, which was 13 per cent higher than the peaks observed last year and in 2022.

The Diwali night this year had higher nitrogen dioxide (NO<sub>2</sub>) levels indi-



Vehicles move amid a thick layer of smog on NH 9 in New Delhi on Saturday. — G.N. JHA

cating high traffic congestion.

Unlike previous years on Diwali night in Delhi, there was a quick build-up of PM2.5 levels and dissipation the next day, the report said.

"By midnight on October 31, PM2.5 hit a peak of 603 µg/m<sup>3</sup>, 13 per cent higher than Diwali peaks observed in 2022 and 2023," the report stated.

Meanwhile, according to a report by the Delhi Pollution Control Committee (DPCC), the PM2.5 levels decreased by 4 per cent as compared to Diwali last year.

The CSE report said PM2.5 levels were already rising steadily during the preceding five days leading up to Diwali and showed a marked increase of 46 per cent from October 28 through October 31.

The PM2.5 was in the poor category during the afternoon of October 31, but the evening build-up

peaked to hit severe levels during midnight and stayed elevated until early morning the next day, the report mentioned.

"The reasons behind this late build-up and early dissipation of pollution on Diwali day were warm atmospheric conditions with relatively more efficient natural ventilation and adequate wind in the city. This is supposed to be one of the warmest Octobers this year," it said. The report said this year nine out of 38 air quality monitoring stations recorded PM2.5 concentrations exceeding the critical threshold of 900 µg/m<sup>3</sup> on Diwali night.

The report further said, "There was a sudden and sharp escalation in farm fire count on the day of Diwali and that combined with the change of wind direction to northwesterly. This increased the share of its contribution to Delhi's air quality by 27 per cent."

## No proposal from AAP on CDVs so far: L-G

Saxena accuses AAP leaders of 'undesirable politics' over reinstatement

AGE CORRESPONDENT NEW DELHI, NOV. 2

Days after Delhi lieutenant-governor V.K. Saxena issued directions for the deployment of civil defence volunteers (CDVs) to mitigate air pollution in the city, the AAP ruled city government has not yet issued any formal notification for their deployment.

Mr Saxena on Saturday wrote to chief minister Atishi underlining the non-engagement of CDVs till now and has asked her for their immediate re-appointment. He said he is yet to receive any proposal for the re-appointment of civil defence volunteers who were removed as bus marshals last year.

The L-G has also asked for a concrete scheme to be formulated by the government for their immediate as well as long-term engagement.



V.K. Saxena

Around 10,000 CDVs working as marshals in public transport buses in Delhi were removed from their jobs in November last year after objections were raised by the revenue and finance departments.

"Of course, you and your party leaders may continue to do the politics of taking credit for their reinstatement but any more delay in the welfare of these economically weaker and helpless people is not right in any way," Mr Saxena stated in the letter.

The L-G in his letter accused that leaders of her Aam Aadmi Party (AAP) engaged in "undesirable politics" over the issue, yet "unfortunately he has not received any proposal from her so far."

Citing his earlier communication to the chief minister on October 24, Mr Saxena said he had directed to ensure the re-appointment of the CDVs from November 1 and had sought a comprehensive proposal for their long-term engagement. He said he had ordered the reinforcement of the CDVs to help the national capital combat air pollution.

"The air pollution in Delhi is at its peak and if these volunteers were timely reappointed, they would have definitely been helpful in tackling the situation besides being benefited themselves," the L-G said.

## Ammo cartridge found in Dubai-Delhi AI flight

AGE CORRESPONDENT NEW DELHI, NOV. 2

The Delhi police are probing a case of security breach after a live cartridge was found in a pocket seat of an Air India flight landing from Dubai recently, officials said on Saturday.

According to a police officer, an Air India staff found the live round of ammunition during routine cleaning on a flight on October 27. Following this, an FIR was registered under the Arms Act and a probe has been initiated, he said.

Air India spokesperson in a statement said, "One

ammunition cartridge was found in the pocket of a seat of our flight AI916 after it had landed from Dubai at Delhi on October 27, and all passengers had safely disembarked."

"A complaint was immediately lodged with the Airport police by Air India strictly adhering to the laid down security protocols," the statement read.

The recovery of live round of ammunition comes amid several airlines receiving hoax bomb threats. According to a report, more than 510 domestic and international flights have received hoax bomb threats in the past two weeks.

## BJP, Cong slam AAP's 'betrayal'

AGE CORRESPONDENT NEW DELHI, NOV. 2

The BJP and the Congress lashed out at the AAP ruled Delhi government for betraying the civil defence volunteers of Delhi who were not given employment even after assurance from CM Atishi.

Delhi BJP chief Virendra Sachdeva stated that, "If the Kejriwal-Atishi government does not send a constitutional proposal to the L-G by the evening of November 3 to reinstate bus marshals, BJP will ghereo the chief minister."

Delhi Congress president Devendra Yadav said, AAP only sheds crocodile tears for the CDV as it failed to honour the direction of L-G.

## Beant Singh killing: SC to hear Rajoana's plea tomorrow

AGE CORRESPONDENT NEW DELHI, NOV. 2

The Supreme Court is slated to hear on Monday a plea of former police constable Balwant Singh Rajoana, convicted in the 1995 assassination case of the then Punjab chief minister Beant Singh, seeking commutation of his death sentence to life term on the ground of an "inordinate delay" in deciding his mercy petition.

A special bench of Justices B.R. Gavai, P.K. Mishra, and K.V. Viswanathan will hear the plea.

On September 25, the apex court sought responses from the Centre, the Punjab government, and the administration of the Union Territory of Chandigarh on Rajoana's plea.

In his plea, Rajoana has sought directions to the Centre and the Punjab government to commute his death sentence "due to inordinate delay" in its execution and in deciding the "mercy petition filed on his behalf".

Rajoana was convicted in Singh's assassination case where the chief minister and 17 others were killed in a blast at the entrance of the civil secretariat in Chandigarh on August 31, 1995.

SHORT TAKES

**Maha poll: Jewellery worth ₹24cr seized**

**Mumbai:** The Static Surveillance Team (SST) of the Election Commission has seized diamonds, gold and silver jewellery costing around ₹24 crores near a toll booth in Ahilyanagar district of poll-bound Maharashtra, an official said on Saturday. The seizure was made on Thursday morning near the Supa toll plaza, he said. Static Surveillance Teams have been deployed across Maharashtra in view of the November 20 Assembly elections. "The consignment of diamonds, gold and silver jewellery was recovered from a vehicle in which three persons were travelling. The trio had begun their journey from Zaveri Bazar in south Mumbai," Supa police station's inspector Arun Avhad said. The SST team asked them to show the receipt. They did show some receipts, but the amounts mentioned on them did not tally, he said. — PTI

**SP MLA booked for threatening witness**

**Varanasi:** An FIR has been registered here against Samajwadi Party (SP) MLA Om Prakash Singh and four others for allegedly breaking into the house of a witness in a 2021 case against him and threatening him and his family members, police said on Saturday. The FIR was registered at Bheulpur police station on Friday on the directions of a special MP-MLA court, they said. On the night of June 26, 2023, SP MLA from Jamania Om Prakash Singh, his son Ritesh Singh, Chittupur Corporator O.P. Singh, Nand Lal Keshri and an unidentified person barged into the house of Gautam Ghosh in the Sundarpur area. Ghosh is the main witness in a case registered against Om Prakash Singh at Siga police station here in 2021, Bheulpur SHO Vijay Shukla said. — PTI

**K'taka withdraws notices to farmers**

**Bengaluru:** Observing Opposition parties — BJP and JDS of using notices served to farmers over Waqf to take advantage for their political gains, CM Siddaramaiah directed officials concerned to immediately withdraw notices served to farmers concerning to Waqf land issue. The decision to withdraw notices served to farmers comes in the wake of BJP's state wide protest on Monday over Waqf land issue along with farmers who have been slapped notices by Tahsildhar's. The notices were served on farmers of Vijayapura, Kalaburagi, Yadgir, Bidar, Shivamogga among others asking farmers to produce documents on the land owned by them. Regarding the notices to farmers, a high-level meeting was chaired by Mr Siddaramaiah in Bengaluru.

**SAWANT SORRY FOR 'IMPORTED MAAL' COMMENT**

**MUMBAI, NOV. 2** Shiv Sena (UBT) MP Arvind Sawant on Saturday issued an apology for his comments on Eknath Shinde-led Shiv Sena's candidate Shaina N.C. He was under fire after he called the Shiv Sena candidate, who was earlier BJP's spokesperson, "imported maal". Mr Sawant said he has always respected women and his comment was distorted to deliberately target him. "I was hurt by the accusations against me. I have always respected women. But my comments were distorted and I was targeted deliberately. Still if my comments hurt anybody's sentiments, I regret it and apologise for the same. In my 55 years of public life, I have never insulted women," the Lok Sabha member of Shiv Sena (UBT) said. Shaina N.C. is contesting the Assembly election from the Mumbadevi seat as the Shiv Sena candidate. She was a member of the BJP for more than a decade. However, because of the seat adjustment in the "Mahayuti" alliance, she joined the Eknath Shinde-led party last month. She is contesting against Congress's Amin Patel, who is the sitting MLA from the Mumbadevi constituency. Congress and Shiv Sena (UBT) are part of the MVA alliance.

**Happened in past: Fadnavis junks charges Pawar: Police vehicles used to give financial aid to Mahayuti**

**SONU SHRIVASTAVA MUMBAI, NOV. 2**

NCP (SP) chief Sharad Pawar on Saturday alleged that police vehicles are being misused to supply money to Mahayuti candidates in the Maharashtra Assembly election. He claimed that some police officers also informed him about it, but did not disclose details in order to "protect the officers". However, Maharashtra home minister Devendra Fadnavis dismissed NCP founder's allegations stating he used to listen to such stories during Pawar's regime. The Pawar family on Saturday held two separate Diwali celebration events for the first time after a political rift between Sharad Pawar and his nephew and Maharashtra deputy chief minister Ajit Pawar. The Senior Pawar on Saturday hosted the Diwali celebration at his residence 'Govindbaug' on



Jairam Ramesh

Baramati-Malegaon road in Baramati city, while Ajit Pawar hosted a Diwali celebration at his Katewadi residence, which is 10 km away from the Govindbaug. Speaking with the reporters at Govindbaug, the NCP founder said that he has come to know from officials of many districts that candidates of the ruling parties are getting financial assistance for the election. The police vans have been used as per the police officers, he said. Mr Pawar said he wanted to speak on the issue openly in public, but he was refraining from doing so as this would hurt the officials who have shared

the information with him. "Officials of the police department have also said this," said the 83-old-Maratha leader, who was accompanied by his grandnephews Yugendra Pawar and Rohit Pawar in the press conference. Referring to a separate Diwali celebration held by Ajit, the senior Pawar said, "Diwali has been celebrated here for many years. If the tradition was continued, it would have been great. I am feeling uneasy about it, because the people have to visit two places, which is causing inconvenience to them." Mr Pawar said that most of the family members joined the Diwali celebration at Govindbaug, but Ajit Pawar may not have got time. "Both the sisters and brother of (Ajit Pawar) joined the Diwali celebration here," he said. Mr Pawar said that the result of Haryana Assembly election would not have any impact on Maharashtra Assembly election.

**BJP 'blackmailed, coerced' Ajit Pawar join NDA: Cong**

**Breach of Official Secrets Act: Jairam, slams 'washing machine' politics**

**AGE CORRESPONDENT NEW DELHI, NOV. 2**



Jairam Ramesh

The Congress on Saturday called for a probe into alleged "blackmail" and "coercion" tactics used to bring NCP leader Ajit Pawar into the NDA fold. Taking a swipe at the BJP, the Congress also said the saffron party's "washing machine" was nowhere more powerful than in Maharashtra. Senior Congress leader Jairam Ramesh cited Maharashtra deputy chief minister Ajit Pawar's recent remarks to claim that the issue involved not just the use of "coercion and blackmail" but also breach of the oath of confidentiality and the Official Secrets Act. "The BJP's washing machine is an all-India phenomenon but perhaps nowhere was it more powerful than in Maharashtra," he said. The use of the term

surrounding these charges were used by the BJP to bring him over to the National Democratic Alliance. "The non-biological Prime Minister himself led the charge, famously labelling the NCP — now his much beloved ally at the state and Centre — as a Naturally Corrupt Party," he said. "Ajit Pawar has now revealed that after becoming chief minister, Devendra Fadnavis showed him a file recommending an open inquiry against Ajit Pawar in the alleged irrigation scam. One can only imagine the threat that was implicit in this move: submit to us, or face action," Mr Ramesh said. Mr Pawar and several other MLAs broke away from the Nationalist Congress Party led by his uncle Sharad Pawar and joined the Shiv Sena-BJP government in the state last year.

**Uddhav to start Assembly poll drive on Nov. 5**

**Mumbai, Nov. 2:** Shiv Sena (UBT) chief Uddhav Thackeray will begin his election campaign trail for the Maharashtra Assembly polls on November 5 from Konkan and Vidarbha with focus on constituencies of MLAs who were part of the 2022 rebellion led by Maharashtra chief minister Eknath Shinde. Mr Thackeray will address an election rally in Ratnagiri on November 5, a seat represented by state industries minister Uday Samant. Mr Thackeray will also canvass votes for party MLA Rajan Salvi who is contesting from neighbouring Rajapur constituency. — PTI

**Soren govt failed to utilise ₹4.4L-cr Central funds, says BJP Pay ₹1.36L-cr coal dues: Soren to govt**

**AGE CORRESPONDENT with agency inputs NEW DELHI/RANCHI, NOV. 2**

Ahead of the scheduled visits of Prime Minister Narendra Modi and home minister Amit Shah to poll-bound Jharkhand, the chief minister Hemant Soren on Saturday requested the Centre to clear ₹1.36 lakh crores of coal dues to the state, while the BJP alleged that the JMM-led government has failed to properly utilise Central funds. "The PM and the home minister are coming to Jharkhand. I once again request them with folded hands to clear the outstanding coal dues of ₹1.36 lakh crores to Jharkhand. This amount is crucial for



Jharkhand chief minister Hemant Soren during a rally ahead of the state Assembly elections in Khunti district of Jharkhand on Saturday. — PTI

Jharkhand," Mr Soren posted on X. He also appealed to BJP MPs to facilitate clearance of the amount. "I would also appeal to my BJP colleagues, especially the MPs, to help in getting our dues," Mr Soren posted on X, sharing a copy of a letter to the PM. Mr Modi is scheduled to address two rallies in Jharkhand on November 4, while Mr Shah will address three public meetings on November 3. Responding to Mr Soren's post on the social media, the BJP accused the JMM-led government of failing to effectively

utilise over ₹2.5 lakh crores allocated by the Central government over the past five years due to mismanagement and corruption. "Despite receiving significant support from the Narendra Modi-led government at the Centre, which allocated over ₹4.4 lakh crores since 2014 — equivalent to funding nearly 737 Chandrayaan missions or the cost of 4,510 Vande Bharat trains — the Soren government failed to utilise it properly," the saffron party leader Gaurav Vallabh alleged in a press briefing. He also alleged that the state government was neck-deep in corruption and neglected its citizens despite the state housing 40 per cent of the country's mineral wealth.

**BJP says it stands for vows' credibility & Cong for crisis**

**AGE CORRESPONDENT NEW DELHI, NOV. 2**



Sudhanshu Trivedi

The BJP on Saturday asserted that it stood for credibility of promises made to people under Prime Minister Narendra Modi's leadership and the Congress for the crisis of credibility. The fresh salvo by the BJP against its rival party came amid a war of words between them over unkept poll pledges. BJP spokesperson Sudhanshu Trivedi told reporters that the ruling party had gradually enlarged the scope of its welfare schemes, ranging from health insurance to free grains and cash transfer for farmers, by resorting to first creation of wealth followed by its distribution as the size of the Indian economy grew over the past decade. "We believe in first the creation of wealth and distribution. The Congress stands for creation of corruption and destruction of wealth," he said, flagging a host of alleged unfulfilled promises of Congress-led governments in different states. A day after Mallikarjun Kharge claimed that "Modi

the track record of fulfilling the promises. As a veteran Congress member who has served in senior positions, Mr Kharge has seen leaders such as PV Narasimha Rao and Pranab Mukherjee, who deftly handled the economy under difficult circumstances, and is now seeing the party under the grip of urban Naxals due to Rahul Gandhi's influence, Mr Trivedi claimed. Rebutting Mr Kharge's charges, Mr Trivedi said Employees' Provident Fund Organisation data suggested that its account holders had grown to 25 crore compared to 11 crore a decade ago. He also cited a host of infrastructure work, including the construction of houses for the poor, 74 airports and 37 kilometres of road per day, and asserted that all these activities had led to a lot of employment. India is now third in auto manufacturing and second in mobile phones manufacturing and if anyone still cannot see the country's development, then there is some serious weakness in their sight and mindset, the BJP spokesperson said.

**In Soren's J'khand, Hindus becoming outsiders: Sarma**

**Says they must remain united to save Sanatan**

**AMRESH SRIVASTAVA with agency inputs NEW DELHI/RANCHI, NOV. 2**

Playing the Hindu card ahead of the Assembly polls in Jharkhand, Assam chief minister and BJP co-in-charge Himanta Biswa Sarma has accused the state chief minister Hemant Soren for practicing "selective hospitality" and alleged him of favouring certain groups while treating others as "outsiders". He challenged the chief minister to send back Jharkhand Congress in-charge Ghulam Ahmad Mir from the state and claimed that if Mr Soren did so, he too would leave the state. In a poll rally at Panki in Palamu district on Saturday, the Assam chief minister also accused the JMM-led coalition in Jharkhand of "patronising infiltrators" and claimed that this election would be fought to drive out illegal immigrants and protect Hindus, he also urged them (Hindus) to



Himanta Biswa Sarma remain united to save "Sanatan". Claiming that Hindu population in Jharkhand has declined in several areas, Mr Sarma said, "This election is for driving out infiltrators from Jharkhand and saving Hindus. We were Hindus, we are Hindus and we will be Hindus. It is time to remain united to save Sanatan," Mr Sarma claimed. "Hindus have protected India and should remain united to chant 'Jai Shri Ram,'" he added. Meanwhile, a delegation of INDIA bloc, met Jharkhand's chief electoral officer Ravi Kumar in Ranchi to register their complaint, seeking action against Mr Sarma for his alleged inflammatory and divisive speech-

**'Not a single vow fulfilled by JMM'**

**New Delhi/Ranchi:** Union minister and BJP in-charge for Jharkhand Shivraj Singh Chouhan alleged that the JMM-led alliance government in Jharkhand made 144 promises but not a single promise was fulfilled in the past five years. He alleged that the coalition government has ruined the state but now the upcoming BJP government would ensure its development. es. Along with other alliance partners representatives, the JMM general secretary Supriyo Bhattacharya handed over written complaint. "We have submitted copies of his speech as well. He takes specific names and links things to a specific community. It's a violation of the model code of conduct. We demanded action against him," Mr Bhattacharya said.

**'BJP using hatred to fool people'**

**AGE CORRESPONDENT NEW DELHI, NOV. 2**

The Congress on Saturday claimed that the JMM led INDIA bloc government in Jharkhand is going among the people in the upcoming Assembly polls on the basis of its work, while the BJP is trying to "mislead" them with its "same old politics of hatred". The Congress general secretary in-charge communications Jairam Ramesh said that in the last five years, the Jharkhand government has taken many steps for the betterment of the people of the state and done excellent work in fields of education, health, housing and security. "Amidst all the efforts of 'MoShah' to destabilise the state government, these public welfare schemes of ours are providing relief to the people — Bicycle distribution scheme: 10 lakh children got bicycles; CM Utkrishit Vidyalaya: Education started through CBSE medium in 80 schools."

**Petrol bomb attack on house of Hindu leader in Ludhiana**

**No injuries reported; police probe on**

**Ludhiana (Punjab), Nov. 2:** Three unidentified persons allegedly hurled a petrol bomb at the residence of a Shiv Sena (Hind) leader in Model Town here in the early hours of Saturday. No one was injured in the incident, according to the police.

CCTV footage showed the attackers who were on a motorcycle throwing a bottle containing inflammable liquid toward the home of Harjot Singh Khurana, a leader of Shiv Sena (Hind)'s Sikh wing. The incident comes around a fortnight after three motorcycle-borne persons hurled a petrol bomb at the house of Shiv Sena (Bharti) leader Yogesh Bakshi in Chandar Nagar locality later discovered that a neighbour's car had been partially damaged. After the CCTV footage was examined, the police were informed about the incident. The police said broken pieces of glass were found scattered near the wall of his house. Additional police commissioner, Ludhiana, Shubham Aggarwal said the accused would be identified soon. Meanwhile, the police have not made any breakthrough in the case of the attack on Mr Bakshi's house. CCTV footage is being scanned to trace the miscreants. — PTI

**Jaishankar to visit S'pore and Australia from Nov. 3-8**

**New Delhi, Nov. 2:** External affairs minister S. Jaishankar will visit Australia and Singapore from November 3 to 8 during which he will meet leaders of the two countries and address the 8th Roundtable of ASEAN, an official statement said on Saturday. Mr Jaishankar will co-chair the 15th foreign ministers' framework dialogue (FMFD) with Australian foreign minister Penny Wong in Canberra, the statement issued by the ministry of external affairs said. "The EAM will deliver the keynote address at the inaugural session of the 2nd Raisina Down Under to be held in the Australian Parliament House," it said. Mr Jaishankar will travel to Brisbane and inaugurate India's fourth consulate in Australia, it added. On the second leg of the visit, Jaishankar will travel to Singapore on November 8, the statement said. — PTI

**Loyalists of deputy CM contesting as Sena, RPI candidates Fadnavis goes all guns blazing against MVA**

**SONU SHRIVASTAVA MUMBAI, NOV. 2**

Senior BJP leader Devendra Fadnavis is leaving no stone unturned to get candidates of Shiv Sena and Republican Party of India elected from the Andheri (East) and Kalina Assembly constituencies respectively. The candidates fielded by the BJP's alliance partners in the two constituencies are considered close associates of Mr Fadnavis. They joined the Shiv Sena and the Ramdas Athawale-led

party on Mr Fadnavis' instructions. RPI (A) has fielded Mumbai BJP vice-president Amarjeet Singh from the Kalina seat. In Andheri (East), chief minister Eknath Shinde has fielded Murji Patel, who was in the BJP earlier. The BJP has asked Mr Shinde to convince Swikriti Sharma, wife of former specialist Pradeep Sharma, to withdraw her nomination. Mr Shinde will meet the Sharma family on Sunday. An insider of the BJP-led Mahayuti alliance said that the Shiv Sena was not



Devendra Fadnavis ready to leave the Andheri East and Kalina seats as the undivided Shiv Sena had contested both the seats in 2019 and won. "It was Devendra Fadnavis who convinced Eknath Shinde to leave Kalina seat for the BJP, which gave it to the RPI. Apart from this, Mr Fadnavis

also successfully persuaded Mr Shinde to announce Mr Patel's candidature from the Andheri East constituency, which he was not ready to give to the BJP," the Mahayuti insider said. The Eknath Shinde-led Shiv Sena wanted to field Swikriti Sharma, but the BJP opposed her candidature as her husband is one of the accused in the case related to explosives planted near industrialist Mukesh Ambani's residence and murder of Mansukh Hiran, who was the key witness in the case.

POSTGRADUATE INSTITUTE OF MEDICAL EDUCATION & RESEARCH CHANDIGARH

CORRIGENDUM

Ref: Global Tender Enquiry Notice No. PHEP/24-25/G/MHFV-01

Following changes are made:

S. No	Equipment/Item Name	Original Bid Submission Date	Revised Bid Submission Date	Original Bid Opening Date	Revised Bid Opening Date	Deptt Name
7	Magneto Therapy	02.11.2024	11.11.2024	04.11.2024	12.11.2024	Physiotherapy

Ref: Global Tender Enquiry Notice No. PHEP/24-25/G/02

Following changes are made:

S. No	Equipment/Item Name	Original Bid Submission Date	Revised Bid Submission Date	Original Bid Opening Date	Revised Bid Opening Date	Deptt Name
2	Robotic Surgical System for Soft Tissue on Backpack Basis	05.11.2024	13.11.2024	06.11.2024	14.11.2024	Urology

All other details shall remain the same.

Professor In-Charge (EP)

## SHORT TAKES

### 7 die in bus, trailer collision in Odisha

**Bhubaneswar:** A tragedy struck in Odisha's Sundergarh district early Saturday morning when a minibus carrying local villagers collided with a stationary trailer near the Gaikanapali area under the Hemgiri police jurisdiction. The accident, attributed to dense fog and poor visibility, resulted in the deaths of seven passengers, while four others sustained serious injuries. The victims, who were on their way back from a "Kirtan" ceremony — a devotional singing event held in celebration of Diwali — were only a few kilometers from home when the crash occurred. According to initial police reports, the minibus driver failed to see the parked trailer in time to avoid a collision due to the thick fog blanketing the area. Local police were quickly notified and, along with the help of residents, transported the injured passengers to a nearby hospital for urgent medical care.

### Gangotri temple shut for winter season

**Uttarkashi:** The portals of the Gangotri temple here were closed on Saturday for the winter season when it remains snowbound, an official of the temple committee said. All temples located in the Garhwal Himalayas, also known as Char Dham, are closed during the winter. Gangotri temple committee secretary Suresh Semwal said the gates of the temple located at a height of around 10,000 feet above sea level were closed amid rituals at 12.14 pm on the auspicious occasion of the Annakoot festival. "After the ceremonial closure of the temple gates amid chants of 'Har Har Gange, Jai Ma Gange' by devotees and priests, the idol of Goddess Ganga left in a palanquin for Mukhba where she will be worshipped for the whole of winter, he said. Gangotri is the first of the Char Dham temples to be closed. — PTI

### UP barber sexually harasses girl, booked

**Budaun:** A barber has been booked for allegedly sexually harassing a seven-year-old girl in a salon here, police said on Saturday. The accused was identified as Shahid (18), they said. According to police, the incident occurred on Friday evening when the girl had gone to a doctor's clinic with her aunt. Shahid, who works at a salon nearby, called the girl and sexually harassed her. He also took some objectionable pictures of her. Upon returning home, the girl narrated the incident to her family members, who then approached the police, they said. Senior superintendent of police Brijesh Kumar Singh said that a case has been filed against Shahid and raids are being conducted to arrest him. — PTI

## Indian team attends G-20 meeting in Brazil New Delhi calls for global co-op on disaster resilience

AGE CORRESPONDENT  
NEW DELHI, NOV. 2

The principal secretary to the Prime Minister, P.K. Mishra, has affirmed India's commitment to the Sendai Framework for Disaster Risk Reduction and called for an increased international collaboration on knowledge sharing, technology transfer and sustainable development to enhance disaster resilience globally while participating in the G-20 Disaster Risk Reduction Working Group (DRRWG) ministerial meeting in Belem, Brazil, according to an official release. He led a high-level Indian delegation that took part in the meeting held from October 30 to November 1.

With the active participation of the Indian delegation, a consensus was arrived at on finalising the first ministerial declaration on Disaster Risk Reduction, the Union home ministry said in an official release Saturday. During various sessions,

WITH THE active participation of the Indian delegation, a consensus was arrived at on finalising the first ministerial declaration on Disaster Risk Reduction, the Union home ministry said in an official release

Mr Mishra shared the progress made by the government of India in reducing disaster risks and in up scaling disaster financing.

He emphasised India's proactive approach to disaster risk reduction on five priorities of the DRRWG, which were enunciated during India's presidency of G-20 — early warning systems, disaster resilient infrastructure, DRR financing, resilient recovery and nature-based solutions.

On disaster resilient infrastructure, he spoke about Prime Minister Narendra Modi's global initiative of Coalition for Disaster Resilient Infrastructure (CDRI), which now has 40 coun-

tries and seven international organisations as members, the release said. The Indian delegation also participated in a trika meeting with the ministers of Brazil and South Africa.

It also held bilateral meetings with ministers from Brazil and other countries, namely Japan, Norway, South Africa, South Korea, Germany, and heads of invited international organisations.

Responding to discussions on extreme heat, Mr Mishra also shared experience and steps being taken, including the focus on promoting traditional practices, to suit local conditions.

The first DRRWG was established on India's initiative during its G-20 presidency in 2023.

Mr Mishra congratulated Brazil on its continuation of the DRRWG and scaling it up to the ministerial level and affirmed India's support to South Africa on the DRRWG during their G-20 presidency next year.

## Pregnant woman cleans dead hubby's bed in hosp

Notice to staff after video goes viral

AGE CORRESPONDENT  
BHOPAL, NOV. 2

A video showing a pregnant woman cleaning the hospital bed, in which her husband died in Dindori district in Madhya Pradesh, has gone viral on social media, prompting the authorities concerned to issue show-cause notice to the staff of the government medical facility.

In the video, a pregnant woman, identified as Roshni Marawi, was seen cleaning the hospital bed in Gardasari community health Centre (CHC) in the district, after her husband Shivraj (40) succumbed to injuries caused by an attack on him and his family members by a group of assailants in their village following a land dispute.

Shivraj, his father Dharam Singh (65) and

ROSHNI MARAWI'S husband Shivraj succumbed to injuries caused by an attack on him by a group of assailants in their village following a land dispute

brother Raghuraj (42) were attacked by a group of around two dozen people over a land dispute between them in the village of Lalpur Sani on Thursday evening.

They were rushed to the CHC where all the three succumbed to injuries, police said.

Shivraj's family started sowing in a piece of agricultural land in the village after they won a land dispute case in the court.

The assailants armed with sticks and sharp weapons attacked them when they were harvesting crops in the particular land, police said.

## MP forest dept destroys millet crops after deaths of 10 tuskers

AGE CORRESPONDENT  
BHOPAL, NOV. 2

Standing "kodo" (millet) crops were on Saturday destroyed in some areas in Bandhavgarh Tiger Reserve (BTR) under Umaria district in Madhya Pradesh where ten elephants died over 72

hours allegedly after consuming the coarse grains, official sources said.

The move comes in the wake of the findings in the autopsy of the dead elephants suggesting excess consumption of the millet crop may have generated toxic xyclopiazonic acid leading to deaths.

## Farooq seeks inquiry into rise in J&K terror attacks

YUSUF JAMEEL  
SRINAGAR, NOV. 2

National Conference (NC) president Farooq Abdullah on Saturday said that the sudden spurt in terror attacks and other incidents of violence in Jammu and Kashmir raises doubts about the motive behind such activity. He demanded an independent probe to find out who is doing it at whose behest.

"There should be a probe into these incidents. How is it that an elected government has been formed and this is happening? I suspect this is being done by the people who want to destabilise this government. Otherwise, why wasn't it happening earlier?" he said here. He added, "I think it is being done to set off a crisis. There should be an independent inquiry into it."

Pleading that the suspected terrorists trapped inside a private house following the security forces launched a cordon-and-search operation in Srinagar's Khanyar area earlier during the day on Saturday should not be killed but captured alive, the former chief minister said, "They can be asked at whose behest they are doing it."



Nihang Sikh warriors ride horses during the "Fateh Divas" celebration in Amritsar on Saturday, a day after "Bandi Chor Divas". — PTI

## Firms facing US curbs didn't flout law: MEA

'We are in touch with US government to clarify issues'

AGE CORRESPONDENT  
NEW DELHI, NOV. 2

India has defended its nationals and business houses sanctioned by the United States of America for technology and material trade with Russia, which the USA perceives to be aiding war against Ukraine. India said the sanctioned transactions and companies are not in violation of Indian laws. However, it is working with all relevant departments to sensitise Indian companies on applicable export control provisions, and is in touch with the US government to clarify the issues.

Ministry of external affairs spokesperson Mr Randhir Jaiswal said India has a "robust legal and regulatory framework" on strategic trade and non-proliferation controls. "We are also a member of three key multilateral non-proliferation export control regimes. In keeping with India's established non-proliferation credentials, we are working with all relevant departments and agencies

MINISTRY OF external affairs spokesperson said India has a "robust legal and regulatory framework" on strategic trade and non-proliferation controls

to sensitise Indian companies on applicable export control provisions, and also inform them on new measures being implemented, which could impact Indian companies in certain circumstances," he said.

The US on Wednesday sanctioned nearly 400 entities and individuals "for enabling Russia's prosecution of its illegal war." It said, "In this action, the department of state is imposing sanctions on more than 120 individuals and entities. Concurrently, the department of the treasury is designating more than 270 individuals and entities. The department of commerce is also adding 40 entities to its entity list." Accordingly, 19 Indian private firms and from Indian nationals have been put on the list.

Companies from China, Switzerland, Thailand, and Türkiye have also been slapped with sanctions for supplying Russia with advanced technology and equipment that it desperately needs to support its war machine. In addition to disrupting global evasion networks, this action also targets domestic Russian importers and producers of key inputs and other material for Russia's military-industrial base, the statement said.

"Those items include microelectronics and computer numerical control items (CNC) on the common high priority List (CHPL), as identified by the US department of commerce's bureau of industry and security (BIS) alongside the European Union (EU), United Kingdom (UK), and Japan," it said.

Meanwhile, Mumbai police began the legal process for extradition of Anmol Bishnoi, the younger brother of gangster Lawrence Bishnoi, wanted in the firing case outside actor Salman Khan's house, from the US.

## Sports event for ex-Naxals, tribal youth 1.65 lakh register

### Bastar Olympics set to wow revellers Nov. 5

RABINDRA NATH CHOUDHURY  
RAIPUR, NOV. 2

In a first of its kind initiative, the Chhattisgarh government is going to hold a 35-day mega sports event, "Bastar Olympics", from November 5 this year, particularly to showcase the sports talent of the surrendered Naxals and tribal youths, decapitated by Maoist violence, in the Leftwing insurgency-hit region in the state.

The event is a part of the move to bring the tribal youths in Bastar in the state to join the main-

stream of development, a spokesman of the state government said.

Chief minister Vishnu Deo Sai on Saturday unveiled the mascot of the Bastar Olympics, featuring hill myna, Chhattisgarh's state bird, and wild buffalo, Chhattisgarh's state animal, and reviewed preparations for the sports event.

Around 1.65 lakh youths in Bastar have already registered their names for participation in the event, the spokesman said.

Special event would be organised as part of the

ELEVEN SPORTS will be part of the Bastar Olympics in which both men and women can take part

THE WINNER in the sports event would be declared the youth icons of Bastar

Bastar Olympics for the surrendered Naxals and tribal youths in the region decapitated by Maoist violence to showcase their sports talent.

Eleven sports will be part of the Bastar Olympics in which both

men and women can take part.

The competitions in the event will be held at three levels- block, district and division, and the winner in the sports event would be declared the youth icons of Bastar, the spokesman said.

The sports event will help hasten the ongoing process of establishing peace in the insurgency-hit region, officials said.

Mr Sai said that the efforts by the state government in the last ten months to establish peace in Bastar have met with significant success.

## Shah will unveil BJP's Jharkhand Sankalp Patra, hold 3 rallies today

Continued from Page 1

The BJP, however, suffered a setback on Saturday after the party's state vice president Pranav Verma switched to the JMM, accusing the saffron party of ignoring him. Mr Verma is a prominent Kushwaha leader in the state.

Shortly after his arrival in Ranchi, Mr Shah held a meeting with senior party members in the state along with the two in-charges — Union minister Shivraj Singh Chouhan and Assam CM Himanta Biswa Sarma — to take stock of the situation and give final touches to the election manifesto called the "Sankalp Patra", which he will release on Sunday morning.

Mr Shah's manifesto will focus on 25 issues as the state completes the silver jubilee of its formation. The promises in the manifesto include providing a good governance model and improving education, health and overall infrastructure.

Later on Sunday, Mr Shah will address three rallies in Kokpada in Narsinhgarh under the Ghatshela Assembly, Hazaribagh under the Barkatta Assembly seat and Chatra in the Simariya Assembly constituency.

The state BJP unit has already announced "Panch Pran" or five promises to provide gas cylinders for ₹500 plus two cylinders free per year, financial assistance of ₹2,100 to women, opening up recruitment for about five-lakh jobs, a ₹2,000 unemployment allowance to educated unemployed in Jharkhand and proving housing dwellings.

Countering the BJP's guarantees, Mr Soren said, "Only those things should be promised that can be fulfilled. We are people who do more than we prom-

ise." The Jharkhand CM is focusing on matching the BJP's sops with the JMM promises and "exposing" the BJP for not fulfilling its previous promises.

The BJP bigwigs presence in the last lap ahead of Assembly polls is expected to give push to the saffron party's campaign efforts and pressurise the INDIA bloc led by Mr Soren, who finds himself embroiled in an age controversy shortly after filing his nomination.

In 2019, Mr Soren filed an affidavit saying his age was 42. In 2024, his affidavit mentions he is 49 years old. The BJP has lapped up the issue, asking how come in five years his age has increased by seven years.

Union minister of state for defence Sanjay Seth pointed out inconsistencies related to age in Mr Soren's nomination papers and urged the Election Commission to investigate whether the discrepancy occurred in 2019 or 2024.

State chief electoral officer K. Ravi Kumar said the matter has not yet been received as a formal complaint, but any concerns raised will follow a legal process.

However, the returning officer of Barhait Assembly, from where Mr Soren is contesting, said the CM's age mentioned in his election affidavit for 2024 Assembly polls matched with his birth certificate and other documents submitted by him. The officer added that discrepancies in the 2019 affidavit are beyond his jurisdiction.

Countering the allegations, Mr Soren's wife and JMM MLA Kalpana Soren questioned whether age has become such a major factor and alleged that the BJP doesn't have many issues to debate with Mr Soren, which is why it is raking up such issues.

## After 2 years, gunfire rings in 'terrorism-free' Srinagar

Continued from Page 1

The operation was underway as reports last came in. The police said that it shifted dozens of civilians, including women and children, of the besieged area to safer locations to ensure no harm comes to them.

This is the first major clash between the security forces and the militants in Srinagar in the past 26 months. The last such incident in the Kashmiri capital had taken place on September 15, 2022, at a place called Nowgam, in which two militants were killed. Prior to it, the city had witnessed an encounter between the militants on May 19, 2020, when two Hizb-ul-Mujahideen cadres were neutralised by the security forces at Nawa Kada'l.

Though many parts of the Kashmir Valley and also the Jammu region of the Union territory have continued to see infrequent terror attacks and other incidents of violence, Srinagar has remained relatively peaceful and was even declared "terrorism-free" by the CRPF some time ago.

On Saturday, the security forces also gunned down two militants during a brief encounter in the Shangus-Larnoo area of southern Anantnag district. "The operation took place near Halkan Gali, a location within south Kashmir known for sporadic

militant activity. One of the slain terrorists is a local Kashmiri and the other a foreign national," a cop said.

The Army termed the killing of two militants in the Anantnag gunfight as a major success. It said the duo was involved in a series of terror attacks, including targeting Rifleman Hilal Ahmad Bhat of the 162 Infantry Battalion (Territorial Army) on October 8 and other incidents in Halan, Bijbehara and Shangus areas of Anantnag.

A report said that the security forces and a group of militants also clashed in a remote area of northern Bandipora district earlier during the day on Saturday. After the brief clash, the militants fled into a nearby forested area, prompting the security forces to launch a search operation to track them down, the police sources said.

J&K has witnessed a surge in the terror attacks and other incidents of violence past fortnight, leaving 17 persons, including three Army personnel dead, two civilian porters, a local doctor, seven construction workers and four militants dead and several others injured.

On Sunday evening, two workers from Uttar Pradesh's Saharanpur division, identified as Usman Malik and Sofiyan Ilyas, were shot at and wounded 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.

In a similar attack, Ashok Chouhan, a seasonal labourer from Bihar, was found dead at Melhura in the Zainapora area of southern Shopian district earlier, whereas another one was shot and wounded by gunmen in Tral area of neighbouring Pulwama district.

On October 28-29, all three militants involved in a sneak attack on an ambulance that was part of a military convoy in the Akhnoor area of Jammu and Kashmir were killed in the counteroffensive launched by the Army.

On October 24, a group of militants targeted a small Army convoy with automatic weapons near its Nigeen Post in Gulmarg's Botapathri area, close to the Line of Control (LoC) in the Kashmir Valley's Baramulla district. In this attack, five people, including three soldiers and two civilian porters were killed, and three other soldiers were injured.

Earlier on October 20, a local doctor and six construction workers, both local and non-local, were killed and several others injured in a terror attack at Gagangir along the Srinagar-Ladakh highway in the Valley's Ganderbal district.

## Baseless: India dismisses Canada's charge on Shah

Continued from Page 1

that it is indulging in harassment and intimidation. Our diplomatic and consular personnel are already functioning in an environment of extremism and violence. This action of the Canadian government aggravates the situation and is incompatible with established diplomatic norms and practices," said Mr Jaiswal.

Amid the deteriorating ties, Canada has named India as an "adversary" in its National Cyber Threat Assessment 2025-26 Report released on October 30. Listing India alongside Russia, China, Iran and North Korea, the report states: "We assess that Indian state-sponsored cyber threat actors likely conduct cyber threat activity against Government of

Canada networks for the purpose of espionage. We judge that official bilateral relations between Canada and India will very likely drive Indian state-sponsored cyber threat activity against Canada."

Responding to this report, the foreign ministry spokesperson said, "This appears to be another example of a Canadian strategy to attack India... Their senior officials have openly confessed that they are seeking to manipulate global opinion against India. As on other occasions, imputations are made without any evidence." The Indian government said that given the strain in ties, it is monitoring the well-being of students and temporary workers who are currently in Canada.

## Army begins verification patrolling in Depsang area

Continued from Page 1

paved the way for talks between Prime Minister Narendra Modi and Chinese President Xi Jinping, who met in Kazan on the sidelines of the Brcis summit.

"As agreed at the leader's meeting in Kazan, relevant dialogue mechanisms at

the level of foreign ministers and other officials will be used to stabilise and rebuild bilateral relations," Mr Jaiswal said.

On Thursday, Indian and Chinese troops also exchanged sweets at several border points along the Line of Actual Control on the occasion of Diwali.

THE ASIAN AGE

3 NOVEMBER 2024



Shashi Warriar

Off the beaten track

The pitfalls of buying online

No matter how old I get, I don't like to admit I'm a coward. But then, lots of things I fear are becoming more a part of our lives these days, and I find it hard to cope.

There's technology, for instance. Online buying terrifies me. I resisted it with some success until covid came along. I made excuses like, "It's not the same as seeing or feeling something before buying it," and, "You'll never find fruit as good as you'll find in the market," and so on.

Covid changed all that. Risking the dread disease by going to the market was more frightening than buying things online. Besides, my wife Prita wasn't afraid of online shopping. She took to it like a duck to water, and soon we were getting along comfortably. We didn't even have to see the young men who delivered the goods: they simply rang the bell and left the goods on the table in the porch for us to collect. Practically everything we needed was available at our doorstep, and, while dining out was impossible, our favourite restaurants delivered, so we hardly felt the lacks.

Covid receded, but Prita liked purchasing things from the comfort of her sofa, using her cellphone for all her shopping. Despite my urging, she continued with the practice because it was so convenient. And then came the time when her phone began to misbehave. It froze from time to time, and worked very slowly. "It's three years old," she announced to me one evening. "Getting slower by the day. Time to get a new one."

"Let's go," I said. "Where?" she asked. "To the shops," I said. "Don't you want a new cellphone?"

"No way," she said, settling into her favourite easychair with the phone in her hands and her thumbs racing. "Not while this still limps along."

A half-hour later, she announced. "See what I got?"

"What?" I asked. She showed me the deal on an online shopping site, one that promises to deliver anything from A to Z: a new phone, faster and shinier than her present one, at a reasonable price, and, besides, a rather good trade-in value for the old one. "Excellent," I said.

"See?" she said. "No need to go out. And not just that, we know it'll arrive three days from now."

"Terrific!" I said, shrinking from a future in which I depended on her for all my purchases.

The next day, though, we had to go out of town for a few days. "What about your phone?" I asked. "No worries," she replied. "The delivery boy will call to confirm if we're home, and we'll tell him to bring it next day."

But the delivery boy never called. Instead, when she followed up, she got a message on the online site's app that the delivery boy had tried to call but failed to get through. "Nonsense!" she fumed. "He never called! What terrible service!"

"Right," I said. "So what do we do now?" "Complain, of course!" she said. "Right now! We can't let them get away with this!" She settled down on the sofa and found the customer relations page of the Internet marketing site, where, after going through several options, she managed to click an option that requested a callback.

They called soon after. She explained what happened, and, after a brief silence, her voice went up. A minute or two of shouting got her a better response, and very soon it was clear that there was nothing left to do but cancel the order, which she did. When she tried to place the same order again – it was a good deal, after all – she discovered she couldn't exchange the phone. After another chat with customer service she found that the site had registered the IMEI number of her phone on a barred list so she couldn't put it up for exchange it for another ten days. Another shouting match followed, after which it was taken off the list.

"When will it arrive?" I asked. "Four days," she said, naming the date.

Four days passed, but the phone didn't arrive. She asked again for a callback from customer service, and cancelled the deal once again. "I give up," she said. "I think I'll stick with this phone for some more time." She deleted a lot of her data and removed many apps she didn't use regularly and got it working a little faster and more reliably than before: its performance was just about acceptable.

A few days later, our ancient toaster failed to come on. This had happened before, and we thought a few thumps at strategic points would revive it, but this time it really seemed to have given up. No amount of thumping worked, so we bid it goodbye and decided to replace it. "Let's go to a shop," I said. "We can get back in an hour or so, and there won't be the tension of whether they'll deliver the thing or not."

"Right," she said, and we set out. We found a shop just fifteen minutes away, and were back home in just over half an hour with a brand new toaster for which the shopkeeper gave us a ten per cent discount.

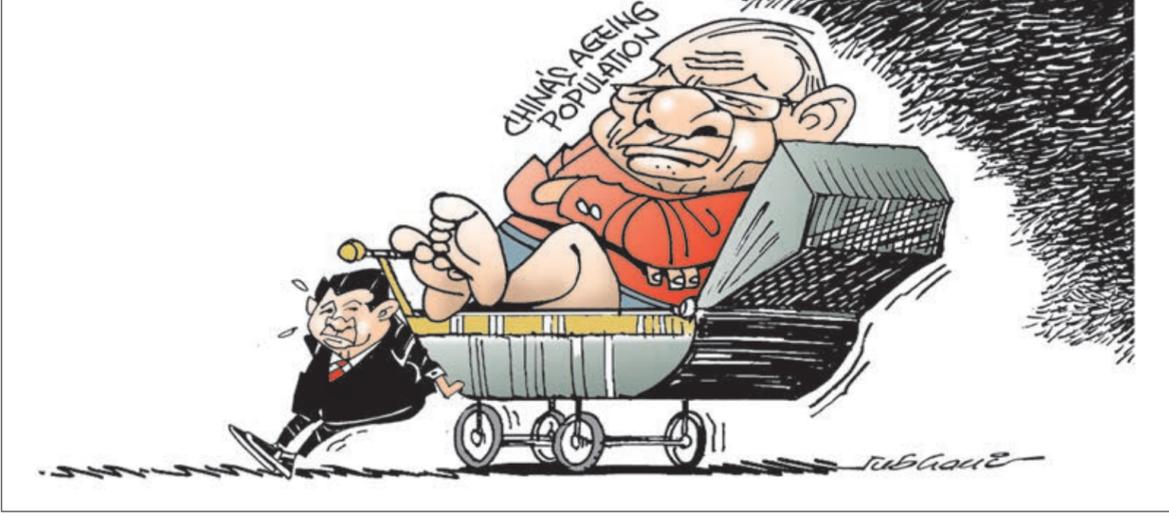
"That was short and sweet, wasn't it?" I asked, gloating just a bit. She must have caught that, because she whipped out her phone immediately. A minute later, she was showing me what she'd found online. "Look!" she said. There it was again, the a-to-z shopping site, carrying exactly the same toaster we'd just bought, but at half the price! "Short, sweet, and expensive!" You just can't win!

Shashi Warriar has written fairy tales, thrillers, a semi-fictional biography, satires, and a love story. Teaching is his favourite pastime.



'Complain, of course!' she said. Right now! We can't let them get away with this! She settled down on the sofa and found the customer relations page of the Internet marketing site...

Subhani



India, China and the fog of elusive peace



Manish Tewari

State of the Union

The recent meeting between Prime Minister Narendra Modi and President Xi Jinping on the sidelines of the Brics Summit in Kazan, Russia, was held out as the potential game-changer that consummated the protracted negotiations to address the April-May 2020 Chinese transgressions along the Line of Actual Control (LAC) and some other near-term legacy issues. Negotiations that had been ongoing since June 2020.

While both Mr Modi and Mr Xi underscored their commitment to disengagement and restoring tranquility along the LAC, the discrepancies in the official readouts of the meeting released by both the countries highlighted discrepancies, divergences and dichotomies in their respective appreciation of the situation along the LAC.

India's optimistic stance on achieving "complete disengagement" starkly contrasted with China's more cautious position. It illuminated the intricate challenge of restoring the pre-2020 status quo along the Line of Actual Control (LAC). Something that the Government of India has held out as a non-negotiable redline for the past 53 months now.

India asserts that the de facto border extends for 3,488 km, while China contends it is significantly shorter. Beijing claims approximately 90,000 square kilometres of Indian territory in the north-eastern region, including Arunachal Pradesh, while New Delhi maintains that 38,000 square kilometres in Aksai Chin is part of Ladakh. Despite considerable focus on the disengagement efforts in Depsang and Demchok, numerous such unresolved holdovers persist.

**Uncertainties Surrounding Pre-2020 Border Dynamics:** A crucial aspect of the ongoing disengagement along the LAC is the lack of clarity and opacity regarding the situation prior to the April-May 2020 standoff. The

Indian government has not adequately disclosed the nature or extent of Chinese incursions or the difficulties encountered by Indian patrols in Ladakh before the escalation in 2020. This opacity has fuelled speculation about the exact terms of disengagement.

The flashpoint of the current border dispute in part can be traced back to China's assertions with regard to where the borders between India and China lay. The Chinese contention in this regard was first articulated by Premier Zhou Enlai in a letter to Prime Minister Nehru on November 7, 1959, and is now colloquially referred to as the Chinese 1959 claim line.

Since then, several areas along the Line of Actual Control have remained contentious. Prior to April-May 2020, tensions were already manifesting themselves in critical areas like the Depsang Plains, where Chinese troops frequently impeded Indian patrols at multiple points namely Patrolling Points 10, 11, 11-A, 12, and 13, respectively.

Although India maintained control over the Burtse area to the west, it has always been a flashpoint since a significant standoff in September 2015 when India objected to the construction of a Chinese watchtower. The Galwan Valley had also experienced friction before the violent confrontation in June 2020. Other locations, such as Hot Springs and Gogra Post, where Indian patrols traversed up to Patrolling Point 15 and 17-A, were recurrent sites of stand offs, particularly during the heightened discord between 2017 and 2019. While a mutual understanding of patrol boundaries has historically helped maintain peace, the region remains always susceptible to the potential of escalations.

**2020 Transgressions: A Turning Point:** The Chinese transgressions of April-May 2020 marked a significant escalation in the border dispute, fundamentally chang-

ing the dynamics along the Line of Actual Control. During this period, Chinese troops advanced deep into territory claimed by India, creating new flashpoints in the region. The violent confrontation in the Galwan Valley, which resulted in the loss of 20 Indian soldiers, highlighted the seriousness of the situation. Chinese forces established camps in areas that had previously been jointly patrolled, undermining fragile agreements that had been in place.

Pangong Tso was particularly impacted, with Chinese troops advancing to the northern bank and occupying positions between Finger 4 and Finger 8. This aggressive manoeuvre pushed the boundary westward and initiated a prolonged standoff. Similar incursions were observed in the Gogra and Hot Springs areas, complicating the negotiations for disengagement. In the Depsang Plains, Chinese forces have continued to obstruct Indian patrols, and China's reluctance to withdraw from this region still raises concerns that a complete return to pre-2020 conditions may not be as easily attainable as is being dissimulated by Mandarin's of the government.

**Buffer Zones and Patrolling Restrictions: A New Reality?** The escalation in 2020 led to the establishment of buffer zones along the LAC, where both Indian and Chinese forces are prohibited from conducting patrols. While this measure may have alleviated immediate tensions, it has also restricted India's access to areas that were previously patrolled freely. The creation of buffer zones in the Galwan Valley and Pangong Tso required India to withdraw from strategic positions in exchange for a pullback by Chinese forces. This arrangement has reduced the likelihood of clashes but has raised concerns about India's long-term

territorial control. Uncertainties persist regarding whether China has fully withdrawn from all areas it occupied during the 2020 standoff. Although disengagement has been achieved in parts of the region, doubts remain about the long-term status of the established buffer zones. Intended to prevent future conflicts, these zones may become a permanent fixture that limits India's ability to patrol the region effectively.

A January 2023 paper written by a senior police officer vividly detailed that Indian security forces regularly patrolled 65 Patrolling Points (PPs) from the Karakoram Pass to Chumur. However, access to 26 of these PPs has been lost due to the suspension of patrolling by Indian security forces. The paper revealed significant absence of Indian access to PPs 5-17, 24-32, 37, 51, 52, and 62. Notably, unpatrolled PPs include those in the Samar Lungpa area northeast of Daulat Beg Oldi and in the Depsang Plains, as well as PPs along the northern bank of Pangong and other critical locations like Demchok and Charding Nala.

**Need for Greater Transparency:** The ongoing disengagement process along the India-China border has significant implications, particularly for states like Arunachal Pradesh, where China asserts claims over the Indian territory. There are growing concerns that these disengagement agreements and resolutions would weaken India's claims over Aksai Chin, a prerogative aggressively chest thumped by the current government during the Article 370 debate in the Lok Sabha on August 6, 2019. The creation of buffer zones, restrictions on patrolling and other yet unknown details of various disengagement minute may lead to de facto borders that do not align with India's territorial claims, potentially compromising both its negotiating position in future discussions as well its national security.

While recent agreements can be termed as tangible progress transparency with regard to its terms are the key.

Manish Tewari is a third-term Lok Sabha MP and former Union minister of information and broadcasting, Government of India

LETTERS  
NEED AQI ALTERNATIVES

Out of the 30 most polluted cities on earth, 21 are from India. And surely many of them will be under BJP governments. Therefore, for the BJP to blame AAP for the pollution in Delhi because of bad roads is a little hard to accept. With angry right-wing individuals and groups egging on their community to light up as many crackers in an effort to counter the AAP restrictions on crackers, what is a huge problem has turned into a political tussle. Bans serve little purpose if they are not properly enforced. Have any of the political parties come up with any initiatives to improve the AQI? Why should India have so many highly polluted cities? We need some honest answers and solutions. Mere political rhetoric is not going to help.

Anthony Henriquez  
Mumbai

STALWART LEAVES

MR BIBEK DEBROY is a name that needs no introduction. From handling the India's PM Economic Advisory Council to contributing in the erstwhile Planning Commission's works to translating ancient Sanskrit texts into crisp, unabridged books in English, Mr Debroy has left an indelible mark on India's intellectual and policymaking landscape. His passing away at the age of 69 is a huge loss of our nation. He was truly a man of wide-ranging interests, be that economics or Sanskrit, English or the Puranas. His books, columns and other translation works of Indian Vedas and Puranas into English had been an intellectual gift to all Indian nationals from time to time. We mourn his loss.

Kirti Wadhawan  
Kanpur

THINK LONG-TERM

THE CURRENT US sanctions against Indian firms raise major worries about India's vital stances when it comes to international diplomacy. Should India reconsider its trading links with countries participating in the Russian defence supply lines? How can governments better educate firms on how to adhere to global sanctions in order to avoid future repercussions? On top of that, what steps would be executed to protect Indian enterprises caught up in geopolitical tensions? Addressing these issues is critical for protecting national interests amidst developing global conflicts.

Anshu Bharti  
Begusarai



Mahir Ali

Trump or Harris?  
Sooner than later,  
American empire  
bound to crumble

A few days from now, nervous tension will be spiking within and beyond the US as the results roll in from what has been hyped up as the most consequential election in American history. The choice, essentially, is between the reinforcement of a deeply unsatisfying status quo and a return to the depressingly entertaining self-immolation of a Trump presidency.

Writing in the context of Nazism and its impact on Germany, Hannah Arendt noted long ago that "those who choose the lesser evil forget very quickly that they chose evil". In recent decades, it has more or less become the norm for the electorate in many democracies faced with a choice between two varieties of what voters might be inclined to detest or distrust. The US easily falls into that category, notwithstanding its posturing as an exemplar or, more absurdly, an enforcer of liberal democracy, given the number of dictatorships its interventions have spawned.

Criticisms of Donald Trump's Madison

Square Garden rally on Sunday has tended to focus on a warm-up comedian's obnoxious description of Puerto Rico as a garbage dump. Even the Trump campaign has disavowed his stance – but, at the same time, distracted attention from echoes of a notorious gathering at the same venue 85 years ago arranged by the German American Bund where an image of George Washington was flanked by Nazi insignia, and the keynote speaker's anti-Semitic, white-supremacist message was greeted with "sieg heils" by the 20,000-strong multitude.

The f-word – fascism – had been flung at Trump even before a number of disenchanted colleagues from his previous White House stint endorsed it. After all, the ex-President had doubled down on his traditional pet hate – which involved denigrating all immigrants who entered via Mexico as rapists and murderers – by claiming that Haitian arrivals in Springfield, Ohio, were devouring cats and dogs. The lack of evidence for even a single instance of such behaviour did not

matter to him or his acolytes.

The accompanying threat to violently deport millions of 'illegal immigrants' was almost a predictable corollary. It has stirred precious little alarm in the US which had in its initial stages relied on invaders and their slaves plus genocidal assaults against North America's native inhabitants that it should still be welcoming to outsiders keen on rebuilding lives that have been shattered all too often because of America-first mentality in Washington.

There is more alarm over Trump's vow to deploy the military against "enemies from within", a designation that encompasses pretty much all of his domestic opponents, who are obviously being unpatriotic in disdaining his MAGA agenda, which in part reflects the white-supremacist efforts of predecessors that were interrupted by Hitler's transgressions. Trump is hardly a pioneer, though. Richard Nixon, too, had his list of enemies – and he came a cropper within two years of winning an undeserved

landslide in 1972.

American voters have picked many obnoxious Presidents within living memory, and there has never been any reckoning for their international crimes – from Vietnam and Korea to Chile, El Salvador, Afghanistan and Iraq, among a far longer list. Trump, to his credit, failed to spark any new wars. The claims that he would have pre-empted both the Russian invasion of Ukraine and October 7 alongside its genocidal aftermath in Israel, Gaza and beyond, are easy to denigrate as absurd. But these are hardly defining issues for most voters.

In the case of Israel's genocidal impulses, they matter more on the Democratic side. Kamala Harris has failed to distance herself from the Biden administration's demonstrably fake efforts for a ceasefire, even while its influence has been paramount in forestalling the kind of revenge Benjamin Netanyahu and Yoav Gallant had in mind for Iran. Meanwhile, the Kahanist "ethnic cleansing" in the Palestinian territories pro-

ceeds apace. Would a reincarnated President Trump somehow halt it? Dream on. The Arab/Muslim 'community leaders' who latched on to him in Michigan recently are either unwise or ignorant in glossing over his efforts to bury the question of Palestine under the mendacious Abraham Accords.

Would Harris be any better? Yes, marginally, at least on domestic concerns. It matters, for instance, that she defends women's autonomy over their bodies, and on the economic front is slightly less enthusiastic than her rival about redistributing wealth to the rich. But then, false promises are the lifeblood of US elections. On the global front, the choice perhaps is between a rapid apocalypse or the gradual decline and fall of an empire that has for too long surreptitiously prolonged the age of imperialism. Either way, but especially with Trump, the risk is that the rest of the world will pay the price for decades to come.

— By arrangement with Dawn

SHORT TAKES

APARTMENT BLAST IN GREECE: MAN ARRESTED

Athens, Nov. 2: Greek police have arrested a 31-year old man for his role in a strong homemade bomb explosion which killed one man and seriously injured a woman in an apartment in Athens this week. The case is linked to anti-establishment guerrilla groups. Anti-terrorism police suspect the blast occurred while the bomb was being made. The nabbed man had testified. According to police sources, he said he shared the keys of the flat with the couple involved in the blast but denied any involvement in the explosion.

GUINEA JUNTA CHIEF IS NOW ARMY GENERAL

Conakry, Nov. 2: Guinea's junta leader Mamadi Doumbouya has elevated himself to the rank of army general. Doumbouya, 43, seized power by force in September 2021 by overthrowing President Alpha Conde, who had placed the then-colonel in charge of an elite force tasked with protecting the head of state from such coups. The military leader "exceptionally" promoted himself to the rank of lieutenant general in January while making clear the junta would not keep its promise to hand power back to elected civilians by the end of the year.

BODY FOUND ON A NORTHERN FRENCH BEACH

Sangette, Nov. 2: A body was on Saturday found on a beach in northern France, from where many migrants seeking a better life in UK attempt the perilous English Channel crossing, an AFP journalist saw. The discovery near Calais came three days after the death of a migrant who fell into the sea off the French coast, while three other people were found dead washed up on northern French beaches on Wednesday. At least 60 people have died trying to cross the Channel to England in increasingly overcrowded dinghies since the start of the year.

POPE PRAYS IN FRONT OF UNBORN BABIES' GRAVES

Rome, Nov. 2: Pope Francis paid his respects on Saturday to the Garden of Angels, an area in Rome's third largest cemetery which houses the graves of stillborn and miscarried children. Francis celebrated All Souls' Day Mass at the Laurentino cemetery, on Rome's southern outskirts. Ahead of the Mass, he stopped for a silent prayer at the graves of children who were never born, an area guarded by two marble statues of angels. The pope laid a bouquet of white roses in front of the children's graves.

SHARK ATTACKS, SEVERS MAN'S LEG BELOW KNEE

Wailuku, Nov. 2: A shark bit a Maui surfer on Friday and severed his leg, authorities said. The man, 61, was surfing off Waiehu Beach Park on Friday morning when a shark bit him. Police officers who arrived to the scene first tried to control the bleeding with tourniquets. His leg was "completely severed just below the knee," Maui County said in a news release. The man was alert while being treated on shore and then taken to Maui Memorial Medical Centre in a very critical condition. The incident prompted officials to close the beach park.

MIDDLE KINGDOM EGYPTIAN TOMB UNEARTHED

Cairo, Nov. 2: Archeologists from Egypt and the United States unearthed an ancient tomb with 11 sealed burials near the famed city of Luxor, Egyptian authorities said. Egypt's tourism and antiquities ministry said in a statement on Friday the tomb, which dates back to the Middle Kingdom (1938 B.C.-1630 B.C.), was found in the South Asasif necropolis, next to the Temple of Hatshepsut on the Nile's West Bank in Luxor. The joint Egyptian-American mission found coffins for men, women and children.

Harris, Trump go toe to toe in final campaign weekend

Dems plan to call for calm on SM if Trump prematurely declares poll win

Washington, Nov. 2: Kamala Harris and Donald Trump enter the final weekend of the most tense US presidential campaign of modern times with a flurry of swing-state rallies that will test their stamina — and ability to persuade the country's last undecided voters.

Democrats are readying a rapid-fire response to flood social media and the airwaves with calls for calm and patience with vote-counting should Donald Trump try to prematurely claim election victory, as he did in 2020, Harris campaign and party officials told Reuters.

Harris, bidding to become the country's first woman president, will use rallies in Georgia, North Carolina and Michigan to drive home her message that Trump is a threat to US democracy.

Trump — seeking a sensational return to the White House after losing in 2020 and then becoming the first presidential nominee to have been convicted of crimes — promises a radical right-wing makeover of the government and aggressive trade wars to promote his policy of "America first."

The 78-year-old, who rallied in Milwaukee, Wisconsin on Friday just miles from Harris's event, will all but cross paths with her again as Trump makes whistle-stops in North Carolina, Virginia, Pennsylvania and Georgia. Their frenetic schedule will run right into



Republican presidential nominee and former US president Donald Trump arrives for a campaign rally at Fiserv Forum, in Milwaukee, on Friday.

Monday, culminating with late-night rallies — in Grand Rapids, Michigan, for Trump and Philadelphia, Pennsylvania, for Harris.

Election Day is Tuesday but Americans have been voting early for weeks, with more than 70 million ballots already cast — including a record four million in Georgia, where Democrats seek to pull out all the stops to keep the state in their column.

Opinion polls continue to show a tie race, particularly in the seven battleground states likely to determine the result in the US electoral college system, leaving the Repu-

blican businessman and his 60-year-old Democratic rival fighting hard to peel off even slivers of support from one another's camps.

Harris, currently President Joe Biden's Vice-President, is doing that by appealing to centrist voters and propelling her base to the polls with a robust ground game and get-out-the-vote effort.

And by painting Trump as a toxic authoritarian, she is also encouraging voters to "finally turn the page" on the former president.

"He is someone who is increasingly unstable, obsessed with revenge, consumed with grievance

— and the man is out for unchecked power," she told supporters in Little Chute, Wisconsin.

Trump, meanwhile, has doubled down on his already extreme rhetoric in hopes of firing up his loyal base to turn out in massive numbers.

"Kamala's closing message to America is that she hates you," Trump fumed on Friday night in Warren, Michigan, where he trashed the economy under Biden and Harris as a disaster — which economists say it clearly is not — and warned that "a 1929-style economic depression" would ensue if Harris were elected.

Trump, Epstein 'bet on Diana': Author Wolff

Washington, Nov. 2: Donald Trump and Jeffrey Epstein allegedly "placed bets on who'd sleep with this gorgeous royal."

Author and journalist Michael Wolff has claimed in his podcast Jeffrey Epstein and Donald Trump had once "placed bets on who'd sleep with Princess Diana."

Wolff, who has chron-

icled Trump's life in multiple books, alleged that the two were engrossed in a competition over who could sleep with more women. The timeline we were noting here is when Diana was married to the Prince, now King Charles III, and was one of the most famous women in the world.

Wolff cited she repre-

WOLFF, WHO has chronicled Trump's life, alleged that the two were engrossed in a competition over who could sleep with more women.

presented an unattainable "get" for Epstein and Trump, which only intensified their interest.

"Diana and the royal family seemed to represent some ultimate 'get' for Epstein and Trump, and an ultimate competition," Wolff explained. He suggested that both men, fueled by their "sex-obsessed" lifestyle, believed "they could sleep with any woman they wanted to, including a princess."



Princess Diana



Anura Kumara Dissanayake

SPARRING IN SRI LANKA OVER PRIVILEGES TO EX-PRESIDENTS

Colombo, Nov. 2: A Sri Lankan Cabinet sub-committee will soon review the privileges accorded to former presidents of the country and future actions on the matter will be taken based on its recommendations, the Presidential Secretariat has said.

President Anura Kumara Dissanayake's office on Friday also refuted reports that the security of former president Mahinda Rajapaksa has been reduced.

The statement by the Presidential Secretariat came after concerns raised by ex-presidents that the new Sri Lankan government under President Dissanayake would slash their privileges.

In the run-up to the September 21 election, Dissanayake had vowed to stop all privileges of ex-presidents claiming they were a burden on the taxpayer.

In recent days the government has faced criticism over the reported move to slash the personal security provided to ex-president Rajapaksa. "The Presidential Secretariat has noted recent media reports claiming that the security of former President Mahinda Rajapaksa has been reduced," the statement said.

"The Presidential Secretariat states that all those reports are false," it added.

Khamenei vows response; attack on Israel injures 11

Jerusalem, Nov. 2: An attack on a central Israeli town early on Saturday injured 11 people as Iran's Supreme Leader vowed a punishing response to Israel's attack last week.

Israel launched dozens of intense airstrikes across Lebanon's northeastern farming villages on Friday, killing at least 52 people and wounding scores more, the Lebanese Health Ministry reported.

The pre-dawn strike on Tira, which followed air raid sirens across central Israel, was one of several barrages fired from Lebanon early in the day.

Many of the projectiles were intercepted by Israeli air defences, while others landed in unpopulated areas. The Magen David Adom emergency service said 11 people were hurt by shrapnel and glass shards in a direct strike on a building in Tira, a predominantly Israeli Arab town. Three were in moderate condition.

NATURE'S WRATH



UNRWA spokesman Jonathan Fowler inspects the damaged UN agency for Palestinian refugees headquarters at the Nur Shams refugee camp in the occupied West Bank, on Saturday.

U.S. BOOSTS MIDDLE EAST PRESENCE WITH BOMBER AIRCRAFT, WARSHIPS

Washington, Nov. 2: Defence secretary Lloyd Austin is sending additional bomber aircraft and Navy warships to the Middle East to bolster the US presence in the region as an aircraft carrier and its

warships are preparing to leave, US officials said on Friday. Austin ordered several B-52 Stratofortress bomber aircraft, tanker aircraft and Navy destroyers to deploy to the Middle East.

Medvedev warns US: Avoid WWII

Moscow, Nov. 2: Dmitry Medvedev, a senior Russian security official who served as Russia's president from 2008 to 2012, warned the United States on Saturday to take Russia's nuclear warnings seriously to avoid World War Three.

Medvedev, who serves as deputy chairman of Russia's powerful security council, told RT broadcaster that top US officials did not want World War Three but for some reason they believe "that the Russians will never cross a certain line."

"They are wrong," Medvedev told RT, adding that Moscow believed the current US and European political establishments lacked the "foresight and subtlety of mind" displayed by the late Henry Kissinger.

"If we are talking about the existence of our state, as the president of our country has repeatedly said, your humble servant has said, others have said, of course, we simply will not have any choice."

The 21/2-year-old war in Ukraine is entering what Russian officials say is its most dangerous phase as Russian forces

RUSSIA IMPRISONS EX-U.S. CONSULAR STAFFER FOR 5 YRS

Moscow, Nov. 1: A court in Russia's far east said on Friday it had convicted Robert Shonov, a former US consular employee, of illegally and covertly cooperating with the US government to harm Russia's national security and had jailed him for nearly five years.

Russia's FSB security service detained Shonov, a Russian national, in Vladivostok in May 2023 and accused him of taking money to covertly supply US diplomats with information that was harmful to Russia.

are advancing in eastern Ukraine and the West considers how to shore up Ukraine. Russia has been signalling for weeks to the West that Moscow will respond if the US and its allies help Ukraine fire longer-range missiles deep into Russia, while Nato says that North Korea has sent troops to western Russia.

Sanctioned Russian in IMF exec board

London, Nov. 2: Ksenia Yudaeva, under sanctions from the United States, has been elected as the International Monetary Fund's executive director for Russia and Syria, the IMF said on Friday.

The executive board is the IMF's top day-to-day business decision-making body. Executive directors are elected by member countries or by groups of countries. The outgoing Russian executive director announced in Septem-

ber that Yudaeva, an adviser to Bank of Russia Governor Elvira Nabiullina, would become the new representative.

Yudaeva declined to comment. A fund spokesperson said executive directors were IMF officials and have the duty to act in the interest of the lender.

"They may, and in practice they regularly convey the views of the countries or groups of countries that have elected them," he said.



New leader of Britain's main opposition Conservative Party, Kemi Badenoch smiles beside her husband Hamish (L) after being announced as their new leader, in London, on Saturday.

Badenoch is new leader of Tories

London, Nov. 2: Kemi Badenoch became the Conservatives' new leader and the first person of colour (PoC) woman to head a major UK political party on Saturday, after winning a leadership contest on a promise to return the party to its founding principles.

Badenoch, 44, replaces former PM Rishi Sunak and has pledged to lead the party through a period of renewal after its defeat at July poll, saying it had veered towards the political centre by "governing from the left".

On the right of the Conservative Party, Badenoch will likely back poli-

es to shrink the state and challenge what she says is institutional left-wing thinking, saying it is time to defend the principles of free speech, free enterprise and free markets.

She becomes the Conservatives' fifth leader since mid-2016 after winning 57% of votes in the final stage of a contest that saw a field of six whittled down to two. She beat ex-minister Robert Jenrick, who won 43% of votes.

Labour PM Keir Starmer welcomed her victory, saying "the first person of colour leader of a Westminster party is a proud moment for our country".

Tropical storm Kong-rey knocked out power to 9.5L households in Taiwan

Japan urges 2L to evacuate over flood scare

Tokyo, Nov. 2: Nearly 2,00,000 people in western Japan were urged to evacuate on Saturday as authorities warned of landslides and floods, while the remnants of a tropical storm trickle over.

The Japan Meteorological Agency said "warm, moist air... was causing heavy rainfall with thunderstorms in western Japan" partly due to Kong-rey, which was downgraded to an extratropical low-pressure system from a typhoon. The city of Matsuyama "issued the top-

el warning, urging 1.89,552 residents in its 10 districts to evacuate and immediately secure safety", a city official told AFP.

While the evacuation was not mandatory, Japan's highest-level warning is typically issued when it is extremely likely that some kind of disaster has already occurred.

Forecasters warned that landslides and floods could affect western Japan on Saturday and eastern Japan on Sunday. Due to rain, Shinkansen bullet trains were briefly sus-

nded between Tokyo and Fukuoka region in the morning before resuming on a delayed schedule.

Kong-rey smashed into Taiwan on Thursday as one of the biggest storms to hit the island in decades. It claimed at least three lives and injured 690 people, according to the National Fire Agency, which added a migrant worker death to the toll on Saturday. The storm knocked out power to 9,57,061 households, 27,781 of which were still in the dark as of Saturday.

Spain flood death toll at 211

Valencia, Nov. 2: The deadliest flash floods in Spain's modern history have killed at least 211 people and dozens were still unaccounted for, four days after torrential rains swept the eastern region of Valencia, Prime Minister Pedro Sanchez said.

In a televised statement, Sanchez said the government was sending 5,000 more army troops to help with the searches and cle-

an-up in addition to 2,500 soldiers already deployed. "It is the biggest operation by the Armed Forces in Spain in peacetime," Sanchez said.

"The government is going to mobilise all the resources necessary as long as they are needed."

It is already Europe's worst flood-related disaster since 1967 when at least 500 people died in Portugal.



Muddy waters flow down to the sea near Benicarlo, in Spain's Valencia.

## INDIAN TOP 10

### NON-FICTION

- THE GOLDEN ROAD**  
William Dalrymple, Bloomsbury, ₹999
- NEXUS**  
Yuval Noah Harari, Fern Press, ₹1,099
- SPEAKING WITH NATURE**  
Ramachandra Guha, HarperCollins, ₹799
- RATAN TATA: A LIFE**  
Thomas Mathew, HarperCollins, ₹1,499
- FROM THE KING'S TABLE TO STREET FOOD**  
Pushpesh Pant, Speaking Tiger, ₹699
- WAR**  
Bob Woodward, Simon & Schuster, ₹999
- A WONDERLAND OF WORLDS**  
Shashi Tharoor, Aleph, ₹999
- WHAT WENT WRONG WITH CAPITALISM**  
Ruchir Sharma, Penguin, ₹999
- GOLWALKAR**  
Dhirendra K. Jha, Simon & Schuster, ₹899
- ICONOCLAST**  
Anand Teltumbde, Penguin, ₹1,499

### FICTION

- INTERMEZZO**  
Sally Rooney, Faber, ₹699
- THERE ARE RIVERS IN THE SKY**  
Elif Shafak, Penguin, ₹899
- THE LIFE IMPOSSIBLE**  
Matt Haig, Penguin, ₹799
- AN EYE FOR AN EYE**  
Jeffrey Archer, HarperCollins, ₹499
- WE SOLVE MURDERS**  
Richard Osman, Penguin, ₹899
- JAMES**  
Percival Everett, Pan Macmillan, ₹750
- BEFORE WE FORGET KINDNESS**  
Toshikazu Kawaguchi, Pan Macmillan, ₹550
- IN TOO DEEP**  
Lee Child, Penguin, ₹899
- SILKEN GAZELLES**  
Jokha Alharthi, Simon & Schuster, ₹699
- THE BOOK OF EVERLASTING THINGS**  
Aanchal Malhotra, HarperCollins, ₹799

Bahrsions, New Delhi

# Underdog to model journalist



Indranil Banerjee

review

Truth, it is said, is often stranger than fiction; sometimes it is more entertaining as well. Dubai-based journalist Mazhar Farooqui's recollections in his book titled *The Maz Files: Scoops, Scams and Showdowns* is just that: a fascinating collation of astonishing, often bizarre, real life incidents involving incidents from his career as an investigative newshound.

The author's chequered and clearly kaleidoscopic career began in his hometown Lucknow where as a Muslim in an increasingly polarised environment he and his family were subject to blatant police injustice. At one point he and his father had to endure beating by the police for no faults of their own. Embittered by such inci-

dents, he resolved to become a fearless investigative journalist: "I made a vow to myself. I would become a journalist, but not just any journalist. I would pursue the truth with unwavering dedication. That I would never settle for mere stenography or half-truths."

A career thus launched made its inevitable progress through the labyrinths of small-town India, progressing to the capital and eventually to Dubai where he made his name. He has been threatened, sued and even arrested but none of this has deterred him from homing down on crooks and scamsters, including powerful business-

men. There are, however, times when this collection of astonishing narratives stretches one's credulity, like the story

about cannibalistic aghoris allowing the author and photographer to record their every action as they illegally obtain corpses, eat them raw including the brain and at one point have intercourse with the bloated corpse of a woman.

He describes an incredible scene involving aghoris with a corpse: "We watched in horror as they pulled the half-burnt body from the fire and began eating it. Limbs were torn asunder, flesh was devoured. The sight was akin to a pack of hyenas tearing into their prey. One of the aghoris managed to sever the skull. This set off a mad frenzy as they fought over the prized brain meat, known as *mag-haz*, believed to bestow superhuman powers."

He then describes an even more horrifying incident involving the corpse of a young woman with a distended belly: "But if we thought we had seen everything, we were mistaken. Soon,

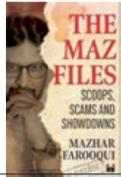
an aghori began to engage in intercourse with the corpse."

The author has not provided any citations or links to his original articles, which in the end diminishes both the credibility and the utility of his accounts.

Despite the fantastic nature of many of his stories, some clearly are important records of events that could have historical significance and use as primary research material.

While some readers might take this collection of stories with a pinch of salt, what cannot be denied is that they have emanated from the pen of a remarkably courageous and gifted individual. The book's sheer readability and remarkable stories are certain to keep the reader spellbound.

*The writer is an independent commentator on political and security issues*



THE MAZ FILES: SCOOPS, SCAMS AND SHOWDOWNS

By MAZHAR FAROOQUI  
Westland  
pp. 316; ₹499

# Can India, Nepal resolve water, army enlisting disputes?



Anil Bhat

review

Considering the strategic location of Nepal vis-à-vis India, the historic, cultural and religious commonality between the two nations, as well as their complex relationship, neither has there been enough academic study nor the mix of political astuteness and sensitivity required of New Delhi in the over seven decades of our post-colonial relationship. Thus, this book by Lieutenant General Shokin Chauhan, a Gorkha Rifles officer who has travelled often to all parts of Nepal and been a defence attache in Kathmandu,

breaks new ground.

Gen. Chauhan takes you on a journey through the shared history of India and Nepal. His book shows glimpses of those centuries-old bonds forged through trade, culture and inter-

woven destinies, the shaping a relationship critical to the region's stability. It delves into a deeper understanding of the strategic geography that places Nepal uniquely between two powers. Detailed maps and analyses bring out the geopolitical considerations at play and their potential impact on both nations.

The author's firsthand experience provides a detailed look at the challenges facing India and Nepal. Border disputes and political tensions are addressed with

clarity. The book also uncovers the often-overlooked military dimension of the Indo-Nepal relationship. The author's military expertise is evident when he explores defence cooperation, security concerns and the potential for stronger collaboration between the two countries' armed forces.

An important bilateral issue between both countries is related to security. Nepal lies in the southern lap of the Himalayas, and shares borders with two huge States of Asia. China's role in

Nepal has expanded steadily over the last decades. To counter China's reach in Nepal, India has to act speedily to improve its weak overland infrastructure in the Himalayas. India needs also to improve its diplomacy vis-à-

vis Nepal and act with greater benevolence.

A great loss to the Indian Army since 2020 is that about 60 per cent of soldiers in each of the seven Gorkha regiments who are of Nepali origin have not been recruited. The recruitment process got stalled due to the pandemic and Nepal's opposition to the Agnipath scheme (a four-year tour of duty for soldiers, sailors and airmen) since its announcement in June 2022.

The issue of water resources, too, lingers even though water is the most important natural resource that Nepal possesses and the greater part of it is yet to be exploited.

This widely researched book is a must-read for politicians, bureaucrats, diplomats, scholars and those related to security.

*Anil Bhat, a retired Army officer, is a defence and security analyst based in New Delhi*

BRIDGING BORDERS: INDIA-NEPAL RELATIONS IN A CHANGING GEOPOLITICAL LANDSCAPE  
By LT GEN. SHOKIN CHAUHAN  
Pentagon Press  
pp. 191; ₹995

# WORLD

## SHORT TAKES

### INDIGENEOUS CALENDAR FOR NEPAL NEW YEAR

**Kathmandu, Nov. 2:** Nepal celebrated New Year's Day on Saturday according to the indigenous Nepal Sambat calendar, with grand cultural processions organised on the occasion.

The people of the Newar community, mainly from Kathmandu Valley, have been celebrating Nepal Sambat as New Year's Day for centuries. Nepal Sambat or era is the indigenous calendar of the Himalayan nation.

A grand procession showcasing various cultural idols was organised in the country, and traditional music bands performed to observe Nepal era New Year 1145.

Prime Minister KP Sharma Oli also attended a celebration rally at Basantapur Durbar Square here on Saturday.

### MAURITIUS REVERSES BAN ON SOCIAL MEDIA

**Port Louis, Nov. 2:** Mauritius on Saturday reversed its decision to block social media until its election that had been prompted by a wire-tapping scandal. The ban on social media had been in place for 24 hours, with users on the Indian Ocean island unable to access Facebook, Instagram, TikTok and X.

It was due to last until November 11 — the day after the general election.

The ban was prompted by the release of secret recordings of phone calls by politicians, journalists, members of civil society and even foreign diplomats that began to emerge online last month.

The office of Prime Minister Pravind Kumar Jugnauth had said that "the national security and integrity of our republic and our international partners may have been compromised" by the leaks. But in a statement on Saturday, the Information and Communications Authority said the ban had been lifted.

# Pollution level in Lahore 40 times above limit of WHO

Diesel fumes, agri burning smoke, winter cooling have caused smog

**Lahore, Nov. 2:** Air pollution in Pakistan's second biggest city Lahore soared on Saturday, around 40 times over the level deemed acceptable by the World Health Organization (WHO), data from IQAir showed.

The level of deadly PM2.5 pollutants — fine particulate matter in the air that causes the most damage to health — peaked at 610, with a reading above 15 in a 24-hour period considered unhealthy by the WHO.

The air quality index, which measures a range of pollutants, also spiked at 1,067.

"We have never reached a level of 1,000," Jahangir Anwar, a senior environmental protection official in Lahore told AFP.

For days, Lahore has been enveloped by smog, a mix of fog and pollutants caused by low-grade diesel fumes, smoke from seasonal agricultural burning and winter cooling.

On Wednesday, the provincial environmental protection agency announced new restrictions in four "hot spots" in the city.



The level of deadly PM2.5 pollutants — fine particulate matter in the air that causes the most damage to health — peaked at 610, with a reading above 15 in a 24-hour period considered unhealthy by the WHO.

Tuk-tuks equipped with polluting two-stroke engines are banned, as are restaurants that barbecue without filters.

Government offices and private companies will have half their staff work from home starting

Monday. Construction work has been halted and street and food vendors, who often cook over open fires, have been told to close at 8 pm.

Smog is particularly pronounced in winter,

when cold, denser air traps emissions from poor-quality fuels used to power the city's vehicles and factories at ground level.

— AFP

### PAK PARL BODY OKAYS BILL TO UP NUMBER OF SC JUDGES TO 25

**Islamabad, Nov. 2:** A Pakistan parliamentary panel has approved a controversial bill to increase the number of judges in the Supreme Court from 17 to 25 despite its disapproval by the opposition lawmakers who termed it an attempt to manipulate the judiciary.

The Supreme Court (Number of Judges) (Amendment) Act 2024 which sought to increase the number of judges from 17 to 25 was moved in the Senate last month by independent senator Abdul Qadir to deal with the rising number of "pending cases".

It was then referred to the Senate Standing Committee on Justice, which met on Friday and its meeting was chaired by Senator Farooq H. Naek of the Pakistan Peoples Party.

— PTI

# Serbia to probe train station roof fall that killed 14

**Novi Sad, Nov. 2:** Serbia wound up a rescue operation and opened an investigation on Saturday into a roof collapse that killed 14 people and injured three at a railway station in the northern city of Novi Sad.

At least two children were among those killed in the disaster, which happened on Friday when a length of roofing along the entrance to the station collapsed on a sunny day.

Rescuers worked into the night, using heavy construction machinery, to free the dead and wounded from under the rubble.

The station in the city about 70 km (40 miles) northwest of Belgrade underwent renovations in 2021 and 2022.

Other minor works continued until July this year when the transport ministry said a total of 16 million euros (\$17.33 million) had been invested in the renovation.

Transport minister Goran Vesic said on Saturday the inquiry, opened by prosecutors in Novi Sad, would include the state Traffic Institute, state railway company and the Chinese consortium that undertook the renovation work.

"The investigation will determine ... who made decisions and put seals and signatures, who was in charge of controlling the (quality of) works," Vesic said in a TV broadcast.

Vesic, state Serbian Railways company, the state Traffic Institute and the Chinese consortium — China Railway International Co. Ltd and China Communications Construction Company (CRIC-CCCC), that renovated the building, all said on Friday that the part of the building that collapsed was not a part of the works.

Interior minister Ivica Dacic said 20 people would be interviewed by authorities on Saturday in connection with the disaster, including people from the ministry in charge and the state railways operator.

"The documentation about the building will (also) be obtained ... about who made the decisions," Dacic added.

Authorities declared Saturday a national day of mourning. The University Clinical Center (UKC) in Novi Sad said in a statement that the three injured people remained in intensive care.

— Reuters

# March demands protection for Hindus in B'desh

**Dhaka, Nov. 2:** Hundreds marched in Bangladesh's capital on Saturday to demand protections for Hindus and other minorities who say they have suffered violence and threats since the ouster of autocratic premier Sheikh Hasina.

Hasina's toppling in an August student-led uprising saw a spate of reprisals on Hindus, who were seen as disproportionate supporters of her regime. The caretaker government that replaced her, led by Nobel laureate Muh-

ammad Yunus, has acknowledged and condemned attacks on Hindus but said in many cases they were motivated by politics rather than religion.

Regular protests in the months since claim that attacks are continuing and have demanded action from Yunus' administration, an "advisory council" tasked with implementing democratic reforms and staging fresh elections. "It's deeply regrettable that the council of advisors do not acknowledge the sufferings

minorities have endured," Hindu civic leader Charu Chandra Das Brahmachari told AFP.

"I have witnessed the atrocities against them — their temples, businesses, and homes." Protest organisers have urged the interim government to introduce a law to protect minorities and mandate a minimum share of minority representation in government, among other demands.

Tensions have been inflamed by the filing of sedition charges this week

It's deeply regrettable that the council of advisors do not acknowledge the sufferings minorities have endured. I have witnessed the atrocities against them — their temples, businesses, and homes."

— CHARU CHANDRA DAS BRAHMACHARI  
Hindu civic leader

against 19 people who participated in an earlier minority rights rally in the port city of Chittagong. The group was

accused of disrespecting the Bangladeshi national flag by hoisting a saffron flag — the emblematic colour of the Hindu faith — to fly above it.

"Framing our leaders with false charges, like sedition, has made us sceptical of the government's intentions," protest member Chiranjit Goswami told AFP. Hindus are the largest minority faith in mostly Muslim Bangladesh, accounting for around eight per cent of the population. Attacks have also been

reported on Sufi shrines, with suspicion falling on Islamists seeking to curb alternative expressions of the Muslim faith.

Saturday's demonstration came a day after 10,000 people attended a similar rally in Chittagong.

Minority leaders have pledged to hold more protests in the coming weeks. Hasina, 77, fled by helicopter to neighbouring India in August as protesters flooded Dhaka's streets in a dramatic end

to her iron-fisted rule. Her government was accused of widespread human rights abuses, including the extrajudicial killing of thousands of her political opponents during her 15-year rule.

A top UN official on Wednesday urged a probe into the killings in Bangladesh during protests that led to the downfall of ousted Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina, while also calling for minority protection and a national process of truth and healing.

— AFP

# Overwrought and under-imagined!



Kushalrani Gulab

review

Each time I picked up *Intermezzo* by Sally Rooney, I got caught in the feelings the author's words elicited. These were not good feelings. They were feelings of acute loneliness, painfully but exquisitely drawn out to such a point that I had no option but to close the book after a few pages or shatter into a million pieces.

Each time I put the book down, I swore I would not read it any longer. It was just too much. Too intense. It made my heart hurt. I needed more from me than I had the emotional capacity to give.

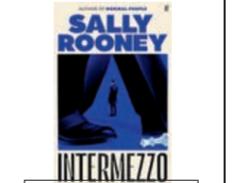
But each day, I'd be consumed with wanting to know what was happening in the lives of Ivan and Peter, the two protagonists of the book. And so, a month later, by dint of reading just a few pages a day, here is my review.

*Intermezzo* begins with the funeral of Peter and Ivan's father, where the two brothers meet again after years. They haven't been close since Ivan's teens, when his childhood adoration of his much older brother morphed into antagonism. Now Peter is a barrister, worldly and sophisticated, while chess champion Ivan hasn't been doing well lately and suffers from the social awkwardness associated with genius.

Both men are desperately lonely in their own ways. Ivan has only ever felt loved by his father and his dog, which he cannot keep in his rented flat. He's had sex but has never had intimacy and doesn't expect he ever will. Peter has had what Ivan wants, but that relationship fell apart when his girlfriend fell sick with a condition in which sex causes pain. Sylvia let Peter go and he now has a

much younger girlfriend, Naomi.

Suddenly Ivan finds love and intimacy. With a woman even older than Peter. A woman with her own problems and fears. Peter, meanwhile, falls into a pattern in which he switches between Naomi and Sylvia. As soap opera-like as this sounds however, there's no blatant drama. Peter and Ivan simply live their everyday lives, their



INTERMEZZO  
By SALLY ROONEY  
Faber & Faber  
pp. 448; ₹699

thoughts carrying their stories.

These thoughts though, are presented in such forensic detail that no reader of the book can escape the pain the two men feel deep in their souls; pain that, I have no doubt, every person on the planet feels; pain that most people will do almost anything to avoid.

And this is why, much as I appear to extol the virtues of this book, one thought beats staccato-like in my brain: I will never read Sally Rooney again. Because this book? It hurt.

*Kushalrani Gulab is a freelance editor and writer who dreams of being a sanyasi by the sea*

## SHORT TAKES

### Task cut out for India 'A' vs Oz

**Mackay, Australia:** India 'A's first-innings batting collapse came back to haunt them as Australia 'A' nosed ahead of the visitors after being set a target of 225 on the third day of the first 'Unofficial Test' here on Saturday. The home team was 139/3 at stumps, needing another 86 runs for win as the Indian bowlers could not get enough wickets to put pressure on the Australians in their second essay. Skipper Nathan McSweeney and Beau Webster were batting on 47 and 19, respectively, at the close of play. India were all out for 312 in their second innings, a far better batting display than their forgettable outing on the first day, when they crumbled for 107. Resuming the day on 96, Sai Sudharsan (103) duly completed his century but Devdutt Padikkal fell for 88, adding only eight runs to his overnight total of 80 after having stitched a partnership of 196 runs for the third wicket with the former.

**Brief Scores:** India 'A' 107 & 312 in 100 overs (Sai Sudharsan 103, Devdutt Padikkal 88, Fergus O'Neill 4/55, Todd Murphy 3/77) vs Australia 'A' 195 & 139/3 in 50.3 overs (Nathan McSweeney 47 batting, Marcus Harris 36).

### Krishna wins gold at U-19 Worlds

**New Delhi:** Young Indian boxer Krishna Verma won the gold in the women's 75kg category while five other signed off with silver medals at the inaugural U-19 World Championships organised by World Boxing in Colorado, USA. While Krishna notched up a unanimous 5-0 decision over Germany's Simon Lerika in the 75kg summit clash. Chanchal Chaudhary (women's 48kg), Anjali Kumari Singh (women's 57kg), Vini (women's 60kg), Akanksha Phalasal (women's 70kg) and Rahul Kundu (men's 75kg) lost their respective finals. Chanchal had to settle for a second place finish after she was disqualified while Anjali went down 0-5 to Mia-Tiah Ayton of England. Akansha and Rahul lost by an identical 1-4 margin to Lilly Deacon of England and USA's Awinongya Joseph respectively. Meanwhile, Vini lost via 2-3 split verdict to England's Ella Lonsdale.

Five female boxers and a male boxer will fight for gold in the final on Saturday. — PTI

### Bopanna-Ebden out of Paris meet

**Paris:** Veteran Indian tennis player Rohan Bopanna and his Australian partner Matthew Ebden made a quarterfinal exit from the Paris Masters after suffering a hard-fought defeat in the men's doubles contest here. The third seeded Indo-Australian duo toiled for one hour 46 minutes before going down 6-7, 5-7 to the Dutch-Croatian combo of Wesley Koolhof and Nikola Pietrangeli at the ATP 1000 event on Friday. There was little separating the two pairs with the first set going into tiebreaker. Bopanna and Ebden had a few chances but Koolhof and Pietrangeli saved set points to win the tiebreak and take a 1-0 lead. The second set was also closely well contested, but Bopanna and Ebden provided Koolhof and Pietrangeli with a crucial break in the 12th game following a double fault. — PTI

### Edathodika bids adieu to football

**Malappuram, Kerala:** Former Indian defender Anas Edathodika has announced his retirement from professional football, drawing curtains on his 17-year senior professional career. The 37-year-old has represented India on 21 occasions, besides featuring in 172 competitive club encounters. Taking to his social media handles on Saturday, Edathodika shared an emotional video of his accolades, besides penning a passionate note. "It's time to hang up my boots and say farewell to professional football. From the fields of Malappuram to stadiums across India, this journey has been a dream come true," he noted. Considering Edathodika's senior career, he began his stint with Mumbai FC in 2007 before moving to Pune FC in 2011. In 2015, Edathodika made his Indian Super League debut with Delhi Dynamos. Since then, Edathodika has played for other top clubs like Mohun Bagan (2017, on loan), Jamshedpur (2017-18 & 2021-22), Kerala Blasters (2018-19) and ATK (2019-20). Edathodika made his India debut in 2017. — PTI

**Mumbai, Nov. 2:** New Zealand lead by 143 runs in their second innings, after Indian spinners Ravindra Jadeja and Ravichandran Ashwin triggered an opposition collapse in a keenly fought third Test on Saturday.

The tourists were 171/9 on Day Two after Jadeja bowled Matt Henry for his fourth wicket of the innings at the stroke of stumps on a sharply turning track in Mumbai.

Ajaz Patel was batting on seven after he took five wickets to help bowl out India for 263, with the hosts taking a slender lead of 28.

New Zealand won the first two matches to seal their first-ever Test series triumph in India and now eye a 3-0 sweep.

India's Shubman Gill, who hit 90, said: "It's all about one good partnership when you are chasing a total which is around 150-160. If you have one partnership about 70-80 runs the match is done and dusted."

Will Young stood out with his 51 before being caught and bowled by Ashwin, who took three wickets with his off-spin.

Fast bowler Akash Deep struck in the first over when he bowled skipper Tom Latham for one to keep up India's fight after Gill's knock.

Washington Sundar sent back Devon Conway for 22, and Ashwin dispatched Rachin Ravindra for four, as New Zealand slipped to 44/3.

But Young and Daryl Mitchell put on 50 runs to resist the Indian attack, which hit back through Jadeja's left-arm spin.

Jadeja got Mitchell out for 21, with Ashwin taking a stunning catch while running backwards from mid-off, and soon the bowler dismissed Tom Blundell.

#### GILL HAVING FUN

Earlier Ajaz's heroics — at the same venue where he claimed all 10 wickets in a Test innings in 2021 — helped end India's reply to their 235 in the second session.

Gill and overnight partner Rishabh Pant, who hit 60, stood out as they counter-attacked in a stand of 96 while Sundar smashed an unbeaten 38 off 36 balls.

"I was honestly trying to have fun in the middle even if it was difficult — enjoy the difficult moments. If I was to put too much pressure on myself then I am losing on the art of batting," said Gill.

Off-spinner Glenn Phillips struck soon after lunch to send back Jadeja, caught at slip for 14.

Ajaz got Sarfaraz Khan caught behind for a duck in the next over.

Gill took on the spinners with boundaries in the next few overs before Ajaz had him caught at slip.

Sundar and Ashwin took India into the lead before Ajaz got Ashwin out for his sixth career five-wicket haul. — PTI

## Chase won't be easy, we have to bat well: Ashwin

**Mumbai, Nov. 2:** Senior off-spinner Ravichandran Ashwin admitted that a chase of around 150 won't be very easy for the Indian batters on a not-so typical Wankhede turner, where the track is behaving differently at two ends.

New Zealand ended the second day at 171 for 9 in their second innings with an overall lead of 143 which many like former India captain and head coach Anil Kumble believes is a challenging target if one factors in the track.

"Hopefully not many, we should wrap it up with one or two runs here and there. Any runs saved in this innings is going to be much more critical. It's not going to be easy, we'll have to bat really well," Ashwin said in a snap interview for Jio Cinema on Saturday. What surprised Ashwin is the nature of low bounce, not exactly synonymous with red soil Mumbai surfaces

# TAILSPIN!

## Spinners steal the show on Day 2, NZ take lead



India's Akash Deep celebrates the dismissal of New Zealand captain Tom Latham on the second day of the third and final Test at the Wankhede Stadium in Mumbai on Saturday. — DEBASISH DEY

### SCOREBOARD

**New Zealand 1st Innings: 235**  
**India 1st Innings (overnight 86/4):** Yashasvi Jaiswal b Patel 30, Rohit Sharma c Latham b Henry 18, Shubman Gill c Mitchell b Patel 90, Mohammed Siraj lbw b Patel 0, Virat Kohli run out 4, Rishabh Pant lbw b Sodhi 60, Ravindra Jadeja c Mitchell b Phillips 14, Sarfaraz Khan c Blundell b Patel 0, Washington Sundar not out 38, Ravichandran Ashwin c Mitchell b Patel 6, Akash Deep run out 0. Extras (lb-1, nb-2) 3. **Total (all out in 59.4 overs)**

**263.**  
**Fall of wickets:** 1-25, 2-78, 3-78, 4-84, 5-180, 6-203, 7-204, 8-227, 9-247.

**Bowling:** Matt Henry 8-1-26-1, William O'Rourke 2-1-5-0, Ajaz Patel 21.4-3-103-5, Glenn Phillips 20-0-84-1, Rachin Ravindra 1-0-8-0, Ish Sodhi 7-0-36-1.

**New Zealand 2nd Innings:** Tom Latham b Akash Deep 1, Devon Conway c Shubman Gill b Washington Sundar 22, Will Young c b Ashwin 51, Rachin Ravindra st Pant b Ashwin 4, Daryl

Mitchell c Ashwin b Jadeja 21, Tom Blundell b Jadeja 4, Glenn Phillips b Ashwin 26, Ish Sodhi c Kohli b Jadeja 8, Matt Henry b Jadeja 10, Ajaz Patel not out 7. Extras (b-12, lb-4, nb-1) 17. **Total (For 9 wickets in 43.3 overs) 171.**

**Fall of wickets:** 1-2, 2-39, 3-44, 4-94, 5-100, 6-131, 7-148, 8-150, 9-171.

**Bowling:** Akash Deep 5-0-10-1, Washington Sundar 10-0-30-1, Ravichandran Ashwin 16-0-63-3, Ravindra Jadeja 12.3-2-52-4.

## AJAZ FEELS BATTING WILL BE CHALLENGING ON DAY 3

**Mumbai, Nov. 2:** New Zealand have just one wicket and an overall lead of 143 runs in hand but spinner Ajaz Patel is certain that life will not be easy even for Indian batters while chasing a small total on a Wankhede track that is deteriorating fast. Patel, who claimed 5/103 in India's first innings, said how the third day will pan out will depend on how the wicket behaves in the first session. "Whatever we score, we're going to have to try and do our best to restrict India but it'll be interesting to see how the wicket continues to play," Patel said when asked if New Zealand have enough on the board.

"It's turning quite sharply, it's inconsistent in terms of how much it does turn and bounce, but as a spinner it's encouraging as well that you're going to get something out of the surface and for batting it's quite challenging. It is certainly turning from both ends, it's just the bounce is a little bit variable, so from a batting perspective that can be a challenge as well," he said.

Patel, though, said the pitch hasn't been as favourable to the spinner in the morning. "Whether that's due to the rolling, or whether that's due to the heat and the wicket drying up throughout the day, I'm unsure. It'll be interesting to see how that wicket plays tomorrow morning, whether it kind of reacts the same way or whether it's a little bit different." — PTI

Patel, though, said the pitch hasn't been as favourable to the spinner in the morning. "Whether that's due to the rolling, or whether that's due to the heat and the wicket drying up throughout the day, I'm unsure. It'll be interesting to see how that wicket plays tomorrow morning, whether it kind of reacts the same way or whether it's a little bit different." — PTI



R. Ashwin celebrates the dismissal of New Zealand's Glenn Phillips on Saturday. — AP

## Kohli could stay at RCB till 2027

**Bengaluru, Nov. 2:** Virat Kohli has dropped elaborate hints that he would like to continue playing competitive cricket till 2027 with an aim to complete 20 years with Royal Challengers Bengaluru after being retained by the franchise for a hefty fee of ₹21 crore.

Having entered the twilight zone of his illustrious career, speculations are rife about how long the 36-year-old would continue in top flight cricket having endured a prolonged lull for the last four years since the start of Covid-19.

Kohli has been playing for RCB ever since IPL's inception in 2008 and is the leading run-scorer in the competition, amassing over 8,000 runs at a healthy if not spectacular strike rate of 131.97, including eight hundreds and 55 fifties.

"At the end of this cycle, it is going to be 20 years that I am going to be playing for RCB and that in itself is a very, very special feeling for me," Kohli told RCB Bold Diaries indicating that he aims to continue for at least another three years till 2027.

"I have never thought that I am going to play so many years for one team, but the relationship has truly become special over so many years," he said.

He reiterated that he doesn't see himself playing for any other franchise.

"I don't see myself anywhere other than RCB, and I am very happy that it happened. I am very excited that I got a chance



to create a strong new squad in this auction, something that we are really looking forward to as a franchise, as a team," Kohli said in RCB Bold Diaries video.

He also pondered on the fact that he shared a close bond with the franchise and its fans, while his goal would be to win the elusive title.

"I am super excited as ever as everyone knows what RCB means to me. It's been a very, very special relationship over so many years, which continues to grow stronger, and what I have experienced playing for RCB is truly special. I hope that the fans and everyone who's connected to the franchise feel the same way," he said.

"I am also just looking forward to this cycle. Obviously, the goal is to win the IPL title at least once in the next cycle," he continued.

He promised that RCB will leave no stone unturned to win their elusive IPL title.

"We are going to give it our best shot as always and try to make everyone proud of the way we play our cricket. A big shout out to the fans for your unwavering support over so many years. I am really grateful, really thankful," Kohli concluded. — PTI

Published by K. Sudhakar for and on behalf of Deccan Chronicle Holdings Limited at Jawaharlal Nehru National Youth Centre, 219 Deen Dayal Upadhyay Marg, New Delhi 110 002. and Printed by him at BFL Infotech Limited, C-9, Sector-III, Noida - 201301. Editor - Kaushik Mitter, RNI Registration number 57290/94 Price in Nepal - Nep.Rs. 20.00 per copy.

**Call to protect the nation, mother cow and Sanatan Dharma**  
**Patanjali's Swadeshi campaign is the only solution**

Spirit of nation building drives Patanjali which offers every item needed from morning to evening in the day-to-day life. Thus, there's no need to make yourself and the country sick and helpless by bringing ordinary quality and standard items to your home. Join Patanjali yourself and make at least ten others join it. Please spread all the facts and truths given here to millions of people and uphold your yoga dharma, national dharma and Sanatan dharma.

**Choose the Best** Why should you use the costly and mostly chemical-based products of foreign companies when you have the option of choosing the best Patanjali Chyawanprash, Patanjali Honey that meets more than 100 parameters of purity, and the best Patanjali cow ghee that meets 60 types of quality parameters, Patanjali milk biscuits which are made with cow milk and free from refined flour and unhealthy fats. 100% pure mustard oil, all spices and all high quality items of kitchen and bathroom; like the best hair care- Kesh Kanti, the best dental care- Dant Kanti, the best skin care- Aloe Vera, the best floor cleaner Gonyle etc. besides food and HPC products.

**Patanjali's contribution to national service** Patanjali is the only such institution in India, whose basic principle is 'Prosperity for charity'. The ultimate beneficiary of Patanjali company is the country. Yogirishi Swami Ramdev, Pujya Acharya Balkrishna and hundreds of learned and capable sanyasis at Patanjali have devoted their entire life in the service of Mother India. Such example cannot be found even in the slightest in any foreign company. As an aware citizen of this country, ponder over what the MNCs running empires worth lakhs of crores of rupees are doing for the country? The countrymen must ask what many Indian and foreign companies have done for the country.

**Account of what you took and what we gave** When you bought Patanjali Cow Ghee, then we succeeded in serving lakh of cows. When you bought food products, Chyawanprash, Honey and products like Dant Kanti, Kesh Kanti, Aloe Vera Gel etc., we gave you the world's best Gurus. World class institutions, worth thousands of crores of rupees, viz. the Patanjali Acharyakulam, Patanjali University (NAAC A+), Patanjali Gaushala, Patanjali Research Centre, could be established with your contributions, support and blessings to engage in the service of the people of Mother India. However, adversaries of Yoga, Ayurveda and Sanatan remain engaged in plotting to defame Patanjali.

**Appeal to 100 crore Indians** Adopt yoga and make others do it and take forward Patanjali's Swadeshi campaign with full force. We assure you that we will continue to carry forward hundreds of works in the service of Mother India and humanity and will one day definitely make India a supremely prosperous country by eradicating economic slavery, and slavery of education, healthcare, ideology and cultural subjugation etc.

**Patanjali is not in business, it is doing good deeds and treatment** Patanjali has made hundreds of research and evidence based medicines and has treated crores of people suffering from diseases of liver, kidney, brain and heart, cancer as well as BP, diabetes, obesity, arthritis, asthma and disturbance of vata-pitta-kapha tridoshas etc. Publication of Patanjali's research papers in high impact research journals has for the first time lent Ayurvedic medicines the status of research and evidence based medicine. People suffering from chronic diseases must visit their nearest Patanjali centre once to get complete relief from the diseases. Also, they should come to Haridwar for seven days to rejuvenate their life. Healthy people must also come to Haridwar to live long through yoga, Ayurveda, panchkarma, shatkarma, and naturopathy treatments. Learn the eternal values and principles of Yoga, Ayurveda and Sanatan Dharma by watching Swami Ji's live program on Aastha Channel from 5 AM to 7:30 AM and 8 PM to 9:30 PM every day, and on India TV at 8 AM.

For treatment at Patanjali Wellness and Yoggram, call:- 8954666111, 8954666222, 8954666333 (Working Hours: 6 AM to 10 PM)

Get special discount of 20% till Chhath Puja

Celebrities pay tribute to fashion designer, Rohit Bal

11 >>



As Ash turns 51, Abhishek's silence noticed by all

16

>>



# 'Digi Arrest' fear grips the nation

As 'Digi Arrest' scams witness an exponential rise across the country, cyber experts caution of possible pitfalls

ROSEINA COUTINHO

It's time everyone steers clear from the 'Digi Arrest' fear. Suddenly 'digi arrest' has become the talk of the town. Many people have reportedly been scammed out of millions of rupees by impersonators and fraudsters who reach out to their victims via video calls, under the façade of a police or tax official. The scammers force their victims to stand in one place, 'freezing' their position under the false pretext of 'Digitally Arresting' them. The 'digital arrest' quagmire has become so deep and messy that recently Prime Minister Narendra Modi cautioned people against 'Digital Arrests' via his *Mann Ki Baat* radio address. The PM said: "No government agency will ever contact you via phone or video call for such an investigation."

PHOTO: FREEPIK



matter by asking the victims to do a "settlement" to avoid arrest. The 'settlement' means paying a 'fat amount' to the fake CBI or income tax officials.

## DIGI ARREST FEAR

"A digital arrest is a scam where someone pretends to belong to some police or government agency solely to scare you and have your personal details shelled out along with a huge amount to be paid," explains Himanshu Yadav, Cyber Security expert, content creator & Founder at Hackindtech. He shares how recently in India, a group of scammers posed as CBI officers and made video calls to individuals, levelling charges of illegal activities against them. They even try arbitrating the

Abhishek Parashar, Cyber-crime Investigator & Founder of Indian Cyber Club says, "At times after the victim is digitally arrested, the fraudsters may even threaten to freeze



SCAMMERS INCREASINGLY USE CALL SPOOFING TO CHANGE THE CALLER ID THAT APPEARS ON THE RECEIVER'S PHONE UNDER THE PRETEXT THAT THE NUMBER CALLING THE OTHER IS A LEGITIMATE GOVERNMENT NUMBER."

— HIMANSHU YADAV, Cyber Security Expert & Content Creator

NO GOVERNMENT AGENCY WILL EVER CONTACT YOU VIA PHONE OR VIDEO CALL FOR SUCH AN INVESTIGATION."

— PM NARENDRA MODI - *Mann Ki Baat*

bank accounts along with other social media handles or any internet-based transaction account until the victim agrees to pay the demand put forth." The 'settlement payments' are usually accepted via untraceable means. "Untraceable means such as gift cards bearing arbitrary amounts of money, bitcoins or wire transfers are usually preferred options by such fraudsters," says Abhishek.

TURN TO PAGE 10

## WORD OF CAUTION

**Verify:** Never take unsolicited calls from unfamiliar numbers at face value.

**Use Two-Factor Authentication:** Added layer of security for bank and social media accounts helps.

**Stay Cautious:** Avoid sharing Aadhaar numbers or bank details over the phone.

**Stay Updated:** Be aware of current scams and inform others about it.

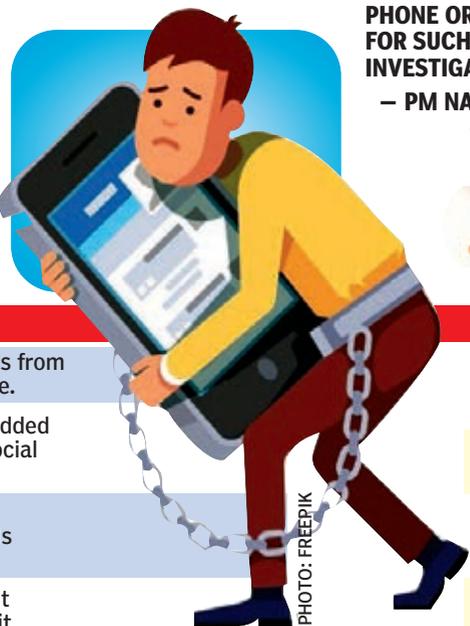


PHOTO: FREEPIK

## CYBER FRAUD

**Aug 2024:** Bengaluru cops arrested several men after they scammed a victim for more than Rs 20 million.

**7.4 lakh** complaints registered from Jan to April 2024 (National Cybercrime Reporting Portal)

**₹11,269 crore** worth of complaints were listed in the first six months of 2024 on the Home Ministry's cybercrime portal and 1930 Helpline.

**9.6 lakh** complaints were filed in 2022 and 4.5 lakh in 2021 respectively.



## Sreeleela to match steps with Allu Arjun

She's the chosen one for the special song in *Pushpa: The Rule*. In the earlier film it was Samantha who made waves with the *Oo Antava* number

B.V.S. PRAKASH

THE ASIAN AGE

Although names of Bollywood actresses like Janhvi Kapoor and Shraddha Kapoor have been doing the rounds, it is Telugu girl Sreeleela who has bagged the plum chance to match dance steps with reigning star Allu Arjun for a special song in *Pushpa: The Rule*.

"Allu Arjun is a terrific dancer and very few could match him in speed and grace," says a source and adds, "Sreeleela is a very good dancer too."



Sreeleela has become a sensation in Tollywood with her racy dancing in movies like *Dhamaka* and *Guntur Kaaram*. 'Her dances in songs like *Pulsar Bike*, and *Jinthak* in *Dhamaka* and her *Kurichi Madathapeti* song with Mahesh Babu in *Guntur Karam* became super popular," he notes.

Talking about the rumours that Bollywood divas would get to do the *Oo Antava* type song, the source says, "Being a pan-India movie, they were looking for a popular actress who can also dance, and found Sreeleela fits the bill — she's a great dancer and is also going to make her debut in Bollywood soon."

CHOKITA PAUL

THE ASIAN AGE

Emotional farewells may be a hallmark of airport settings, but travellers departing from Dunedin, New Zealand, will need to speed things up. A newly imposed 3-limit on goodbye hugs in the airport's drop-off zone aims to curb lingering embraces that could clog traffic.

Signs outside the terminal now warn, "Max hug time three minutes," advising those looking for more heartfelt goodbyes to head to the parking lot instead.

CEO Dan De Bono explained to *The Associated Press* that the cuddle cap was designed to "keep things moving smoothly" in the airport's revamped drop-off area. But there were mixed reactions. De Bono said, "We were accused of breaching basic human rights and asked how we dared to limit how long someone can have a hug."

Some travellers had welcomed the change. The signs were intended as a gentler approach, contrasting with other airports that warn of wheel clamping or fines for overstaying in drop-off zones. In the UK, some airports have even started charging fees for all drop-offs, no matter how brief.

"Three minutes is 'plenty of time to pull up, say farewell to your loved ones, and move on. The time limit is really just a polite way of saying, you know, let's keep things moving,'" said De Bono. He also pointed out that a 20-second hug is enough to trigger the feel-good hormones oxytocin and serotonin, adding that anything beyond that becomes "really awkward."

**LONGER HUGS SPEAK VOLUMES**

Radhika Dhawan, a business and mindset



**YOUR 'GOODBYE' TIME STOPS... NOW!**

IN NEW ZEALAND, TRAVELLERS AT ONE AIRPORT ARE BEING REQUESTED TO KEEP THEIR FAREWELL HUGS TO A MAXIMUM OF 3 MINUTES. THE REGULATION IS DESIGNED TO ENSURE DROP-OFF ZONES REMAIN UNOBSTRUCTED AND TO AVOID DELAYS CAUSED BY PROLONGED GOODBYES

coach finds Dunedin Airport's "Max Hug Time" rule amusing. "Airports are crossroads of love and anticipation, places where emotions race. A farewell isn't just about chemistry; it's about being fully present in those fleeting moments. Sometimes, a simple 'see you soon' feels right. Other times, we need a longer, lingering embrace

to mark the depth of a bond." For Dhawan, while Dunedin's rule might nudge travellers toward efficient goodbyes, it also signals a broader direction where productivity edges out ties. "Where do we draw the line?" she asks, challenging the fact that even small, expressive gestures are now on a timer. "A hug that speaks what words cannot stay with us far longer than the seconds it takes to share it," she asserts.

**STILL A LANGUAGE OF LOVE**

Dr Annie Baxi, a mental health practitioner, views Dunedin Airport's "3-minute hug permit" with both humour and a sense of concern over the boundaries it places on human connection. "The idea of timing a hug touches on a deeper truth about public spaces and the quiet restrictions we place on emotional expression," she explains. Many find it ironic that a time limit is placed on something so universally

“THE IDEA OF TIMING A HUG TOUCHES ON A DEEPER TRUTH ABOUT PUBLIC SPACES AND THE QUIET RESTRICTIONS WE PLACE ON EMOTIONAL EXPRESSION. A FLIGHT REPRESENTS A PERIOD OF SEPARATION, A TEMPORARY DISCONNECTION FROM LOVED ONES.”

DR ANNIE BAXI, mental health practitioner.



“IT'S ABOUT BEING FULLY PRESENT IN A FLEETING MOMENT, AND NOT ALL ABOUT THE CHEMISTRY.”

SOMETIMES, A SIMPLE 'SEE YOU SOON' FEELS RIGHT. OTHER TIMES, WE NEED A LONGER, LINGERING EMBRACE TO MARK THE DEPTH OF A BOND.”

— RADHIKA DHAWAN, business and mindset coach.

comforting, she notes. But beneath that humour lies a subtle discomfort. "The restriction feels emotionally limiting and even unnatural. Hugs bring a sense of calm and make us feel valued. To control or constrain this in public policy touches a nerve. A flight represents a period of separation, a temporary disconnection from loved ones," Baxi says.

The "3-minute hug rule" may feel both comic and bittersweet, illustrating the clash between our inherent need for connection and the efficient, regulated spaces we navigate daily. It begs the question: Have we reached a stage where even the smallest gestures of affinity are regulated and streamlined?

Dhawan adds, "I couldn't help but recall the opening scene of *Love Actually*, where Heathrow Airport becomes a backdrop for tearful reunions, heartfelt smiles, and hugs — a beautifully chaotic portrayal of airport hellos and goodbyes. The idea of placing love on a timer, as with this new rule, felt both comical and absurd, as though it's somehow trying to contain the very emotions that make these farewells so deep."

**'Digi Arrest' fear grips the nation**

CONTINUED FROM PAGE 9

**EXPONENTIAL RISE**

While these scammers appear on screens with a dummy setup of police stations, tax offices or any government agency, they also don't 'copycat' uniforms of policemen while targeting their victims. PM Modi expressed concerns stating that in the first quarter of 2024 alone, Indians had lost a whopping Rs 120 crore to such scams. Himanshu says it is easier to pull off scams now because most people have shifted to online spaces for financial transactions. Scammers just have to tap in the right codes to have a bite of one's personal information or number.

A common tactic is call-spoofing. Himanshu adds, "Scammers increasingly use call

spoofing to change the caller ID that appears on the receiver's phone under the pretence that the number calling the other is a legitimate government number." He opines that such tactics help them 'appear to be' more credible. However, these very tactics complicate things for victims who feel threatened and cannot distinguish between officials and scammers.

**VICTIMS ON CHECKLIST**

Scammers are quite mindful of certain groups who perhaps, appear to be more susceptible or simply, fit the bill. Mukesh Kumar Rao, Cyber & Cloud security specialist cautions, "These scammers often target senior citizens, government employees, believing them to



have substantial financial resources along with some inclination towards avoiding any legal hurdles." He affirmingly adds, "They may also exploit social media profiles to first find victims for their personal details that can later be used over their victims for psychological manipulation." While retired officials are often a hot spot, others too,



“THEY MAY ALSO EXPLOIT SOCIAL MEDIA PROFILES TO FIRST FIND VICTIMS FOR THEIR PERSONAL DETAILS THAT CAN LATER BE USED OVER THEIR VICTIMS FOR PSYCHOLOGICAL MANIPULATION.”

— MUKESH KUMAR RAO, Cyber & Cloud security specialist

need to be wary. "Older people, students or even immigrants are common targets because they would be less likely to be in a position to take action against such perpetrators," says Himanshu.

**CAUTION OVER REGRET**

The first word of caution: Stay Calm! Prachi Chauhan, Digital

Forensics Expert, at Indian Cyber Club says, "There is no reason to rush into such things as no genuine police or government official would ask you to pay fines via gift cards or online modes right away." Look out for warning signs (red flags). The very mention of cryptocurrency payments or gift cards should be viewed with suspicion. Make sure of the organisation's website or contact details being forged by the scammer.

Abhishek adds, "Sadly, we Indians tend to be fearful 'by default' on hearing any mention of police officials or legal procedures for that matter." This lack of awareness about existing laws, too, acts as a stepping stone for scammers to feed on the fear of victims. Given the exponential rise in these cases, caution and prevention need to be on everyone's checklist.

# FAREWELL TO A VISIONARY

Rohit Bal, lovingly known as 'Gudda' by those close to him, has left the fashion world in mourning. Aged 63, he passed away Friday night following a heart attack, leaving behind a legacy as one of India's most cherished designers

In a career that spanned decades, Bal's work was composed of seamless blends of Indian heritage and modern sensibilities, that took Indian fashion beyond borders, making his name a mainstay in wardrobes of global stars and the Indian elite. Bal's presence in fashion was magnetic, drawing Hollywood icons such as Cindy Crawford and Uma Thurman, and Bollywood stalwarts like Kareena Kapoor Khan, Ranbir Kapoor, and Sonam Kapoor to his creations. Yet, what set Bal apart was his personal warmth and charisma. The news of his passing had messages from friends, muses and admirers pouring in.



Filmmaker **Karan Johar**, who recently wore one of Bal's creations, penned a moving tribute. He revealed the eerie timing: he had chosen one of Bal's outfits to wear for Diwali, not knowing it would be his last homage to the designer. Sharing photos of himself in the exquisite ivory ensemble with Bal's iconic flora and fauna embroidery, Johar wrote, "I saw Gudda's collection and show and as always marvelled at what a stunning artist, craftsman, fashion legend he is... I say this with a heavy heart and in the present tense because his art and irreplaceable contribution to the fashion industry will remain forever..."

Just last month, Bal took his final bow at the Lakme Fashion Week X FDCI 2024 grand finale. Frail but resolute, he navigated the runway with the help of his models, among them Bollywood star **Ananya Panday**. She had the privilege of being his muse that night, presenting him with a rose at the end of the show — a spontaneous tribute to a man who could barely walk but still commanded the stage with his undeniable presence.

Ananya shared a photo of herself with Bal from the show, captioning it simply, "Gudda," with a red heart and dove emoji. **Kareena Kapoor Khan**, too, honoured him with a throwback photo from his early days, while **Aditi Rao Hydari's** tribute said, "Rest in style, Rest in beauty."

The Fashion Design Council of India (FDCI), which Bal helped found, called him "a pioneer" whose "legacy of artistry, and innovation along with forward-thinking will live on in the fashion world." Bal fought ill health to make a grand return to the ramp at the LFW grand finale. The designer looked frail as he presented *Kaaynaat: A Bloom In The Universe*.



**Sonam Kapoor**, another loyal admirer, shared a poignant message. "Dear Gudda, I hear about your passing on my way to celebrate Diwali in your gorgeous creation that you generously lent to me for the second time. I've been blessed to have known you and worn you and walked for you multiple times. I hope you're at peace. Always your biggest fan."



"Gone too young. Rest peacefully #RohitBal," **Priyanka Chopra** wrote on her Instagram Stories. **Sabyasachi** said, "Rest in Peace Rohit Bal. You were much loved and admired by all of us at Sabyasachi."

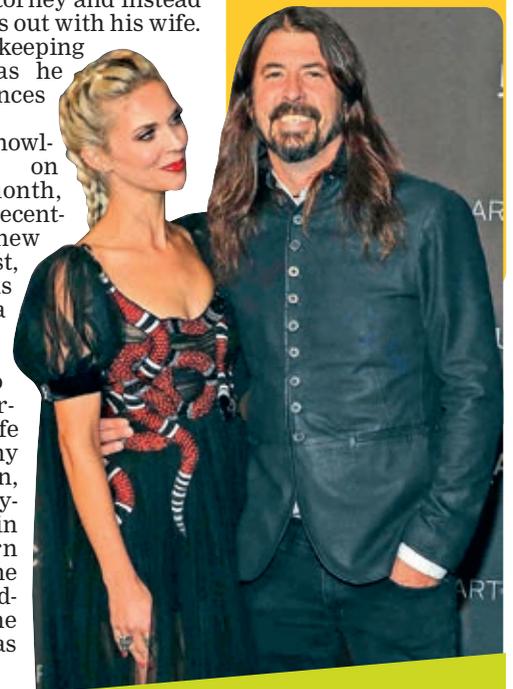
— With inputs from PTI.

# Foo Fighter's Dave Grohl drops divorce attorney

Dave Grohl, rock band Foo Fighters' iconic frontman, has parted ways with his divorce attorney in a bid to repair his marriage following his recent confession of infidelity and the birth of a child outside of his marriage. The singer is no longer working with a divorce attorney and instead hoping to work things out with his wife. Grohl's wish is on keeping his family intact as he faces the consequences of his actions.

Grohl publicly acknowledged an affair on Instagram last month, sharing that he had recently welcomed a new daughter. In his post, he expressed his intentions to be "a loving and supportive parent" to his new child and to work toward restoring trust with his wife and family. "I love my wife and my children, and I am doing everything I can to regain their trust and earn their forgiveness," he wrote, urging consideration for "all the children involved" as they navigate it.

Frontman fights to save marriage amid cheating scandal



# Floral Kareena!

Kareena Kapoor's low-key Diwali look steals the show in tropical Paradise with Saif



While Bollywood was abuzz with ornate sarees and lehengas for Diwali 2024, Kareena Kapoor took a fresh route, embracing the festive vibe in a romantic beach setting with her family. The actor, along with husband Saif Ali Khan and their sons Jeh and Taimur, is spending the holiday at an undisclosed tropical location, sharing glimpses of her idyllic "Diwali sunset" with fans.

In a series of photos posted on Instagram, Kareena looked radiant in a breezy floral maxi dress by US fashion label PatBO, an ideal choice for a laid-back yet elegant celebration. The pink and green dress features a sleeveless design with ruffles around the neckline, waist cutouts, and a belt for added structure. Its boning balances sophistication with a touch of beachy romance. Kareena captioned her post, "Diwali sunsets with my love, 2024," celebrating the holiday in her own understated style.



## YOUR NOVEMBER MONTHLY HOROSCOPE

**OSCAR CAINER**



**YOUR HOROSCOPE FOR THE WEEK BEGINNING 3 NOVEMBER 2024**

**ARIES**



March 21 - April 20

You might feel more vulnerable than usual in November; as if you've got lots to protect, but your options of making gains are limited. Yet other people, who have a different perspective, will be able to see with greater clarity. You're in an enviable situation. The advantages of your current position far outweigh the negatives. If you think positive, and plug into the Mercury/Jupiter energy, you'll be able to see beyond the irritating issue that's causing so much frustration and focus on this month's opportunity. It's big. And achievable.

Take full advantage of November's opportunities! Visit [infree.cainer.com](http://infree.cainer.com)

**TAURUS**



April 21-May 21

Since the darkest hour always happens just before the dawn, why don't we banish dawns? Waiting for the Sun to appear over the horizon might be magical, but is it worth the hassle? Of course it is! As soon as we experience its warmth and light, darkness disappears. Those middle of the night anxieties fade away. And we forget what wasn't looking so great before it appeared. November brings the grand finale of an intense situation in your world. Will it have a happy ending? Absolutely. Like a quest to watch the sun rise, it will be fun.

November is going to be amazing! For inspiring insight, visit: [infree.cainer.com](http://infree.cainer.com)

**GEMINI**



May 22-June 22

Time is elastic. Just because it ticks past doesn't mean it progresses in a regular way. We know this. We've all experienced minutes that pass like hours and vice versa. We notice it most in times of intense emotion, when we don't seem to have any control of its speed. But that doesn't mean we can't influence the way it passes. In November, with your ruler in mutual reception with Jupiter, time is more on your side than you think. If you relax, it will slow down. And if you want to get things moving faster, you can do that too.

For uplifting news about November, check out your forecasts at [infree.cainer.com](http://infree.cainer.com)

**CANCER** June 23-July 23



November brings information you've been waiting for. Great! You'll know what you need to know. But will that change the way you're feeling? Or will you decide you need to know even more? If you can stop seeking greater knowledge about a situation in your world, and absorb the intel you've already got, you'll realise that you're perfectly positioned to draw a conclusion. Is it guaranteed to lead to success? No. But it's a sure sign that you're on the right track! If you stop wondering, and start doing, you'll make excellent progress.

You're going to enjoy November. Find out why! Visit [infree.cainer.com](http://infree.cainer.com)

**LEO**



July 24-August 23

In November, there are definite indications of greater material and emotional stability. Yay! The issue is that they're likely to arise from a development that (initially at least) seems challenging. But don't panic! If you find yourself in a situation that seems to involve compromising your interests, you've got the talent to be able to negotiate into a better position. It's about exerting your Leo authority in a clever way. Using your social skills, you can bring others around to your way of thinking. And work towards success.

For news you need to hear about November, visit: [infree.cainer.com](http://infree.cainer.com)

**LIBRA**



September 24-October 23

Just because the drama in your world features somebody else doesn't mean your role is insignificant. You've got a vital part to play. The spotlight isn't on you, but you can influence the way the storyline develops, and get recognition when it comes to an end. Someone needs to express themselves. And your guiding hand is giving them the support they need. As long as they think they're leading the way, you can steer their direction. The experience you gain will enable you to shine in the new situation November brings your way.

Make November a month to remember! For valuable news, visit [infree.cainer.com](http://infree.cainer.com)

**VIRGO**



August 24-September 23

Although waiting for something is exciting, if we wait too long, our interest wanes. We might be hungry, and look forward to dinner; but if something interrupts our plans, all thoughts of food disappear. You've been yearning to make a change in your world. Will this month bring what you want? Or will it be too little, too late? With your ruler, Mercury in mutual reception with lucky Jupiter, there's every reason to be hopeful. Even if things don't go according to plan, November brings new situations and connections that will re-inspire you.

November's cosmic events could transform your life! Find out how! Visit [infree.cainer.com](http://infree.cainer.com)

**SCORPIO**



October 24-November 22

Working out the difference between a good idea and a bad one isn't as easy as we'd like it to be. Often, it's not the idea that's the problem; it's the way it's implemented. Some dreadful ideas have been successful. And lots of brilliant ones have gone by the wayside. In November, with your ruler, Pluto, moving into innovative Aquarius, with a combo of creativity, enthusiasm and determination, you'll be able to transform dull concepts into brilliant notions. And if you use discrimination, the decisions you make will be right. And wise.

Be ready for November! It's going to be action-packed! Visit [infree.cainer.com](http://infree.cainer.com)

**SAGITTARIUS** November 23-December 21



You're much in demand. Wherever you turn someone needs your attention/support. It's flattering that they think you're the person to help sort out their issues. But what about you and your needs? Who's looking after those? You're not, of course, obliged to be available to everyone, all the time. You could, of course, say 'no'. But the truth is that you enjoy being stretched to the limit. This week, the Celestial Archer brings a reward for your efforts. Amongst all your responsibilities, there are moments of respite, and fun.

Discover why this Celestial Archer is so magical for you.

**CAPRICORN**



December 22-January 20

When people aren't on the same wavelength, it's often because they're not communicating properly. They're talking more than listening. And poor communication can have the opposite effect too; it's easy to assume we're in agreement, then, when things go a bit pear-shaped, discover that we disagree on fundamental issues. In November, the legacy of mysterious Pluto leaving your sign gives you the ability to set 'wrongs' right. It's bridge-building time. You can lay aside past grievances and move towards a brighter, happier future.

For inspiring predictions to take you through the coming month, visit [infree.cainer.com](http://infree.cainer.com)

**AQUARIUS**



January 21-February 19

A key relationship is growing more tense. This isn't necessarily, by the way, a romantic connection. It could be someone you work or socialise with. Somehow, the understanding you both shared seems to have disappeared. And this is troubling you. But with transformative Pluto entering your sign (for a 20-year residency), your perceptiveness is on the up. Your increased awareness gives you the insight to be able to gently address any problems in a way that leads to resolution and reunion. It's transformation time!

November brings potential for positive change. Find out more! Visit [infree.cainer.com](http://infree.cainer.com)

**PISCES**



February 20-March 20

You're not where you were or who you were. You might be in the same physical space (and look the same), but, in your heart and mind, you've moved on. In November, you'll realise that things that used to scare you hardly bother you. And that things you were passionate about no longer hold the same interest. Yikes! If the latter sounds worrying, relax. Over the course of the month you'll find other priorities, that are worth getting really excited about. And if you turn your attention to them, you can begin to transform your life.

Make November special! For inspiring forecasts and great news, visit [infree.cainer.com](http://infree.cainer.com)

**WANT TO KNOW MORE?**

The late Jonathan Cainer's nephew Oscar, will bring you your weekly zodiac forecasts over the weeks and months to come. For more from Oscar, visit [cainer.com](http://cainer.com)



# The New Eco-friendly 'Combing Operation'

Many people are 'brushing aside' plastic combs and opting for eco-friendly combs made from bamboo, neem wood, and even ox horns

PHOTO: FREEPIK



PHOTO: ANUWOODCRAFT

## ANUSHREE CHAURASIA

In a world increasingly aware of environmental degradation, small changes in daily habits can contribute significantly to sustainability. One such shift is in the realm of personal grooming, where more and more people, especially the younger generation, are swapping out plastic combs for eco-friendly alternatives like bamboo, neem wood, and even ox horn combs. This movement isn't just about aesthetics; it's about ethics, heritage, and sustainability.

## JOURNEY BACK TO NATURE

It's refreshing to see a resurgence of traditional, natural materials in everyday products. Young men and women today are rediscovering the charm of eco-friendly grooming tools, much like those used by their grandparents. These natural combs, made from materials like bamboo, neem, and Sheesham wood, offer a more environmentally conscious alternative to plastic combs.

Poonam Raman, an ecologist emphasises the importance of these choices. "Every small decision we make in our daily lives, from the kind of comb we use to the materials we choose for our clothing or accessories, has a direct impact on the



PHOTO: FREEPIK

## HAIR THIS!

- Neem wood comb helps reduce dandruff, and promotes scalp health
- Natural oils present in ox horn combs add shine to the hair
- Sheesham (Indian rosewood) and coconut shell combs are durable and passed down from generation to generation.



PHOTO: NBS\_ARTWOOD



PHOTO: CREAMK



PHOTO: ANUWOODCRAFT

environment. By switching to sustainable alternatives like bamboo or neem combs, we reduce our reliance on harmful plastics and also encourage the growth of traditional, eco-friendly industries."

## NATURE'S BOUNTY

Combs made from bamboo, a fast-growing and renewable resource, are particularly popular. Lightweight and strong, bamboo combs glide through hair without snagging, helping to prevent breakage and split ends. Additionally, bamboo's antimicrobial properties make it ideal for daily use, keeping the scalp cleaner and healthier.

Neem wood combs, another favourite in this eco-friendly grooming trend, are prized for their medicinal properties. Neem has been used in Ayurvedic medicine for centuries due to its antifungal, antibacterial, and anti-inflammatory benefits. A neem wood comb helps reduce dandruff, promotes scalp health, and is gentle on sensitive skin. In contrast to plastic combs, which can generate static and lead to frizz, neem wood combs leave hair smooth and manageable.

## MODERN TWIST

There's also a resurgence of interest in combs made from Sheesham (Indian rosewood) and coconut shells. These materials are not only durable but carry with them cultural significance. Traditionally, Sheesham combs were passed down from generation to generation, and they were often crafted by hand, reflecting the skill of artisans who valued sustainability long before it became a buzzword.

For people with tough or curly hair, combs made from coconut shells or ox horns are particularly suitable. The density and smooth texture of ox horn combs make them perfect for detangling thick or textured hair without causing damage or breakage. The natural oils present in ox horn also add shine to the hair, making them a luxurious yet eco-friendly choice.

These traditional combs are increasingly being seen as a symbol of ethical consumerism. Many youngsters are sharing photos and



PHOTO: DEAN\_HUNT\_ART

BY SWITCHING TO SUSTAINABLE ALTERNATIVES LIKE BAMBOO OR NEEM COMBS, WE REDUCE OUR RELIANCE ON HARMFUL PLASTICS AND ALSO ENCOURAGE THE GROWTH OF TRADITIONAL, ECO-FRIENDLY INDUSTRIES."

— POONAM RAMAN, Ecologist

videos of their natural combs on Instagram and TikTok, sparking an eco-friendly haircare trend.

## THE ENVIRONMENTAL IMPACT

From an ecological perspective, plastic combs are part of the larger plastic pollution problem. Plastic doesn't decompose. Every discarded comb lies somewhere on the planet, either in a landfill, breaking down into microplastics in our oceans, or contributing to the accumulation of non-biodegradable waste. According to the World Wildlife Fund, plastic pollution is one of the greatest threats to the environment, affecting marine life and ecosystems worldwide.

Natural combs, on the other hand, are biodegradable and require fewer resources to produce. Bamboo, for instance, grows rapidly without the need for pesticides or fertilizers, making it one of the most sustainable materials on the planet. Neem, Sheesham, and coconut trees are similarly renewable, and their cultivation often supports small-scale farmers and artisans in rural communities.

Moreover, the craftsmanship involved in making these combs supports local economies, especially in

regions where artisanal skills are passed down through generations. "It's a win-win," says Raman, adding, "You're not just reducing waste but also supporting communities and preserving age-old craftsmanship."

## A HOLISTIC APPROACH

Beyond environmental benefits, using natural combs is also better for hair and scalp health. Plastic combs often generate static electricity, which can lead to frizz and hair breakage. In contrast, wooden and horn combs are gentle on the scalp, stimulate blood circulation, and help distribute natural oils evenly through the hair, leading to healthier, shinier locks. Bamboo and neem wood combs are especially good for scalp massages, a practice that helps in stress relief and relaxation. These combs promote better circulation to the scalp, which can improve hair growth and strengthen the roots.

## GREEN COMBING CULTURE

This eco-friendly combing culture is a conscious choice that blends tradition with sustainability. By opting for natural, biodegradable materials like bamboo, neem, and ox horn, individuals are not only reducing their environmental footprint but also promoting a healthier, more holistic approach to personal care. This shift is part of a broader movement toward ethical consumerism, one in which beauty and grooming products are not just about self-care, but also about caring for the planet.

PHOTO: FREEPIK

