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EYE

'I am my first critic'

Ace composer AR Rahman on collaborating with Hans Zimmer and the challenge of making music in an era of streaming platforms

BOOKS

NK Singh's life in roses and ragas



DAILY FROM: AHMEDABAD. CHANDIGARH. DELHI. JAIPUR. KOLKATA. LUCKNOW. MUMBAI. NAGPUR. PATNA. PUNE. VADODARA

Government of Keralam

സുശക്തം സനാതുരതി
GOOD GOVERNANCE WITH EMPATHY

WINDS OF CHANGE



Shri V. D. Satheesan
Hon'ble Chief Minister
Government of Keralam



For seven decades, Keralam has charted a distinctive path of development and social progress, setting benchmarks that have earned the nation's pride. As the State celebrates its 70th birthday, it stands at the threshold of new possibilities, looking ahead with renewed ambition to shape a future that is more progressive, inclusive and opportunity-driven.

Marking the first step in a journey that brings together celebrations, ideas and action is the **Festival of Keralam**, which will showcase Kerala's rich art and cultural heritage, as well as its investment opportunities. The year-long festival, to be held across major cities in India, will be inaugurated today at **4 pm at the Nishagandhi Auditorium, Thiruvananthapuram.**

The journey ahead will see Keralam harness the winds of change to strengthen social security, drive economic growth, improve everyday life and create a future where the aspirations of the new generation take centre stage.

Keralam 70

WINDS OF CHANGE

Pioneering Initiatives Shaping a New Era

- **Senior Citizens Act & Department:** Introduced the world's first-of-its-kind legislation and department to safeguard senior citizens' rights.
- **Saral Keralam:** Enacted legislation to drive regulatory reforms and promote industry and investment.
- **Enhanced Social Welfare Support:** Increased pensions and strengthened welfare schemes.
- **Priyadarshini Free Travel Scheme:** Enabled free public transport for all women through the State Transport Network.
- **Operation Toofan:** Anti-drug operations have been launched to wipe out drug networks and protect students and youth.
- **Mission Samudra:** Amended Maritime Law for maritime and port-led development initiatives.
- **Aviation Services Hub:** Leveraging the state's aviation infrastructure and connectivity to develop an aviation services hub.
- **Knowledge Valley & Research Park:** Launched to position Kerala as a global hub for higher education, research and innovation.
- **Sports Reforms:** Major legislative and structural reforms to curb partisan politics, protect athletes' rights and modernise sports administration.
- **Governance Reforms:** Undertaking participatory reforms in laws and rules to reduce litigation and ensure ease of living.

Keralam 70 film

CMO Keralam, Kerala Government
cmokeralam, iprdkerala
CMOKeralam, Kerala Government

stark.in

The World

Congo's Ebola deaths cross 5,000, fear of spread mounts

Associated Press
Bunia, October 31

DEATHS IN Congo's Ebola outbreak have topped 5,000 as the country grapples with the relentless spread of the disease and cases are recorded in other African countries, the latest government data on Saturday shows.

Data from the Congolese Ministry of Health showed that the disease has killed 5,026 people out of 10,351 infected, at a nearly 50% lethality rate. The surge is sparking concerns among experts regarding the authorities' ability to contain the deadly virus.

The latest outbreak, caused by the Bundibugyo virus, was declared in mid-May, catching authorities by surprise. They have since struggled to manage it.

It is already the second deadliest Ebola outbreak in history, second only to a two-year-long West Africa outbreak between 2014 and 2016, which killed 11,000 people across multiple countries.

KHAMENEI ORDERS ARMED FORCES TO PREPARE IMMEDIATE RESPONSE TO ANY ATTACK

Iran, Qatar hold talks amid threat of strikes by US after midterms

Doha proposed seven-day US-Iran trust-building plan, say officials

Reuters
Dubai, Cairo, October 31

IRANIAN NEGOTIATORS held talks in Doha with Qatari mediators on Saturday to discuss paths out of war in the Gulf, a source told Reuters, as diplomats try to avert a new outbreak of fighting after the US midterm elections this week.

Saturday's talks in the Qatari capital followed more than 12 hours of discussions on Friday between Iranian and Qatari envoys in Tehran, said the source, who was briefed on the negotiations and spoke on condition of anonymity. The source said the talks were being coordinated in regular contacts with Washington.



The slogan on a banner in Farsi reads, 'Flag of battle is still hoisted', at Palestine Square in Tehran on Friday. AP

Countries in the region have been anticipating that US President Donald Trump, who has held off on strikes on Iran during the weeks leading up to Tuesday's midterm elections, could restart attacks once the voting is over. Iran has repeatedly said it would respond to new attacks by striking at US and Israeli targets in neighbouring countries.

Iran's Supreme Leader Ayatollah Mojtaba Khamenei issued a statement on Saturday ordering the armed forces to be prepared to respond to any attacks. The Iranian military later announced it was taking steps to improve its readiness.

"Any level or type of threat must be met ☒with an immediate, impactful, and geographically unrestricted response," Khamenei, who has not appeared in public since replacing his father slain at the war's outset, said on Saturday in the statement posted on his official Telegram account.

He said that senior commanders had reported high readiness along the Gulf coast, in and around the Strait of Hormuz and Gulf of Oman, and on Iran's northwestern and southeastern borders.

Trump, who launched the war alongside Israel in February, has repeatedly hinted at plans to restart strikes on Iran. Last week he called on Israelis ahead of their own election to keep his wartime ally Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu in power so the two leaders can "finish the job".

But Washington has also lately taken steps to indicate it is open to diplomacy. Earlier this week, Vice President JD Vance, who led the US delegation ☒at previous rounds of talks with Iran, wrote a letter to a hardline senior Iranian security official, which the New York Times and Wall Street Journal described as an initiative to see if it was possible to restart talks.

Trump played the letter down, saying he approved it only to discuss the possibility of letting more medical supplies into Iran: "I said if you want to do that, that's ok. Basically, it's getting supplies in to help people that are not well."

In the latest Qatari-mediated discussions, the Qataris brought a proposalto Tehran a week ago for a seven-day plan, under which the US and Iran would take daily steps to build trust ahead of broader peace talks, the source briefed on the negotiations said. A senior Iranian official told Reuters on Friday that this proposal was not deemed satisfactory by Tehran.



Residents evacuated during a humanitarian mission from the Russian-occupied town of Oleshky, return to Ukrainian-controlled territory, amid Russias attack on Ukraine, on Saturday. REUTERS

Ukrainian evacuees from Russia-occupied Oleshky reach Belarus

Associated Press
Chernihiv Region, October 31

EVACUEES FROM Russian-occupied Oleshky in Ukraine arrived in Belarus on Saturday on their way back to Ukraine, part of a major rescue operation carried out under the most significant truce since Russia's full-scale invasion of Ukraine 4 years ago.

The ceasefire in Ukraine's southern Kherson region, which the White House says was brokered with help from US first lady Melania Trump, began at 3 am Tuesday and is expected to continue through Sunday evening.

It was a rare joint Russia-Ukraine humanitarian effort, a brief respite in the grim war.

Civilians from Oleshky, on the Dnipro River, began the long journey out of the war-ravaged region in bus convoys on Friday. The estimated 2,000 remaining residents were offered the choice of travelling to Ukrainian- or Russian-held territory, or remaining in the city with replenished food and medical supplies.

Russia's Ministry of Defence said those who chose to travel from Oleshky to Ukrainian-held territory were taken to the Russian city of Anapa and flown to the Belarusian city of Homel. They were accompanied by Dmytro Lubinets, Ukraine's commissioner for human rights, it said.

"We will be home soon!" said a video post from Lubinets at Homel airport.

Four planes with the evacuees landed in Belarus and the passengers would be on Ukrainian territory "within hours," said Ukrainian lawmaker Davyd Arakhamia.

Relatives waited on Saturday at the Ukrainian-Belarusian border, along with aid tents, coffee stands and even provisions to feed the pets the evacuees were bringing with them. Volunteers from organizations, including the Red Cross, Doctors without Borders and the World Central Kitchen, were also there.

Ukrainian President Volodymyr Zelenskyy on Saturday welcomed US approval of Ukraine's purchase of 500 PAC-3 Patriot interceptors but urged partners to supply the weapons from existing stocks to protect the country this winter, warning the newly authorized U.S. sale could take years to deliver.



A protester uses a slingshot during protests over living costs and education in Paris on Saturday. REUTERS

Weekend protests continue across France, thousands take to the streets

Associated Press
Paris, October 31

HUNDREDS OF thousands of mostly young protesters took to the streets across France on Saturday in a third consecutive weekend of demonstrations over living costs and education.

About 70,000 police and gendarmes were deployed across the country, and Paris marches were rerouted to the capital's edge.

France's government estimated that 3,20,000 people protested nationwide Saturday, fewer than in previous protests but still a significant turnout. Mass protests on October 17 that deteriorated into some of France's worst rioting in years drew more than 500,000 people around France, and demonstrations on October 24 drew 4,10,000, according to government estimates. Organizers' turnout estimates are much higher.

Authorities in France reported about 300 arrests nationwide so far — down from 800 at the same time last week.French Interior Minister Laurent Nuñez warned of a "very high risk" of disorder, especially after dark on Halloween. Police had arrested thousands of people following riots and looting that marred the largely peaceful protest marches the previous two Saturdays.

At Porte de Bagnolet, on the eastern edge of Paris, thousands gathered behind a line of students who led the march hand in hand.

Security agents from the CGT, one of France's largest labor unions, were keeping watch at the front of the gathering, while police were massed on side streets.

The marchers' grievances are diverse. Each group carried its own banner: high school students, climate activists and people angry about the cost of living. Corentin Cabreux, a 21-year-old student, said that he lives in a state-run student residence where "there are damp stains all along the bottom of my walls, whole sections peeling off, cockroaches everywhere, rats."

Jewish ex-cop will represent an Islamist party in Israel's newly elected parliament

Sam Metz
Sakhnin, October 31

JEWISH EX-COP and self-described Zionist might seem an unlikely candidate to represent an Islamist party in Israel's parliament.

But Yoav Segalovitz will soon be seated in the Knesset as a member of Ra'am, an Arab-led party that won eight seats in Tuesday's election.

His decision to leave a centrist Jewish-led party and join a conservative Arab-led one has drawn curiosity and condemnation in Israel, where a key question after an inconclusive election is whether Arab-led parties will be embraced by other opponents of Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu to help oust him from power.



Yoav Segalovitz

Segalovitz says the purpose of his partnership with Ra'am leader Mansour Abbas was to show that Jews and Arabs can build political coalitions across racial and religious divides.

"He's Arab. I'm a Jew. I'm secular. He's religious," he said of Abbas. "But we're all citizens of Israel. We all take part in this society. If we want to get progress here, we must go in partnership together," he said in an interview before the election.

Segalovitz was speaking about an alliance formed to help a small party win greater acceptance, but his words also have meaning within a broader debate that could determine the election's ultimate impact.

Arab-led parties won an unprecedented 18 seats in Israel's 120-member Knesset and could play a decisive role in forming a majority in the next government — if the country's Jewish-led opposition is willing to join hands with them. AP

Gen Z protests reach Germany as thousands join Halloween rallies

Miranda Murray
Atlanta, October 31

THOUSANDS OF people across Germany joined demonstrations on Saturday, as a youth-led movement inspired by protests elsewhere in Europe took to the streets to demand better education and lower living costs.

The protests follow a wave of Gen Z-led demonstrations across Europe this year. In Serbia, student-led activism helped unseat the country's long-time leader at the ballot box, while protests in France have descended into rioting and looting.

The German protests organised by the campaign group "Gen Z regelt" — Gen Z takes charge in German — are planned in 34 cities including Berlin, Frankfurt and Munich. The group says it opposes compulsory military service and wants greater investment in education as many young Germans struggle with rising costs.

Official numbers on Saturday afternoon suggested participant turnout was significantly below the 182,000 organisers initially expected. Police in Frankfurt, Munich and Berlin reported 6,000 protesters, compared with around 36,000 on the organisers' website.



Young people attend a protest by campaign a Gen Z group in Frankfurt on Saturday. REUTERS

German authorities say they expect Saturday's demonstrations, which coincide with Halloween festivities, to be largely peaceful but have warned of attempts by extremist groups to exploit the movement.

Parts of Germany's far-left scene and some groups linked to foreign extremist movements have joined efforts to mobilise support, according to the federal interior ministry.

"We all have those images from France in our minds — looting, burning houses, burning police vehicles, and attacks on police officers," said Roman Poseck, interior minister for the state of Hesse, whose capital is Germany's financial hub, Frankfurt.

"France must not be held up as a model in this regard."

Some businesses across German cities boarded up windows and planned early closures ahead of the demonstrations due to concerns over possible unrest, including along Berlin's luxury Kurfuerstendamm shopping boulevard. REUTERS

UK PM Burnham says he is 'open' to an apology for slavery, but rules out reparations

Reuters
London, October 31

BRITISH PRIME Minister Andy Burnham has said he is open to calls for a formal apology for Britain's historical role in slavery, before attending next week's Commonwealth summit at which he is likely to face demands for financial reparations.

Writing in the Guardian newspaper, Burnham said Britain was "offering a structured dialogue with those affected by the transatlantic slave trade", in which at least 12.5 million Africans were abducted and sold into slavery. "Listening to calls for a formal apology on behalf of the British state will form an important part of this process, and I am open to them," he added.

But Burnham rejected calls for financial reparations, writing: "I do not think that British people today can be held liable for historical wrongs, however heinous, that happened in a different age under different laws and in which they played no personal part."

Poland President accuses Tusk of forced takeover of country's top court

Reuters
Warsaw, October 31

POLISH PRESIDENT Karol Nawrocki on Saturday accused Prime Minister Donald Tusk of staging a forced takeover of the country's top court after the head of the court, an ally of the previous far right government, was suspended.

Late on Friday, the Constitutional Tribunal said its longest-serving judge Anna Korwin-Piotrowska had suspended Bogdan Swieczkowski, the tribunal's president and an appointee of Tusk's hard-right predecessor, and was now in charge of the court.

The move escalated a battle between Nawrocki, an ally of the previous nationalist government, and Prime Minister Donald Tusk's pro-European government over control of the judiciary. "Tonight, there was a breach of public order in the Republic of Poland and a forcible takeover of a constitutional body," Nawrocki said in a statement read by an aide outside the court early on Saturday, after the president had turned back mid-flight from a trip to Africa to address the situation.



Police officers at Polish Constitutional Court in Warsaw on Saturday. AP

He headed straight to the court where riot police were out in force as several hundred protesters demanded Swieczkowski's reinstatement. Nawrocki called for urgent political consultations.

Tusk, writing on X, said his government was seeking to restore the rule of law, which the European Union had accused his predecessors — the Law and Justice Party — of subverting.

A long-running political dispute over the Constitutional Tribunal has effectively paralysed the institution, with the pro-European government and the nationalist president refusing to recognise appointees put forward by the other side.

THE FORMER BRITISH PARATROOPER'S MISSION BEGAN AFTER RECEIVING A BIRTHDAY CARD FROM HIS FATHER, KEITH, IN THE MID-1990s

In 28 yrs of walking, Karl Bushby overcame jungle and red tape, now he's nearly home

Brian Melley
Market Resen (England) Oct 31

KARL BUSHBY has spent 28 years walking home, but as he approaches the finish Monday, it's not clear he's ready for the audacious journey to end.

Pushing a cart loaded with camping gear along a country road in northern England about 50 kilometers (30 miles) from the finish line, Bushby was uncertain of the future, anxious about the prospect of living in his mother's basement and facing an identity crisis.

"My purpose and reason for living is about to end," he said. "It's going to be difficult ... trying to blend back into a society that you just don't know anymore."

Bushby, 57, was just shy of 30 when he set out from the tip of South America on Nov. 1, 1998. Since then, he has walked 31,000 miles (50,000 kilometers) across four continents, navigated shifting ice over the Bering Strait and swam, by his own description, across the Caspian Sea and English Channel. He has crossed 30 countries to return to where he started nearly three decades ago.

Swampy jungle, scorching desert and frozen tundra slowed him down, but bureaucratic obstacles helped turn what was supposed to be a 12-year trek into the epic he calls the "Goliath Expedition."

It has taken nearly three times as long for Bushby to return to his mother, Angela, in Hull as it took the hero in "The Odyssey" to reach Ithaca.

"Odysseus was a bit of an amateur," Bushby quipped. "I'll cut him some slack. I haven't met any giant Cyclops."

The real world provided enough challenges. He faced off with a polar bear, floated through crocodile-infested waters to avoid a guerrilla conflict in Colombia, was attacked by a mob in Peru and was rescued by helicopter from an ice floe drifting out to sea.

The former British paratrooper's mission began after receiving a birthday card from his father, Keith, in the mid-1990s.



British adventurer Karl Bushby near Market Rasen, Lincolnshire

His father mentioned a debate among special forces soldiers about whether a person could walk from London to New York via the Bering land bridge once used by early humans.

Bushby traced a continuous route across Europe, Asia and North America and then extended it to the southern tip of Chile.

"With that under my skin, there was no going back," he said.

Unlike many global expeditions that use transport to cross oceans, Bushby imposed two rules: no transportation could be used to move forward, and he had to return home on foot.

He set out with $500 and soon found himself battling hurricane-force winds on the Patagonian Steppe. He crossed the dangerous Darién Gap in 2001 and spent 18 days in jail after entering a restricted border zone in Panama.

The Bering Strait crossing in 2006 nearly ended the expedition. Bushby and American adventurer Dimitry Kieffer survived a plunge into freezing water and were airlifted to safety before being detained for entering Russia illegally.

Russia became one of his biggest challenges. Visa problems and harsh weather stretched his journey there to nearly a decade. When Russia denied him a visa in 2012, Bushby walked from Los Angeles to the Russian Embassy in Washington in protest, eventually securing the necessary paperwork.

He also endured surveillance in China, delays caused by the pandemic and a 31-day crossing of the Caspian Sea after geopolitical barriers blocked routes through Russia and Iran. A weak swimmer, he relied on a flotation vest and wetsuit, using a self-invented technique he calls "float-timming."

Romance also altered the timeline. Relationships with women from Colombia and Japan ended in heartbreak, strained by his nomadic life.

The expedition has been equally hard on his family. Bushby's son, from an early marriage that ended in divorce, is now in his mid-30s after largely growing up without him. Although his father met him when he crossed the English Channel, Bushby has not seen his mother in a decade. AP

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NK Singh's life in roses and ragas

DAILY FROM: AHMEDABAD, CHANDIGARH, DELHI, JAIPUR, KOLKATA, LUCKNOW, MUMBAI, NAGPUR, PATNA, PUNE, VADODARA

Happening today

PRESIDENT DROUPADI
Murmu will attend the 'Hirak Jayanti' (diamond jubilee) celebrations marking the 60th year of formation of Haryana, at Kurukshetra.

THE INDRAVATI TIGER
Reserve in Chhattisgarh's Bastar region is set to welcome tourists for the first time in four decades. The reserve, established under Project Tiger in 1983, was largely inaccessible due to left-wing extremism.

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NATION PAGE 8



ED ARRESTS AZAM KHAN MINUTES AFTER HIS RELEASE FROM RAMPUR JAIL

NATION PAGE 10

FILMMAKER SANJAY GUPTA, KNOWN FOR *KAANTE* AND *ZINDA*, DIES

6-YEAR-OLD CRITICAL AFTER ASSAULT BY CLASS 3 STUDENT IN HARYANA SCHOOL

OPPOSITION RALLY AT RAMLILA MAIDAN IN DELHI TODAY

INDIA bloc holds 'impeachment' of CEC; PM calls Opp 'obstructionist'

Kharge levels six charges against Gyanesh Kumar, Rahul calls for trial

Asad Rehman
New Delhi, October 31

THE OPPOSITION INDIA bloc on Saturday held a symbolic "public impeachment" of Chief Election Commissioner (CEC) Gyanesh Kumar over various alleged electoral irregularities and the Special Intensive Revision (SIR) of electoral rolls, with Lok Sabha Leader of Opposition (LoP) Rahul Gandhi saying that the event was a "political weapon" against those who "colluded to destroy the votes of the Indian people".

The mock impeachment session, presided over by former Lok Sabha Speaker Meira Kumar, was held at Congress president and Rajya Sabha LoP Mallikarjun Kharge's 10, Rajaji Marg residence in the national capital.

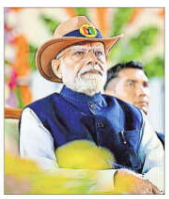
The Opposition leaders and MPs along with several civil society members passed a resolution to "impeach" Gyanesh Kumar, accusing him of "deleting votes to steal elections" and demanding that he be tried in court for "treason" and jailed.

Wrapping up the proceedings, Rahul said it was "strange

»CONTINUED ON PAGE 2



Former Lok Sabha Speaker Meira Kumar presides over a symbolic 'public impeachment' of Chief Election Commissioner Gyanesh Kumar organised by the Opposition INDIA bloc at Congress chief Mallikarjun Kharge's residence in New Delhi, Saturday. PTI



PM Narendra Modi at 'Rashtriya Ekta Diwas' celebrations in Ekta Nagar, Gujarat, Saturday. PTI

Forces conspiring to divide India, social media used as weapon: Modi

Aditi Raja
Kevadia, October 31

ON A day when the INDIA bloc held a "public impeachment" of Chief Election Commissioner Gyanesh Kumar, Prime Minister Narendra Modi on Saturday said the Opposition had turned into an "obstructionist force" (*avrodh paksh*). Warning against forces "engaged in conspiracies to divide" the country, he said social media was "being used as a weapon, rumours being spread, and efforts being made to tarnish India's image".

Speaking at the Rashtriya Ekta Diwas celebrations to mark the birth anniversary of Sardar Vallabhbhai Patel, at the Statue of Unity in Ekta Nagar in Narmada district of Gujarat, Modi also warned against "*dimagi* (intellectual) Naxals", and underlined the need to move forward towards a "secular civil code".

"In a democracy, the responsibility of the Opposition is to oppose government policies, but it is our misfortune that the Opposition (*virodh paksh*) has become an obstructionist force (*avrodh paksh*)... Driven by frustration and

»CONTINUED ON PAGE 2



External Affairs Minister S Jaishankar with US Secretary of State Marco Rubio, US Ambassador to India Sergio Gor and India's Ambassador to the US Vinay Mohan Kwatra in Atlanta. PTI

AT G20 FOREIGN MINISTERS' MEET

Jaishankar raises energy crisis, flags sanctions, attacks

'Deliberate attacks on energy trade, infra calculated strategy to hold prices hostage'

Shubhajit Roy
New Delhi, October 31

EXPRESSING CONCERN over the increasing "distortions of energy markets through obstacles, sanctions and chokepoints", External Affairs Minister S Jaishankar has said that the "deliberate attacks" on energy infrastructure and trade are a "calculated strategy" to hold prices hostage.

Speaking at the second plenary session of the G20 Foreign Ministers' meeting in Atlanta, US, on Friday, Jaishankar said there appears to be "little regard" for the predicament of low-income countries.

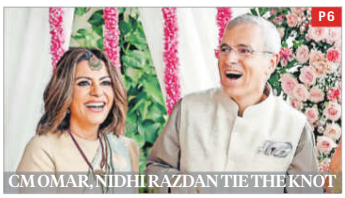
His remarks come amid the US's sanctions on the sale of Iranian oil and its recent decision to waive Russia-linked sanctions. There have been attacks on energy infrastructure and ships carrying oil and gas in both the ongoing wars in West Asia and Russia-Ukraine.

"Spoke at the 2nd Plenary of @g20org #Atlanta. Underlined that the world today stares at an energy crisis, not of production, but of unpredictability

»CONTINUED ON PAGE 2

INSIDE PAGE 6

QUAD BUILDING RELIABLE AND OPEN SUPPLY CHAINS, SAYS RUBIO



P6

CM OMAR, NIDHI RAZDAN TIE THE KNOT

Lucknow's KGMU probes police report claiming conversion pressure on campus

Manish Sahu
Lucknow, October 31



FILE

UP Police had launched a probe after claims of alleged religious conversion emerged last year

KING GEORGE'S Medical University (KGMU) in Lucknow has decided to initiate an inquiry into a report by the Uttar Pradesh Police's Special Task Force (STF) that raised allegations of staff members being harassed and, in some cases, being coerced to convert by their colleagues and seniors from the minority community.

The STF had launched an inquiry following claims about alleged religious conversion and "love jihad" that emerged last year. The Lucknow police had in January arrested Rameezuddin alias Rameez Malik, a junior resident in the university's Department of Pathology, and a medical intern in two separate cases.

Rameezuddin, who was arrested in Lucknow on January 9, faces allegations of sexually exploiting and trying to convert two women. The intern faces allegations of sexually exploiting a nursing student on the false promise of marriage.

In its inquiry report recently submitted to the state government in August, the STF is learnt to have alleged misconduct, including physical and mental harassment of female junior residents, nursing staff and a contractual employee by male nursing staff, doctors and a head of department from the minority community.

The report claims to have found instances of harassment in four different departments of KGMU.

»CONTINUED ON PAGE 2

48 lakh non-BS-VI vehicles in NCR dists, cops have task cut out as Delhi curbs begin today

Sophiya Mathew & Sakshi Chand
New Delhi, October 31

BEGINNING SUNDAY, non-BS-VI petrol and diesel vehicles registered outside Delhi will no longer be able to enter the capital. The restriction, which will be in effect for three months until January 31, 2027, will impact lakhs of older vehicles that do not meet the prescribed tailpipe emission norms.

Approximately 3.02 crore Bharat Stages-I to IV vehicles are registered in Uttar Pradesh, Haryana, and Rajasthan. Forty-eight lakh of these vehicles are registered in National Capital Region districts adjoining Delhi.

All these vehicles frequently enter and exit Delhi, often on a daily basis. Roughly three-quarters of these pre-BS-VI vehicles are two-wheelers.

Several Delhi Traffic Police officers with whom *The Indian Express* spoke acknowledged

»CONTINUED ON PAGE 2

PRE-BS-VI VEHICLES IN NCR

Segment	UP NCR	Haryana NCR	Rajasthan NCR	Combined
Two-wheelers	9.59 lakh	22 lakh	4.87 lakh	36.55 lakh
Cars/cabs	1.65 lakh	5.18 lakh	42,373	7.26 lakh
Goods vehicles	29,348	1.30 lakh	9,890	1.70 lakh
Buses	5,809	16,390	2,854	25,053
Others*	15,064	1.91 lakh	19,536	2.26 lakh
Total	**11.75 lakh**	**30.65 lakh**	**5.62 lakh**	**48 lakh**

*THREE-WHEELERS, TRACTORS, ETC; SOURCE: MINISTRY OF ROAD TRANSPORT AND HIGHWAYS

MORE REPORTS, PAGE 4

CM Mann among 40 MLAs in AAP's first Punjab poll list, focus on Malwa

Kanchan Vasdev
Chandigarh, October 31

SEEKING A headstart in the run-up to the Punjab Assembly elections slated for February 2027, the ruling Aam Aadmi Party (AAP) on Saturday announced its first list of 40 candidates, all of whom are sitting MLAs renominated from their respective seats across the state.

Chief Minister Bhagwant Mann figures in the list; he will contest the elections from his Dhuri seat in his home district Sangrur, putting to rest speculation that he may shift to another constituency.

The list was announced by AAP national secretary Pankaj Kumar Gupta following a meeting of the party's Political Affairs Committee (PAC) in Delhi, which cleared the nominees. The meeting was attended by the AAP top brass, including

»CONTINUED ON PAGE 2

EXPLAINED

Eyeing a headstart

By declaring its first list of candidates months ahead of the polls, AAP is looking to gain advantage over its rivals. It has sought to declare candidates in 'safe seats' first on basis of their performances as MLAs and public surveys.

2 foreigners die in Bengaluru 5-star hotel pool, electrocution suspected

Atiya Firdos
Bengaluru, October 31

TWO FOREIGN nationals — a German and a Slovak — died of suspected electrocution in the swimming pool of Bengaluru's Conrad Hotel, a five-star facility, Friday evening, police said. Two others were injured while attempting to rescue them.

The victims were identified as Alexander Maximilian Theiss, 57, a German national and Lufthansa crew member, and Juraj Horvat, 45, a Slovak national working as a project manager at IBM.

The injured were identified as Mathew Desantis, 41, an American national staying at the hotel, and Rahul Tiwari, 28, a hotel employee who worked as a pool attendant and lifeguard. Both were taken to Manipal Hospital for treatment and have since been discharged.

The incident occurred at the hotel's swimming pool on the third floor. Police Commissioner Seemant Kumar Singh told reporters that investigators suspect an electrical leakage into the pool.

"The area had been sealed, and technical and Scene of Crime Officer (SOCO) teams had inspected the spot. We are awaiting the Forensic Science

»CONTINUED ON PAGE 2

STORE'S REQUEST FOR SPACE ELSEWHERE HAS NOT ELICITED A RESPONSE

Shastri Bhawan being razed, Capital's first Jan Aushadhi Kendra has nowhere to go

Anonna Dutt
New Delhi, October 31

IN A corner of Shastri Bhawan in the heart of the Capital, a blue board announces Jan Aushadhi Kendra, the government's generic drug store. The one-room store has shelves stacked with the most commonly used medicines: cough syrups, paracetamol and medicines for diabetes, cholesterol, hypertension and allergies.

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Every day, employees of various ministries and labour hands from nearby construction sites walk in to buy medicines at affordable rates.

This is no ordinary store. Among the country's earliest Jan Aushadhi Kendras and the first in Delhi, it opened its doors in 2009 when Ram Vilas Paswan, the then Union Minister of Chemicals and Fertilisers, came for its inauguration.

Seventeen years later, it is set to shut shop because the building is going to be demolished and the government is yet to allocate an alternate space for the store.

Under the Central Vista redevelopment plan, all ministries and departments in Shastri Bhawan had been asked to vacate the building by September.

"While the ministries and departments have already moved out from the building, we are yet to be allocated space for the store," the Jan Aushadhi Kendra in-charge said.

"Unlike most Jan Aushadhi Stores now, which are run by private players, this one is entirely government-operated. The space and other costs such as electricity are borne by the Department of Pharmaceuticals (which runs the scheme and is under the Ministry of Chemicals and Fertilisers) and the employees are from Kendriya Bhandar," the in-charge said.

There is no other Jan Aushadhi Kendra in the vicinity – the nearest store is in Gole Market near the RML Hospital.

As the ministries and departments began leaving the premises, the store's request for space elsewhere did not elicit a response.

The first request for allotment of alternative accommodation was made in January this year when store employees wrote to the Department of Pharmaceuticals. A reminder was sent in March and then again in July.

"It has been three months since the last letter but we have not received any communication yet. No alternative space has been allocated for the store," the store in-charge said.

Until 2014, there were only 80 such stores across the country. The scheme was modified and rebranded in 2015 and 2016, allowing private players to run the stores with medicines being procured by the government.

Under the modified scheme, it is for the owner of the store to find a suitable space. The store at Shastri Bhawan had been paying a nominal rent of Rupee 1 until now.

The Ministry of Chemicals and Fertilisers, sources said, had requested the Ministry of Housing and Urban Affairs to allot a suitable space to the store to ensure there is no disruption in service. According to MoHUA sources, the process for allotting space for the Jan Aushadi Kendra is ongoing.

Currently, there are more than 19,000 stores across the country, with at least one in each district. With large stocks purchased centrally, medicines sold at these stores are 50% to 80% cheaper than the branded medicines available in the open market.



The store opened in 2009. ANONNA DUTT

- Shastri Bhawan is being demolished under the Central Vista redevelopment plan. All ministries, departments were asked to vacate the building by Sept
- Unlike most Jan Aushadhi Stores now, which are run by private players, this one is entirely govt-operated
- Three requests for allotment of alternative accommodation made since January

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INDIA bloc holds 'impeachment' of CEC

and unprecedented" that the entire Opposition had to gather in the garden of the Rajya Sabha LoP's house to discuss the CEC's impeachment as "all other institutions were shut for them".

"I fully support the motion to impeach Gyanesh Kumar, who should be tried for treason in court and justice served," he said.

"People gathered here have a message for Gyanesh Kumars of this world: You are hiding behind the institution you have sworn to protect. Remember, you can't hide behind it forever. One day, you will have to face the representatives of the people of this country," the Lok Sabha LoP said.

Claiming that Gyanesh Kumar "will not survive as CEC", Rahul said the Opposition has "enough evidence to ensure that this gentleman does not continue in office," adding that "If the BJP insists on retaining him even after we reveal, its game will be clear for everyone to see."

Rahul said 13.3 crore votes were deleted during the SIR, which indicated, he added, that 130 million voters accounting for 15% of India's electorate were deleted. "And the difference between the Opposition and those who won the 2024 elections was only 3%, which means the Election Commission itself is stating that the 2024 Lok Sabha elections were illegal," he alleged.

After Rahul's speech, the resolution to "impeach" the CEC was passed unanimously by those present by raising their hands. The Opposition members also raised slogans against Gyanesh Kumar.

Earlier in the day, while moving the "impeachment motion", Kharge levelled six charges against the CEC, accusing him of "conspiring to steal elections" and "acting at the behest" of Prime Minister Narendra Modi and Home Minister Amit Shah.

Detailing the charges against Gyanesh Kumar, Kharge alleged that he "deleted 13.2 crore voters" during the SIR exercise, "rewrote Form 6" without Parliament's approval, "seized the electoral rolls through ECINET" and "shut out the other two Election Commissioners".

Among the INDIA bloc leaders who attended the mock impeachment event were Congress Parliamentary Party (CPP) chairperson Sonia Gandhi, Congress leader Priyanka Gandhi Vadra, Samajwadi Party (SP) MP Dharmendra Yadav, TMC MP Saugata Roy, RJD leader Tejashwi Yadav, CPI(M) MP John Brittas and CPI's P Sandosh Kumar. A number of civil society members including Yogendra Yadav and Nikhil Dey, student leaders like Neha Bora, and some voters whose names have been deleted, were also present. Several of them addressed the session too.

Kharge said, "The right to vote, granted to our citizens through universal adult franchise under Article 326 of the Constitution of India, is today in grave danger".

He said the Opposition MPs had submitted motions in both Houses of Parliament to seek the CEC's impeachment, but their notices were rejected. In April this year, the presiding officers of both the Houses had rejected the Opposition members' impeachment motions to remove the CEC.

"The proposal we have brought today is aimed at safeguarding the dignity of a constitutional institution. We have no personal animosity towards the CEC. Our intention is for the Election Commission to function impartially, in alignment with the spirit of the Constitution, and to ensure that the common man's trust in it remains intact. We must prevent a situation where the voting rights of vulnerable sections, women, and the youth could be arbitrarily deleted by someone sitting in Delhi, using a computer," said Kharge.

Recalling former PM Rajiv Gandhi's decision to lower the voting age to 18 years, Kharge said the move had given young people the right to decide the country's future. He alleged that the Modi government was now threatening that right through its actions.

"The Modi government has done everything to remain in power – Sansad chori, party chori, electoral bonds and now vote chori," alleged the Congress chief.

Kharge also said that CEC Kumar was able to carry out such actions because of the Chief Election Commissioner and Other Election Commissioners (Appointment, Conditions of Service and Term of Office) Act, 2023, which, he said, provided perpetual immunity to the CEC and ECs from any punitive action.

He said the 2023 legislation was passed by the Modi government after 145 Opposition MPs were suspended from Parliament, which prevented them from participating in a debate on it. "This is shameful. Those who were working in national interest were kept out and the law was passed. This law gives the CEC immunity which even the President and Prime Minister do not have," he added.

Kharge also said the Opposition was not seeking voting rights for "ghuspaithiya (infiltrators)" as the BJP alleges, but to ensure that the voting rights of all Indian citizens are protected. "It is the BJP which is protecting 'ghuspaithiya', and the pot is telling the kettle black," he said.

The stage at the event was designed to resemble the Lok Sabha, with a wood-panelled backdrop and seats arranged in a semi-circular formation similar to the seating pattern in the House. Microphones were also installed in the first three rows.

Initiating the proceedings, Meira Kumar said the session was convened to hold a "public impeachment" of the CEC as eligible voters were being "wrongfully" removed from the electoral rolls. "When this issue is raised by the INDIA bloc, there is no accountability. So we have decided that the Opposition alliance will hold a meeting and bring a proposal to remove Gyanesh Kumar," she said.

In a statement later, former Union minister P Chidambaram said: "Today's public impeachment of Mr Gyanesh Kumar, CEC, was a historic and unprecedented event... The gathering today is a united and resurgent front of the people, political parties and civil society organisations that are determined to resist these destructive forces and protect the Constitution and the country."

The mock impeachment of Gyanesh Kumar, which was held as part of the INDIA bloc's campaign against the CEC and the Modi government over alleged "vote theft" and the SIR row, set the tone for its mega rally to be held on Sunday at Delhi's Ramlila Maidan.

Jaishankar at G20

& disruption, unaffordable costs, and challenges of access," Jaishankar said in a post on X.

"Highlighted that deliberate attacks on energy trade & energy infrastructure are a calculated strategy to hold energy prices hostage," he said.

Jaishankar said he emphasised that "continuous distortions of energy markets through obstacles, sanctions & chokepoints are happening with increasing frequency, greater complexity & wider impact," adding that "there appears little regard for the predicament of low-income countries".

"Stressed that convenient distinctions are being drawn between oil and gas. Selective carveouts speak for themselves. Reiterated that the knock-on effects & mutual dependence in a globalised market should not be underestimated," he said in his post.

Reaffirming that India needs "reliable and predictable LPG supplies for its clean cooking needs", Jaishankar said he reiterated that India's national mission on critical minerals spans from exploration to recycling. India has also proposed a G20 Critical Minerals Circularity Initiative, he said.

"The G20 must display both understanding and leadership to keep energy markets open & predictable. It must widen access to finance and advance storage, small modular reactors, green hydrogen and bio fuels," he said.

After the session, Jaishankar also met US Secretary of State Marco Rubio. "Appreciated @SecRubio's hospitality in Atlanta for the @g20org FMM. Took stock of our bilateral cooperation," Jaishankar posted on X, along with a picture of him with Rubio, Indian Ambassador to the US Vinay Mohan Kwatra and US Ambassador to India Sergio Gor.

Jaishankar's participation at the G20 Foreign Ministers' meeting comes just days after Rubio visited India on October 20-22. His visit is also being seen as laying the groundwork for Prime Minister Narendra Modi's possible visit to the US for the G20 leaders' summit in mid-December.

Jaishankar also met his counterparts from Canada, Australia, Germany, Brazil, Mexico, Argentina and Poland among others.

In his meeting with his Canadian counterpart Anita Anand, the two sides assessed the "steady growth" in India-Canada cooperation and agreed that Modi's visit to Canada in December will be another "building block" in their "ambitious relationship".

From Atlanta, Jaishankar will travel to Antigua & Barbuda to attend the CHOGM (Commonwealth Heads of Government Meeting) from November 1 to 4. His visits are part of Delhi's engagement with multilateral groupings, with an opportunity to have bilateral engagements.

Forces conspiring to divide India: PM

disappointment, these people are creating obstacles in the path of the country's development. This is not opposition, this is obstruction. They have made this their political agenda. They are engaged in undermining the dignity and sanctity of the Constitution," Modi said.

"Certain forces are continuously engaged in conspiracies to divide the country... After more than a decade of frustration and disappointment, these forces have now come out in the open... Who is secretly meeting whom abroad? Whom are anti-India forces supporting? Who is speaking the language of India's enemies? We must recognise all these patterns and confront them together... Especially the way social media is being used as a weapon, rumours are being spread, and efforts are being made to tarnish India's image. The people of the country must come together to deal with these challenges," he said.

Recalling his address at Sardar Patel's birth anniversary celebrations last year, Modi said he had pledged that the country would be free of Maoists. "Exactly one year later, as we gather here today, that national resolution has been fulfilled. The backbone of Naxalism has been completely broken," he said.

"We have eradicated Naxalism from remote parts of the country. However, the threat of what I call 'intellectual (dimagi) Naxalism' has not yet disappeared. The country must remain vigilant against these intellectual Naxals," he said.

"We now have to work on the next big goals. We must secure the country's borders completely. We have to stop infiltration and the demographic changes taking place. We also have to move forward towards a Secular Civil Code. Whenever the country takes big resolutions, whenever the country makes big decisions, hurdles will arise, obstacles will be created, and storms will have to be faced, but India is not going to stop now," he said.

"The ideals of 'Ek Bharat, Shreshth Bharat' and the goal of a developed India have now become the country's unwavering commitments. We will put in our utmost effort. We will confront every challenge with determination. But our vision will remain fixed on one goal... By 2047, when India completes 100 years of Independence, we must build a developed India that is sustainable and strong. This passion must guide every effort we make and become a part of our very being," he said.

Referring to the global energy crisis in recent months, Modi said several countries had imposed restrictions on diesel and petrol purchases, while concerns had been raised about India's ability to withstand the impact because of its large population and dependence on petroleum imports. He said India had managed to prevent the crisis from affecting its citizens, describing the outcome as a diplomatic and strategic success, while crediting public solidarity for playing an equally important role.

"While the country was looking for solutions to external challenges, certain forces within the country also began spreading lies and rumours in an attempt to create instability. But the people of India stood shoulder to shoulder with the government... This is the country's greatest strength. It is the biggest foundation of our courage and determination," he said.

"The world is burning in the flames of unrest. These are extremely difficult times for several countries. Wars are raging between many nations. The economies of major countries are grappling with serious challenges. Resource shortages are continuously increasing, and global supply chains are being disrupted... At such a time, India's unity, the unity of all Indians, is our greatest strength. It is this unity that will help us overcome every storm," he said.

Earlier in the day, Modi paid floral tributes to Sardar Patel at the Statue of Unity. "Heartfelt tributes to Sardar Vallabhbhai Patel, the architect of Akhand Bharat and the Iron Man of the country. He dedicated his life to the creation of a strong, prosperous, and capable India," he said in a post on X. He also inaugurated development projects to boost tourism and civic infrastructure in the area.

Delhi's anti-pollution curbs begin today

that ensuring effective implementation of the restrictions through the winter would present a formidable challenge.

Enforcement would be carried out by joint teams of the Traffic Police and Transport Department of the Delhi government, with support from local police at key locations, the officers said. Border checks will use automatic number plate recognition (ANPR) and radio frequency identification (RFID) technology, they said.

More than 60% — 30.65 lakh — of the 48 lakh pre-BS-VI vehicles are registered in the NCR districts of Haryana, including Gurugram, Faridabad, Rohtak, Sonipat, Jhajjar, Nuh, Rewari, and Palwal.

Smaller numbers of these older vehicles are registered in the NCR districts of UP such as Gautam Budh Nagar and Ghaziabad (11.8 lakh), and Rajasthan (5.6 lakh).

Across the region, two-wheelers make up the largest chunk of these older vehicles – numbering around 36.5 lakh. Cars and cabs total 7.26 lakh vehicles, or 15% of the active pre-BS-VI stock. Goods vehicles, buses, and tractors together number about 2.9 lakh, or 6% of the total.

In the heavier segments, diesel is the norm: 81% of goods vehicles, 70% of buses, and 93% of tractors and farm vehicles run on diesel, which is more polluting than petrol as a fuel.

Transport-related pollution has been the dominant contributor to air pollution in the capital, according to the Decision Support System (DSS), a numerical model-based framework developed by the Indian Institute of Tropical Meteorology (IITM), Pune. The average contribution of transport-related pollution to Delhi's air pollution in the winter months is estimated at 15-20%.

The traffic load on Delhi is enormous. Around 16,900 heavy-duty trucks enter the capital daily, more than half of which arrive at four primary entry points, a joint study by IIT-Delhi and The Energy and Resources Institute (TERI) reported earlier this year.

While these trucks represent only a fraction of the total vehicles on Delhi's roads, they generate 61% of all transport-related PM2.5 emissions between the hours of 10 pm and 7 am, the study reported.

A draft emissions inventory for 2021 prepared by TERI estimated that vehicles accounted for around 47% of Delhi's PM2.5 emissions, 78% of nitrogen oxide emissions, and 49% of non-methane volatile organic compounds.

Two-wheelers were identified as the largest vehicular source of PM2.5, PM10, sulphur dioxide, and carbon monoxide emissions. Buses were the biggest source of nitrogen oxides, while three-wheelers contributed the most volatile organic compounds.

For the NCR as a whole, the inventory identified industries as the largest source of particulate pollution, accounting for 44% of PM2.5 and 41% of PM10. Among vehicular sources, two-wheelers were the largest contributors to PM2.5 (31%) and carbon monoxide (51%). Buses contributed the largest share of vehicular nitrogen oxide emissions, at 34%.

An earlier emissions inventory prepared by IIT-Kanpur, based on data collected in 2013-14 and submitted to the Delhi government in 2016, had identified trucks as the largest contributors to vehicular PM2.5 and PM10 emissions, accounting for around 46% of each, followed by two-wheelers at around 33%.

Buses were identified as the largest contributors to nitrogen oxides, while two-wheelers contributed the most to carbon monoxide emissions.

A separate study by TERI and the Automotive Research Association of India, based on monitoring and modelling carried out in 2016-17, estimated that the transport sector contributed 28% of Delhi's winter PM2.5 concentrations.

This study also found that vehicles manufactured before BS-IV standards came into force had a higher contribution to particulate matter concentrations than vehicles that complied with BS-IV norms.

Traffic Police officers said coordination and cooperation among neighbouring districts will be crucial to the effective implementation of the restrictions, particularly in preventing pre-BS-VI vehicles from entering Delhi. Senior Delhi Traffic Police officers have had several meetings with their counterparts in neighbouring districts to discuss this issue.

There are 23 entry points to Delhi, and officials estimated that more than 12 lakh vehicles enter the capital every day. Once a vehicle manages to enter the city or get on a flyover leading into Delhi, it is difficult to turn it around, the officers said.

"It is virtually impossible to ensure that every vehicle is turned around and sent back without causing massive traffic congestion. Given the available manpower, it is also not possible to deploy personnel to monitor every vehicle that enters the city," an officer said.

Fines for violations can range from Rs 20,000 to up to Rs 40,000. Traffic Police officers said challans issued by the Traffic Police do not always carry the same penalties as the ones that are issued by the Enforcement Wing of the Delhi Transport Department.

Challans will also be issued if traffic surveillance cameras catch non-compliant vehicles on the city's roads, officers said. They underlined that cooperation from the public would be critical to ensure the success of these measures. "Pollution is a problem for everyone," an officer said.

AAP list

party national convener Arvind Kejriwal and CM Mann.

Among the prominent candidates in the list is Minister Sanjeev Arora, who has been renominated from Ludhiana West despite having been in jail in connection with an Enforcement Directorate (ED) money laundering case. Besides CM Mann, Arora is so far the only Minister in the 15-member AAP Cabinet who has been fielded for the polls. Assembly Speaker Kultar Singh Sandhwan has been renominated from his Kotkapura seat.

The AAP's first list is tilted towards the Malwa region, where the constituencies of 27 of the 40 candidates are located. Malwa accounts for 69 of the state's 117 Assembly seats, while Majha and Doaba have 25 and 23 seats, respectively. The party has named five candidates from Majha and eight from Doaba in its first list.

Malwa, especially the districts of Sangrur, Barnala and Mansa, is considered the epicentre of the AAP's rise in Punjab. The party currently has 66 of the region's 69 legislators, including CM Mann, who had won the Dhuri seat in the 2022 elections by defeating the Congress candidate by over 58,000 votes.

The AAP had swept the 2022 polls, bagging 92 of the state's 117 seats. Currently, the party's tally in the House stands at 94.

In its first list, the AAP's decision to renominate sitting MLAs has been fuelled by its assessment that they might not be facing any significant "anti-incumbency", sources said.

On Friday, CM Mann had said that the party's candidate selection would be based on their performances and public surveys.

An AAP leader said the party has opted for "safe seats" in its first list. "The surveys also favoured these sitting MLAs," the leader said.

The list includes four women candidates — Inderjit Kaur Mann (Nakodar), Santosh Kataria (Balachaur), Baljinder Kaur (Talwandi Sabo), and Dr Amandeep Kaur Arora (Moga) who headed the Punjab AAP's women wing. The party has named seven Scheduled Caste (SC) candidates in this list.

Four former ministers — Kuldeep Singh Dhaliwal (Ajnala), Bram Shanker Sharma Jimpa (Hoshiarpur), Dr Inderbir Singh Nijjar (Amritsar South) and Balkar Singh (Kartarpur) — have also been fielded.

Punjab AAP president Aman Arora does not figure in the first list, while working president Amansher Singh has been renominated from Batala. None of the party's halqa in-charges, appointed in over 20 constituencies, have been given party tickets so far.

CM Mann's aide Baltej Pannu, the AAP's media in-charge, has not made it to the party's first list. He was aspiring for a ticket from Patiala (urban), where the party has renominated MLA Ajit Pal Singh Kolhi.

The Punjab elections are set to be a multi-cornered battle with the AAP facing challenges from the principal Opposition Congress, Shiromani Akali Dal (SAD) and the BJP, among major contenders.

5-star Bengaluru hotel

Laboratory (FSL) report, postmortem findings and other reports to ascertain the exact cause of the incident," he said.

In a complaint to the police, Silvia Hotuatova, the 47-year-old wife of Horvat, alleged negligence on the part of the hotel management. She said that she and her husband had arrived in India on October 20 for a vacation and were staying at the Conrad Hotel.

According to the complaint, Horvat went swimming in the hotel pool around 5.15 pm on Friday. Hearing screams near the pool, Hotuatova rushed to the spot and found her husband lying motionless in the water. A hotel staff member who jumped into the pool in an attempt to rescue him also suffered an electric shock, the complaint stated.

The complaint further alleged that another person alerted those present to the suspected presence of electric current in the pool. Hotel staff then switched off the power supply, pulled the people out of the water and attempted to revive them. Hotuatova said she was taken to the hospital along with her husband.

Based on her complaint, police registered a case under Section 106 (causing death by negligence) of the Bharatiya Nyaya Sanhita (BNS), 2023, at Halasuru Police Station.

Hotel sources said the two men may have suffered electric shocks soon after entering the pool. Police suspect a short circuit may have caused the incident. "Seeing them struggling in the water, one person tried to rescue them, and the other joined the effort, resulting in both being injured," a police officer said, adding that the pool has been shut down.

Responding to the incident, a Conrad Bengaluru spokesperson said: "We are deeply saddened by the tragic incident which occurred at Conrad Bengaluru yesterday [Saturday], which led to the subsequent passing away of two guests. We offer our deepest condolences to all those impacted. The cause of the incident has not yet been established and remains subject to a comprehensive investigation by local authorities. We are offering our full support to their investigation. Our team remains available to provide all appropriate assistance to relevant authorities as their investigation continues."

Lucknow's KGMU

KGMU spokesperson Dr K K Singh told The Indian Express that the STF had not recommended criminal proceedings against those named in its report but had referred the matter for disciplinary action. The university received the report from the government on Thursday.

"We will place the report before the university's executive council, after which a committee will be constituted to examine the allegations. The disciplinary committee will assess whether the allegations have merit. All the issues raised in the report will be examined," Singh told *The Indian Express*.

The government, in its letter, has directed KGMU authorities to initiate action against employees mentioned in the report in accordance with provisions of the KGMU Act, 2002, and the University's statutes and submit an action-taken report. The executive council meeting is likely to be held next month.

The report places at least eight people across various levels at KGMU under the scanner, and an equal number of employees who were allegedly subjected to harassment or pressure.

According to the report, the STF inquiry was initiated following a complaint by a man who identified himself as president of the "UP Youth Association" and sought a probe into alleged religious conversions and what he described as "love jihad" cases on the university campus.

The report alleges that both cases in which a resident doctor and an intern were arrested were linked to a department where certain faculty members shielded other faculty members, resident doctors, students, nursing staff and employees from the minority community who were accused of misconduct. The report alleges that this allowed the physical and mental harassment of some women resident doctors, students, nursing staff and other employees to continue.

The report further alleges that when women employees objected to or spoke out against such conduct, some faculty members tried to silence them by threatening to damage their careers, label them mentally unstable or terminate their employment.

The report further alleges that a nursing staff member who established a relationship with a colleague from a different faith was subjected to physical and mental harassment and pressured to convert.

The STF report also alleges that a 50-year-old employee of another department, who belongs to the minority community, harassed and stalked a 25-year-old woman working there as a contractual computer operator, and allegedly pressured her to convert and marry him.

According to the report, after the woman complained to the head of the department, a committee was constituted, but no action was allegedly taken against the employee. Instead, the report claims, her contract was terminated, leaving her without a job.

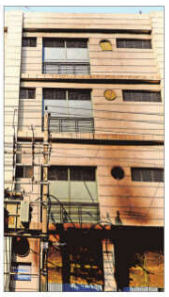
According to the report, a resident doctor in another department allegedly drew two fellow female resident doctors into relationships and blackmailed and pressured them to convert. The report further alleges that when the women complained verbally to the department, faculty members and the head of the department attempted to suppress the matter, and that the women were allegedly threatened with damage to their careers and failure in their examinations.

According to the report, the family of a woman who had complained of alleged coercion to convert said the department head described her as a "psychopath" and defended the accused doctor. This allegedly left the family feeling defensive and pressured to consider a compromise, the report claims.

The report further accuses an additional professor, who had been given the additional responsibility of approving resident doctors' leave applications by the HOD, of bias. The report alleges that residents seeking leave to celebrate festivals such as Chhath Puja or to attend their grandparents' funerals faced insensitive remarks, while those from the minority community were granted leave to attend prayers, weddings or other personal engagements.



No fire clearance, exits at shoe factory where blaze killed 4 blocked; 2 arrested



The fire broke out at the factory on Friday night. AMIT MEHRA

'Stayed for another shift to earn more...': Grieving kin

Sakshi Chand
New Delhi, October 31



Harihar's daughter Anjali with a relative on Saturday. AMIT MEHRA

Sakshi Chand
New Delhi, October 31

NO FIRE clearance certificate, inadequate ventilation measures, and blocked escape routes, including the staircase to terrace, were among the alleged violations observed after a fire broke out at a factory in Northwest Delhi's Mangolpuri Industrial Area Phase-1 on Friday, leading to four deaths, said officials.

Around 9:30 pm, Vikas, 22, a worker, was having dinner with his colleagues on the first floor of the shoe factory. When the blaze broke out around 9:32 pm in the basement, they allegedly realised that the main exit of the four-storey building was locked and ran in panic towards the terrace, trying to escape the blinding smoke. Even as the building, which had been allegedly operational for nearly 30 years, has four gates, all of them were allegedly locked — with iron sheets placed on top — at the time of the incident.

"The gate was right there, but we couldn't get out. The guard must have locked the door and left," Vikas, who was admitted to the emergency ward at Sanjay Gandhi Memorial Hospital on Saturday, told *The Indian Express*, adding, "We tried everything to escape. I stuffed cloth in my mouth and poured water on it to protect myself from choking."

After rescue operations, Vikas and another factory worker, Harinder, now admitted to the ICU of Sanjay Gandhi Memorial Hospital, survived. But four of their co-workers died. The four deceased have been identified as Ashok (25), Harihar (40), Lal Babu (38) and Prem Chand (50).

Expressing grief, Delhi Chief Minister Rekha Gupta stated, "The loss of lives in the unfortunate fire incident is extremely painful. My deepest condolences are with the bereaved families."

On Saturday, the Delhi Police registered a case of culpable homicide and arrested two men in connection with the incident.

One of them has been identified as Ashok, 47, the building supervisor. Suresh Chand, 76, a resident of Pitampura, the other accused, is the father of factory owners who have been summoned by police but are yet to be traced.

Head Constable Upesh was among the first responders on Friday night who observed fumes emanating from the factory during the night patrol. He said he made a PCR call and informed the Fire department.

On blocked escape routes, a fire official said, "The workers who were trapped ran towards the terrace. But the staircase too was blocked with material."

"The windows, including those fitted with glass panes, were also sealed with iron grills. There was inadequate ventilation in the building. Even the openings for the exhaust fans were sealed.The smoke could not escape," another official said.Officials also said that work was being carried out in the basement, allegedly in violation of regulations. Prime facie, officers said, a short circuit may have caused fire.

MCD officials have stated that the area in which the building is located is administered by the DSIIDC "Under ease of doing business, the Factory Licensing department has not inspected premises licence issued in 2024 and NOC from DPCC. Reasons for the fire in the initial probe have been negligence by labour," an official said.

THE HENNA on Gayatri's hands, which she applied for Karva Chauth, has hardly faded. Just two days after celebrating the festival with her husband, Harihar, 40, she sat outside the Sanjay Gandhi Memorial Hospital's mortuary on Saturday, crying. Her son, Ansh, 10, held her hand tightly every time she would burst in tears while talking to relatives and reporters. Her daughter, Anjali, 13, also sat next to her while her son, Himanshu, 15, stood next to his father's body lying on a stretcher.

Harihar, the family's sole breadwinner, had been working at the shoe factory in Northwest Delhi's Mangolpuri for more than two decades, recalled Gayatri. His monthly salary had increased to Rs 35,000 gradually. He often took double shifts, particularly during the festive season, to earn extra for the family.

On Friday, too, Harihar was working late. It was not unusual for his family. While others at the factory went out for dinner, he dialled up home. Himanshu set out with the food, like he did on most days. By the time he reached the factory, it was 8.55 pm. "He got angry that the food had not come earlier. He wanted his meal on time. He told his son, *'Agli baar se time pe aao thoda...*' (come a little earlier next time)'," Gayathri recollected, adding that she could not imagine this was the last conversation the father had with his son. Harihar was among four factory workers who were killed when a huge fire broke out at the shoe factory on Friday night.

In her late thirties, Gayatri now has the responsibility to look after three children. She wants those responsible to be punished. "There should have been escape routes at the factory and adequate fire fighting material," she said in response to a survivor's claims that all gates were locked when the incident happened.

Last video call

For another victim's family, the last moments of a loved one were captured in a video call. Ashok, 25, who hailed from Phulparas in Bihar, had worked in the factory for around 14 to 15 years. He earned approximately Rs 16,000 a month. He is survived by a pregnant wife, and two daughters.

According to his uncle, Umesh, Ashok was speaking to his wife and playing virtually with his younger daughter over a video call around 9.20 pm minutes before the fire broke out. Soon after, he informed his family that there was a fire and began looking for a way out. The call was abruptly cut.

Ashok worked in the dyeing section. He would often put in extra hours to earn more, Umesh said, particularly during the peak months.

Overtime was offered twice a year, and Ashok would travel from Bihar to Delhi to work during these periods. August to December was one such peak season. He would come to the Capital, earn what he could and then return home.

For the family, those months of extra work were a way to make ends meet.

Now, Ashok's wife is left to raise their two daughters while she prepares for the arrival of a third child.

'Only workplace'

For Lal Babu Chauhan, 38, who hailed from a village in Uttar Pradesh, the factory was his first and last workplace, his sister, Hevanti Devi, said. Living alone in a slum in Sultanpuri, he had been working for nearly 15 years — he saved his earnings to send money back home. "I had met him just a few days ago. And today, I am standing at the mortuary to take his body," the sister said, holding back her tears.

Grieving the loss of her brother, she expressed anger towards the factory owner who, she said, had not come forward to help the families of the victims.

Prem Chand, 50, another victim, worked night shifts to manage finances and pay for the cancer treatment of his wife at LNJP Hospital in Delhi.

A resident of Prem Nagar, Premchand had been working at the factory for 10 years where he was involved in shoe dyeing. He earned around Rs 14,000 a month, his family said, and often took on overtime to supplement his income.

His son, Ramesh Kumar Jha, said he had received a call from his father around 8.30 pm.

Premchand told him he would not be returning home that night and would instead work extra shifts so the family could earn more ahead of the festival. Ramesh had quit his job recently to care for his mother during her treatment, making Premchand the sole breadwinner.

The family learnt of his death after a friend called them. When they arrived at the hospital, they found that Premchand had died of suffocation.

After PHQ protest call, transferred ACP seeks 'Sampark Sabha' with top cop, all personnel

Sakshi Chand & Mahender Singh Manral
New Delhi, October 31



Lawyers at the protest earlier this week. AMIT MEHRA

DAYS AFTER two Delhi Police officers, including an assistant commissioner of police, were transferred following an indefinite strike by district court lawyers, police personnel in the Capital are planning a protest outside the Delhi Police headquarters (PHQ) on Monday morning. Senior officers are likely to ask district DCPs and unit heads to prevent their staff from joining the gathering, *The Indian Express* has learnt.

The controversy began on October 23, when an advocate allegedly suffered a serious head injury in a scuffle at Shahdara police station. Lawyers were assured the accused would be arrested, but the next day they were told the accused had been released without action. According to the lawyers, during a meeting with senior police officers, one of them also waved his loaded revolver and threatened them.

District court lawyers then called an indefinite strike, demanding action against the officers concerned. Earlier this week, Manasvi Vashistha, ACP (Gandhi Nagar subdivision), and Arun Kumar, SHO of Shahdara police station, were transferred to the Special Police Unit for Women and Children. Following this, the lawyers called off their strike.

A query sent to the Delhi Police spokesperson for comment did not elicit a response.

On Friday evening, Delhi Police Commissioner Anurag Kumar called a coordination meeting with representatives of Bar Council of Delhi. The meeting was also attended by senior police officers. "It was mutually agreed to constitute a Joint Coordination Committee and appoint nodal officers at district levels and Police Headquarters for timely resolution of grievances. The concerned Bar Association will, as far as practicable, be informed about FIRs registered against practising advocates," Delhi Police PRO Rajeev Ranjan said in a statement late Saturday.

Following the transfers, a message began circulating in Delhi Police WhatsApp groups, asking personnel to gather outside the PHQ at 8 am on November 2 to express solidarity with the two officers and demand that their original postings be restored.

After allegedly initially trying to stop the mobilisation, senior officers are likely to ask all district DCPs and unit heads to prevent their personnel from reaching the PHQ on Monday.

In a video released on Saturday, Vashistha said, "...the support I have received from all of you has made me feel that I am not broken at all. Instead, I have become even stronger."

"...since we are members of a disciplined force, instead of holding a gathering, we should have an open discussion with the Commissioner of Police (CP) at PHQ," he added.

He also called for the interaction to be made accessible through video conferencing for those unable to attend. "We want to meet him (CP) in person and ask him these questions... I request that as many police personnel as possible attend, except those who are engaged in essential duties. Everyone else should join," he said.

Later in the evening, he wrote to Kumar, asking that the planned gathering be converted into a formal interaction. The subject line of the letter allegedly requested the organisation of 'Sampark Sabha' on November 2.

The letter asked that the Sampark Sabha be open to all Delhi Police personnel, especially those at subordinate ranks, with a discussion on the following agenda. "Detailed discussion of the incident that happened at Shahdara police station on October 23 and 24. Detailed discussion on subsequent events especially the adverse orders against Shahdara police station and myself even when all evidence was in our favour. Other issues related to similar events that happen regularly with police personnel especially in Courts. The future plan to address the same," Vashistha wrote.

The ACP also requested that the Sampark Sabha be broadcasted through a secured web link for all Delhi Police personnel, adding that since the matter is imperative, it should be addressed without further delay.

A similar protest took place in 2019, when more than 2,000 police personnel and their family members gathered outside the PHQ following attacks on policemen by lawyers over a parking dispute. The protest ended after senior officers assured them that a review petition would be filed in court, medical assistance provided to the injured and a minimum ex-gratia of Rs 25,000 paid to them.

OBITUARY

Lt. Col. (Dr.) Harish Chandra Vyas (Retd)



15 Apr 1935 30 Oct 2026

Fraternity of Army Educational Corps expresses profound grief on the sad demise of Lt Col (Dr.) Harish Chandra Vyas (Retd). He will always be remembered for his selfless and dedicated service to the Corps. We pray to the Almighty to bless eternal peace to the departed soul and give strength to the bereaved family.

Maj Gen Tamojeet Biswas
Addl DG AE & HoS (AEC)
and All Ranks of Army Educational Corps

ATAL BIHARI VAJPAYEE
INDIAN INSTITUTE OF INFORMATION TECHNOLOGY AND MANAGEMENT GWALIOR
(Indian Institute of Information Technology & Management, Gwalior)
Morena Link Road, Gwalior – 474015 M.P.

Ref. ABV-IIITMG/NF Rect./2026/1418 Date: 30/10/2026

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Non-Faculty Positions Adv. No. 09/2026

S.No.	Name of Post (s)	No. Of posts					Pay Level as per 7th CPC	Upper Age	Group
		GEN	EWS	OBC	SC	ST			
1	Junior Assistant	03	01	01	01	-	Level-3	27	C
2	Junior Technician	04	-	02	-	01	Level-3	27	C

For further details regarding qualification, experience etc. kindly visit our website http://www.iiitm.ac.in.
Last date for filling online application forms is 25/11/2026

Joint Registrar (A&A)



FINANCIAL RESULTS FOR THE QUARTER AND HALF YEAR ENDED 30TH SEPTEMBER 2026

(₹in crores)

Sl. No.	Particulars	Standalone			Consolidated		
		Quarter ended (Three Months)	Year to date Figures (Six Months)	Corresponding Three Months ended in the previous year	Quarter ended (Three Months)	Year to date Figures (Six Months)	Corresponding Three Months ended in the previous year
		(30/09/2026)	(30/09/2026)	(30/09/2025)	(30/09/2026)	(30/09/2026)	(30/09/2025)
		Reviewed	Reviewed	Reviewed	Reviewed	Reviewed	Reviewed
1.	Total income from operations $	11228	24704	9602	11171	24713	9706
2.	Net Profit / (Loss) for the period (before Tax, Exceptional and/ or Extraordinary items#)	3102	5592	3473	3598	5790	3315
3.	Net Profit / (Loss) for the period before tax (after Exceptional and/or Extraordinary items#)	3102	5592	3473	3598	5790	3315
4.	Net Profit / (Loss) for the period after tax (after Exceptional and/or Extraordinary items#)	2456	4378	2867	2966	4709	2874
5.	Total Comprehensive Income for the period [Comprising Profit / (Loss) for the period (after tax) and Other Comprehensive Income (after tax)]	2456	4378	2867	2966	4709	2874
6.	Equity Share Capital	877	877	877	877	877	877
7.	Reserves (excluding Revaluation Reserve) as shown in the Audited Balance Sheet of the previous year.	55282	55282	47852	59679	59679	52878
8.	Earnings Per Share (of Rs. 5/- each) (for continuing and discontinued operations) -						
	a. Basic:	14.00	24.95	16.34	16.90	26.84	16.38
	b. Diluted:	14.00	24.95	16.34	16.90	26.84	16.38

Note

a. The above is an extract of the detailed format of Quarterly and year to date Financial Results filed with the Stock Exchanges under Regulation 33 of the SEBI (Listing and Other Disclosure Requirements) Regulations, 2015. The full format of the Quarterly and year to date Financial Results along with the Auditor's Report, are available on the websites of the Stock Exchange(s) (**www.bseindia.com**) and (**www.nseindia.com**) and have been posted on the Corporation's website at (**www.gicre.in**) and can be accessed by scanning the QR Code.
b. $Total Income from Operations is gross written premium, gross of reinsurance and net of applicable taxes.
c. #The Indian Accounting Standards (IND AS) are currently not applicable to insurance companies in India.

Place : Mumbai
Dated: 30.10.2026

For and on behalf of General Insurance Corporation of India

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Sd/-
Hitesh Joshi
Chairman cum Managing Director
DIN 09322218

General Insurance Corporation of India
'Suraksha', 170, Jamshedji Tata Road, Churchgate, Mumbai 400020, India. | Telephone (Board): +91 22 2286 7000 • Email Id: investors.gic@gicre.in



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'I am an artiste, bro': Diljit puts Punjab & politics centrestage at his Delhi show

After pop superstar responds to Abhijeet Dipke's criticism, CJP leader posts asking him to 'let the matter go'

Suanshu Khurana
New Delhi, October 31



During the performance on Friday. INSTAGRAM/DILJITDOSANJH

A MAP of Punjab, its outline etched across the night sky by synchronised drones, with the words "Waheguru ji ka Khalsa, Waheguru ji ki Fateh" inscribed within, flashed above the massive stage at Jawaharlal Nehru Stadium as Diljit Dosanjh crooned *Main hoon Punjab* from Imtiaz Ali's *Amar Singh Chamkila*.

Amid the pyrotechnics, the Punjabi global popstar arrived on the elaborate stage framed by a towering, volcano-like structure, its giant centre glowing with what looked like molten lava. But the spectacle on Friday night wasn't just about the theatre of a typical Diljit concert.

He screamed "Punjabi aa gaye oye", as limbs danced and hearts pounded, right before diving into his famed number, GOAT. Soon enough, Punjab was centrestage — and its identity, faith, and history would be the string running through the evening.

This included the choice of the date of the much-talked-about opening concert of the Aura Tour. The concert was initially scheduled for November 1, but was advanced by two days after Rajya Sabha MP Vikramjit Singh Sahney appealed to Dosanjh to consider the sentiments of Sikh families for whom the date is associated with the 1984 anti-Sikh violence. The singer agreed, ensuring that the concert would not coincide with the day of remembrance and mourning for many.

Dosanjh has often engaged with the violence of 1984, one of the most painful chapters in contemporary Sikh history. "1984 is in our collective subconscious," he had said in 2022 while speaking about his film Jogi, and wanted the word "riot" to be changed to "genocide".

Friday's concert had faced issues regarding permissions, with Delhi Police initially refusing clearance citing security concerns. It was also caught in political crossfire. The AAP alleged a bias against the singer, citing his support for the farmers' agitation and his film on human rights activist Jaswant Singh Khalra; the BJP rejected the accusation.

Permission was eventually granted after the organisers addressed the security and traffic concerns raised by police. *"Dilli ka show hona zaroori tha... kyunki bohot saare logon ka zor laga tha ki show na ho... Hum toh kar diye hain,"* Dosanjh said.

He joked that he had a "direct word with God" over the phone. "Now I am here, if anyone has the courage, let them come forward and try to stop it!" he roared.

He also thanked Delhi Police for their help, and invited a woman CRPF personnel from the audience onto the stage.

The setlist spanned Dosanjh's career, moving from explosive Punjabi pop hits like 5 Tara, GOAT, and Patiala peg to intimate, melodic ballads such as *Ikk kudi*. There was also a tribute to Nusrat Fateh Ali Khan with *Saanso ki mala*, among others. The ground was wet from the rain earlier in the day, but it could not dampen the crowd's enthusiasm.

"I'm an artiste, bro," Dosanjh repeated through the evening, at one point putting the words in the sky above the stadium. The line, said during an Instagram live by Dosanjh in July, had become a talking point over the musician's response to the Cockroach Janata Party (CJP)'s protests, which had eventually resulted in the resignation of Education Minister Dharmendra Pradhan.

Asked if he would lend his support to the CJP's protest, Dosanjh had said that he was an artiste, not a politician. His response was criticised on social media, especially because he had supported the farmers' agitation earlier.

CJP founder Abhijeet Dipke had raised the question of an artiste's responsibility to speak up on issues affecting society. Mocking Dosanjh, he had said: *"Aana padta hai bro, nahi toh aapki filmein ban ho jaati hain...* Because everything is political, bro," referring to Satluj, the story of Jaswant Singh Khalra that was removed a day after it was released.

On Friday evening, Dosanjh said, "I love all of you because I am an artist, bro. I am being quiet, so let me stay quiet. I support all of you. But don't teach Punjabis how to fight. The film you are making fun of on stage, Jaswant Singh Khalra's film — we fought for that film for a long time." He did not mention Dipke or the CJP.

Subsequently, Dipke posted on Instagram seeking to put the matter behind them. He said Dosanjh's remarks in June had hurt him a little only because he admired the singer. He ended with, *"Chhota bhai samajh ke mitti pao* (Consider me your younger brother and let the matter go)".

NON-BS-VI PETROL AND DIESEL VEHICLES REGISTERED OUTSIDE DELHI NO LONGER ALLOWED ENTER THE CAPITAL

Gurugram & Noida step up border checks ahead of BS-VI vehicle curbs in Delhi



Delhi saw shallow fog and a night temperature of 16.2 degrees Celsius on Saturday. PRAVEEN KHANNA

Sakshi Chand, Abhimanyu Hazarika & Drishti Jain
New Delhi, Gurugram, Noida, October 31

WITH RESTRICTIONS on non-BS-VI petrol and diesel vehicles entering Delhi coming into force on Sunday, Gurugram and Noida have deployed special teams at key border points to screen vehicles and regulate their movement.

In Delhi, enforcement will be carried out by joint teams of the Traffic Police and Transport department, with support from the local police. Border checks will also use automatic number plate recognition (ANPR) and radio frequency identification (RFID) technology.

Identifying vehicles that do not meet the prescribed emission standards could, however, pose a challenge for traffic personnel. While some newer SUVs have distinct designs that help differentiate BS-VI models from their BS-IV counterparts, the same may not be true of sedans, said officials.

To address this, the challan application used by the Delhi Traffic Police is linked to the Vahan database, which provides details of vehicle makes and models. Officials said this would help personnel identify vehicles and determine whether they comply with the required emission standards.

The police will also issue challans through cameras, as it would not be possible to deploy personnel at every entry point into the city, said officials.

In Gurugram, the Traffic Police has deployed special inspection teams at five Haryana-Delhi border routes – Sirhaul toll, Kapashera, Bajghera, Aya Nagar and Gwal Pahari – to screen vehicles headed towards the Capital.

"Officers stationed at these checkpoints will verify BS-VI emission compliance, registration credentials and valid Pollution Under Control Certificates (PUCC). The roadside inspections will focus primarily on commercial vehicles, interstate buses and heavy goods carriers registered outside Delhi," Traffic Police spokesperson Vikas Soni said.

The restrictions will remain in force until January 31, 2027. Only BS-VI-compliant vehicles, CNG vehicles and electric vehicles will be permitted entry into Delhi. Commercial freight carriers whose destination is elsewhere have been advised to use peripheral expressways.

Officials said traffic authorities have asked motorists and transport operators to verify paperwork of their vehicles before approaching the borders.

In Noida, the Gautam Buddha Nagar Traffic Police said vehicles registered outside Delhi, including passenger buses and trucks, would not be allowed to enter the Capital unless they met the prescribed emission standards.

"Vehicles travelling through Delhi to other destinations have been advised to take the Noida-Greater Noida Expressway or Yamuna Expressway to Zero Point, proceed via Pari Chowk, Kasna and Sirsa, and use the Eastern Peripheral Expressway to reach their destinations," it added.

A senior police officer said petrol vehicles more than 15 years old and diesel vehicles more than 10 years old were already prohibited from operating on public roads in Gautam Buddha Nagar under the existing Graded Response Action Plan (GRAP) protocol. "Drivers and vehicle owners will be held responsible," the officer said.

An officer from the Regional Transport Office said BS-IV vehicles registered in Noida could operate within the district, while those registered in Delhi could operate in the Capital.

"Five of our teams will be deployed alongside the Noida Traffic Police at the borders. BS-I, BS-II and BS-III vehicles, classified as end-of-life vehicles, were already being checked and their movement restricted within Gautam Buddha Nagar," the officer added.

A police officer said round-the-clock checks will be conducted at five locations – Chilla border, Delhi-Noida Direct (DND) Flyway, Kalindi Kunj, Pari Chowk and Zero Point.

Skywatch

Forecast: November 1, 2026
Mainly clear sky, no rain
MAX: 28-31
1°C below normal
MIN: 16-18
0.1°C below normal

AQI Tracker

Burari Satisfactory **AQI:92**
Rohini Poor **AQI: 233**
Anand Vihar Moderate **AQI: 118**
IGI Airport Moderate **AQI: 120**

- Good (0-50)
- Satisfactory (51-100)
- Moderate (101-200)
- Poor (201-300)
- Very Poor (301-400)
- Severe (401-500)

Transporters warn: Bus fares may rise by 15-20%, essential goods supply at risk

Devansh Mittal
New Delhi, October 31

BUS FARES could rise by 15-20% and the supply of essential goods face disruption as Delhi bars entry to non-BS-VI petrol and diesel vehicles registered outside the Capital from Sunday under its Winter Action Plan, transporters warned, while maintaining that the restrictions could cause financial losses and push up transportation costs.

Gurmeet Singh, owner of Highway Travels, said on Saturday that unlike previous years, buses with tourist permits would not be exempt from the restrictions. "This ban will lead to enormous losses for us, as these three months are the tourist season. Many foreign tourists also visit different cities of North India," said Singh, who operates 450 buses. Around 50 of his buses will be unable to enter Delhi.

Anil Dixit, owner of Noida-based Skyline Motors, said the restrictions come during the festive season, when people travel to their hometowns or visit relatives in other cities. "Almost everyone takes these buses on loans. How are we supposed to pay EMIs when these buses cannot ply for the three months when the earnings were supposed to be maximum?" he asked.

According to bus operators, as the number of buses that can travel to and from Delhi will reduce, it could push up ticket prices by 15-20%. "During this time of the year, all the buses used to run full and seats are difficult to find because of the festive rush. There will be a severe shortage this time," a fleet owner said.

While larger private operators and state-run bus services may be able to shift older vehicles to routes outside Delhi, smaller operators are likely to bear the brunt. "We will have to arrange tempo travellers or other modes of transport for passengers to reach the drop-off site from the border. Auto and cab drivers will benefit from this," Singh said.

Around 2.5 lakh goods carriers could be affected by the restrictions, according to the All India Motor Transport Congress (AIMTC).

Gunjeet Singh, owner of Sangha Freight, operates around 50 trucks, 35 of which are BS-IV vehicles purchased between 2018 and 2020. "Due to these restrictions, I have been trying to sell them. I can't keep them sitting idle, as that will mean losses for me. But even their resale value has fallen from Rs 15 lakh to Rs 9 lakh," he added.

Transporters also warned that restrictions could disrupt the movement of perishable goods, a large share of which reaches Delhi by road from across the country. Disruption in the movement of these goods could delay supplies to wholesale markets such as Azadpur and Ghazipur, increase transportation costs and eventually push up prices for consumers, they added.

Harish Sabharwal, AIMTC president, said the transport industry was already grappling with rising operational costs, taxes and toll charges. "A sudden restriction on vehicle operations for three months would severely affect their earnings, while loan instalments, insurance premiums, other financial liabilities and household expenses would continue," he said.

Industries cautioned

INDUSTRIAL UNITS in Delhi-NCR that come under 17 highly polluting categories, which have not installed air pollution control devices or placed orders for them, will face closure or receive showcause notices, the Central Pollution Control Board said.

IN AN October 30 order, the environmental watchdog directed the pollution control boards of Haryana, Uttar Pradesh and Rajasthan and Delhi to act against the non-compliant units to meet PM emission norms set by the CAQM in Delhi-NCR.

THE ACTION comes ahead of winter when industrial emissions contribute significantly to air pollution in Delhi-NCR.

Farm fires, weather, Diwali: Factors behind CAQM curbs

Nikhil Ghanekar
New Delhi, October 31

THE ORDER by the Commission for Air Quality Management (CAQM) in National Capital Region and Adjoining Areas for a 15-day ban on dust-generating demolition and outdoor construction activities and a 50% work-from-home mandate in Delhi and five NCR districts is perhaps the first time that such a measure has been adopted outside the scope of the Graded Response Action Plan (GRAP). While emergency measures under GRAP are enforced based on deterioration of air and forecast for poor air quality, usually following the onset of winter, the fresh curbs have been cited explicitly as "precautionary" and "anticipatory" measures.

The CAQM order was issued two days before Delhi's 10-point winter pollution plan kicks off on Sunday, which enforces curbs on entry of vehicles, dust control, fuel dispensing, staggered office timings, higher parking fees, and construction curbs.

The latest curbs have been issued under Section 12 of the CAQM Act, 2021, which empowers the watchdog to take such measures and issue directions as it considers necessary or expedient for protecting and improving the quality of air in NCR and adjoining areas.

Officials aware of developments explained that following assessment of multiple factors, ranging from meteorological factors, paddy harvest progress in Punjab and Haryana, and historical peak data, pre-emptive curbs were announced for sectors where pollution sources could be controlled easily.

It is expected that air quality across the region will gradually worsen through the coming week.

After the respite of a rare 'Satisfactory' air quality index (AQI) late October, driven chiefly by rain, the AQI worsened on Saturday to 'Moderate'. By November 2, it is expected to turn 'Poor'.



Commuters walk past a field amid fog in Gurugram on Saturday. PTI

Among the factors considered before Friday's order were a gradual turn towards unfavourable meteorological conditions, the upcoming Diwali festival and pollution from firecrackers, and paddy stubble burning during the remainder of the harvest season.

So far, around 55-60 % paddy harvesting in Punjab and 50% in Haryana has been completed, officials said, and efforts are underway to ensure farmers get the right machinery and help to manage paddy stubble disposal.

"For the first time, we have tried such pre-emptive actions. The Chief Secretaries across states would have to coordinate with municipal commissioners and district magistrates to enforce the construction ban and work from home mandate," a CAQM official said.

This October, Delhi-NCR has experienced better air quality than last year during the same month, largely due to favourable meteorological conditions.

With an AQI of 60, Friday was the cleanest October air day since October 10, 2022 just a day after the Capital saw a 'Poor' air day, The Indian Express reported on Saturday.

With an AQI of 230, the Capital recorded the worst 'air' day on October 23 in the 'Poor' category.

The AQI has not worsened to 'Very Poor' or 'Severe' through the month. In comparison, last October, the worst air quality was recorded on October 30, 2025, when AQI was 373 in the 'Severe' category.

CODEYOGI FOUNDER PRASHANT CHAUDHARY WINS ROHINI NAYYAR PRIZE

A teacher's faith in a struggling child, a student's vow to create a million learners

Reva Thakkar
New Delhi, October 31

IN CLASS 4, Prashant Chaudhary was failing almost every subject except Hindi. Having moved from a Hindi-medium school to an English-medium one in his village Bhagwanpur near Meerut, he struggled to follow lessons. The textbooks were in English, while teachers, not very proficient in the language, often explained them in Hindi. He expected to repeat the year.

Then his science teacher, Mita Singh, began bringing Coffee Bite candies to class and asking questions suited to each student's ability. Gradually, Chaudhary became one of the most active students in the classroom. During the final lesson on levers, she repeatedly turned to him whenever the others could not answer a question. At the end, she announced that there was only one scientist in the class.

Nearly three decades later, Chaudhary (39), on Saturday won the fifth Rohini Nayyar Prize for Outstanding Contribution to Rural Development by a person under 40. The prize honours Dr Rohini Nayyar, one of India's foremost economist-administrators responsible for designing MGNREGA. She had passed away in 2021.

Chaudhary's CodeYogi Foundation has taught technology and artificial intelligence (AI) skills to more than 3.5 lakh students across nine states and 120 districts. The award, carrying a cash prize of Rs 10 lakh, was presented by Amitabh Kant, former CEO of NITI Aayog and India's G20 Sherpa, in New Delhi. Chaudhary plans to donate the prize money to the foundation.

"I wanted to be like Mita Singh," he says. "To help others the way she helped me."

CodeYogi's model does not depend on computers, laboratories, English proficiency or trained teachers. Its courses run on family smartphones and are available in Indian languages.

Chaudhary's own journey out of his village began when he spotted a reference to IIT in *Dainik Jagran* while in Class 11. He went on to become the first person from his village to enter IIT Delhi, graduating in 2010.



Prashant Chaudhary in New Delhi on Saturday. PRAVEEN KHANNA

At his first software job, a colleague who had dropped out of a BA course and taught himself coding changed Chaudhary's thinking. "You don't actually need to go to IIT or hold a formal degree if you build the right practical skills," he says.

In 2012, Chaudhary began training cousins and friends before taking his lessons to an engineering college in Ghaziabad, teaching iOS development.

He founded DevsLane, a software services company, in 2016. He hired his students and the company grew to $2 million in annual revenue. Initially, the foundation ran six-month training programmes for batches of around 1,000 students, many of them former mechanics, welders and plumbers. More than 80% of those completing the courses secured jobs paying Rs 6-8 lakh annually.

Chaudhary exited in 2020, handing the company to two students, and used the proceeds to build CodeYogi. Last October, he registered it as a non-profit company. But computer laboratories proved a major obstacle, with broken machines and unreliable electricity.

CodeYogi's turning point came in 2023.

A pilot with 16,500 students at Dewas in Madhya Pradesh proved students could learn on their smartphones instead. The model expanded to 3.5 lakh learners in 2024. Late last year, as generative AI began changing software development, CodeYogi retired its pure coding course for a 30-day applied AI fluency programme. Since then, more than one lakh students have registered. Among the students, 48.6% are girls, while 95% rely exclusively on smartphones.

Chaudhary is careful about AI's limitations. CodeYogi covers basic AI literacy and algorithmic bias, while warning students against over-reliance. "AI must serve as an assistant rather than a substitute for genuine cognitive learning," he says. He cites Ankit, a Class 12 biology student from Dewas with no coding background, as an example of the talent waiting to be discovered. After learning to code through CodeYogi, Ankit identified flaws in its editor, built a better version. CodeYogi hired him and incorporated his work into its platform.

For him, the ambition to reach a million learners by March is rooted in the intervention of a teacher who once made a struggling fourth-grader believe he could be a scientist. It is why CodeYogi now starts in Class 9 — 59% of its top-performing students who landed high-paying jobs had no Maths background. The trick is to reach them early, says Chaudhary.

ADVERTORIAL

25 years of JAN SEVA by PM Narendra Modi Ji

The Classroom of 2047:

Is Indian Education Ready for Its Next Great Leap?

MACRO VISION ACADEMY

Twelve years ago, a smart classroom meant a projector, a computer and perhaps a particularly technology-loving teacher. Today, artificial intelligence explains scientific theories, solves equations and writes essays in seconds. Knowledge has never been more accessible.

Yet I often wonder whether this extraordinary technological advancement has been matched by equally meaningful progress in the way we educate our children.

Are we preparing students for tomorrow's technologies, or merely teaching them to operate today's?

Over the last twelve years, India's educational outlook has evolved significantly, moving beyond traditional measures of achievement towards a broader understanding of learning. Under Hon'ble Prime Minister Shri Narendra Modi, initiatives including Digital India, the National Education Policy 2020, DIKSHA and PM SHRI Schools have advanced an educational vision embracing skills, innovation, technology and experiential learning.

As we reflect upon the Prime Minister's 25 years of public service, perhaps the most consequential change is the recognition that education must prepare India not merely for employment, but for leadership in a changing world. Institutions must translate that vision into meaningful experiences.

I began teaching at fifteen. Education is an unusual profession: the longer one teaches, the more one realises how much remains to be learnt. Children are naturally curious. Often, our educational systems become less curious with age.

Perhaps the greatest transformation required is philosophical, not technological. We must move from asking what a child knows to what a child can discover, create and contribute.

This philosophy guides Macro Vision Academy in Burhanpur. We have never considered geography a limitation upon ambition, nor believed innovation must emerge from metropolitan centres before reaching smaller cities.

Indeed, some of the most interesting educational conversations are taking place far from traditional centres. Our Chronosphere innovation hub exemplifies this belief. Across approximately 18,000 square feet, 450 iMacs and twelve specialised laboratories introduce students to artificial intelligence, robotics, machine learning, programming, animation, data science and entrepreneurship.

From Class VI, students learn programming, develop applications, experiment with technology and approach real-world challenges through practical solutions rather than theoretical exposure alone.

In October 2025, 750 students participated in record-setting Python programming exercises. The achievement was encouraging, but more satisfying was their confidence with technologies many adults are still trying to understand.

Increasingly, educators from major-city schools visit Burhanpur to observe these developments. I welcome that curiosity. Education advances when institutions learn from one another; innovation belongs to no particular school or city.

The lesson is that geography need not dictate educational leadership. Institutions that experiment, invest thoughtfully and trust students can shape the national conversation.

I sometimes remark that buying computers is the easiest part of developing a technology laboratory. Encouraging children to think beyond what those computers already know is harder.

AI makes this distinction crucial. It can personalise learning, identify difficulties, improve access to content and help teachers support individual students. But its use must rest on reasoning, ethics, originality and responsibility.

We must ensure children do not become so proficient at obtaining answers that they lose the patience to discover them.

This brings me to what I consider one of India's most important unfinished reforms: standardising educational quality without standardising children themselves.

India's diverse educational landscape still suffers disparities in qualified teachers, laboratories, technology, creative opportunities and institutional support.

Standardisation should not create identical schools or demand identical outcomes. It should establish a common standard of opportunity.

Regardless of geography or income, every child deserves meaningful science education, digital literacy, competent teaching, physical development, creative exploration and encouragement to think independently.

Institutional evaluation also needs clearer standards. Infrastructure, examination results and enrolment figures tell only part of the story.

How well does a school develop problem-solving abilities? Can its students communicate confidently, collaborate, exercise judgement and apply knowledge beyond examinations?

These questions belong in educational assessment.

The National Education Policy 2020 and competency-based evaluation offer a foundation. We now need consistent implementation, measurable accountability and continuous teacher development.

We cannot expect teachers to prepare students for 2047 without preparing teachers for the world already emerging.

Academic rigour must remain central. At Macro Vision Academy, JEE and NEET preparation forms an important part of our ecosystem. Strong results and conceptual clarity matter enormously.

But education cannot end where an examination begins.

A child's intelligence may emerge through mathematics, science, art, leadership or an unusual understanding of people. Schools must recognise these different forms of potential. That is why sports, music, art, practical life skills and character development remain integral to our approach.

One of my most cherished experiences is our Darbaar, where students question me freely, often moving beyond academics into philosophy, society and life's uncertainties.

Once, a student asked me about the meaning of meaning itself.

Children occasionally ask questions for which even a lifetime of experience has not prepared me. That is precisely why I value these conversations. A school should never be a place where teachers have every answer and students are expected to have none.

When I imagine the classroom of 2047, I do not simply see more screens, sophisticated laboratories or automated teaching systems. Those are instruments, not the purpose of education.

I see technology strengthening human potential, teachers becoming more effective mentors and students investigating the world rather than merely memorising explanations.

I see learning connected to practical challenges: sustainable agriculture, environmental conservation, healthcare, entrepreneurship and technological innovation.

Above all, I see institutional quality measured by opportunities created and minds nurtured, rather than the prominence of an address.

At Macro Vision Academy, we explore this future through experimentation. Our progress is substantial, but innovation has no finishing line. Each advance brings another responsibility to learn.

The best educational exchanges happen in person. Our Burhanpur campus welcomes educators, institutional leaders and curious observers to engage with our students, teachers and ideas. Constructive scrutiny matters as much as appreciation.

India's aspiration to become Viksit Bharat by 2047 requires more than economic development and technological advancement. It requires a generation capable of independent thought, responsible action and solutions to challenges we may not yet understand.

The classroom of 2047 will not suddenly emerge in 2047. Its foundations are being laid today, through educators' decisions, the institutions we build and the confidence we place in our children.

The next great educational revolution may not come from where we expect it. But it will come from institutions that refuse to wait for the future before building it.

And perhaps education's finest achievement will be the day our students begin asking questions even artificial intelligence cannot answer.



> A nation is in good hands when its children are encouraged to raise theirs. Welcome questions, nurture curiosity, raise good humans and they shall raise a great nation."

ANAND PRAKASH CHOUKSEY, Founder & Chairman, Macro Vision Academy, Burhanpur

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Quad building reliable, open supply chains and securing critical minerals, says Rubio

US commits to $10 mn for infra in India, ASEAN nations for critical minerals

Shubhajit Roy
New Delhi, October 31

LAYING OUT key markers for a coalition against China's assertiveness in the Indo-Pacific region and in an attempt to assuage concerns over Donald Trump administration's commitment towards the Quad grouping, US Secretary of State Marco Rubio said that the US, India, Japan and Australia are building "reliable and open supply chains", supporting "next-generation technologies", increasing "maritime cooperation", and securing "critical minerals".

Quad Foreign Ministers met for the third time in less than six months, after the gathering in New Delhi in May and in Manila in July.

Rubio met External Affairs Minister S Jaishankar, Japan's Foreign Minister Toshimitsu Motegi and Australian Foreign Minister Penny Wong on the sidelines of the G20 Foreign Ministers' Meeting in Atlanta.

After the meeting, Rubio said he discussed "the real progress we have made in turning our shared priorities into real benefits for the Indo-Pacific".

"As our nations continue building reliable and open supply chains, supporting next-generation technologies, increasing maritime cooperation, and securing critical minerals, the United States, Australia, India, and Japan are delivering results for our people and the nations in the region," he said on X.

US ambassador to India, Sergio Gor said, "The third QUAD ministerial meeting in 6 months! Lots of ongoing work on joint initiatives."



External Affairs Minister S Jaishankar, US Secretary of State Marco Rubio, Japan's Foreign Minister Toshimitsu Motegi and Australia's Foreign Minister Penny Wong in Atlanta, Saturday. AP

A joint statement read, "The Quad ministers underscored the importance of economic security in maintaining global stability and prosperity. They reiterated their commitment to building reliable and open global supply chains and trusted and resilient infrastructure. They expressed grave concerns regarding economic coercion, including through arbitrary export restrictions, as well as non-market policies ... that result in overcapacity to disrupt global supply chains in critical industries."

"Recognising the importance of critical sea lanes, the uninterrupted flow of commerce, energy security, and the unhindered passage and safety of maritime crews and vessels without the imposition of tolls, they reiterated the absolute necessity to protect and preserve navigational rights and freedoms in the Strait of Hormuz, the Red Sea, and the Bab el-Mandeb Strait in accordance with international law as reflected in UNCLOS," it said.

They welcomed the US commitment to provide $10 million to promote infrastructure and facilities in India and ASEAN countries that recover critical minerals from waste. "The Quad ministers highlighted the importance of AI and initiatives like Pax Silica to the future of economic growth and expressed their intent to provide over $85 million of technical and financial assistance," it said.

The Quad ministers also expressed their "deep concern about the proliferation of online and cyber scams that pose a threat to national and international peace and security...The Quad countries are committed to dismantling these operations and holding transnational criminal groups and their leaders accountable."

On supporting energy security in the Indo-Pacific, it said that the Quad convened the first-ever Quad Fuel Security Forum in September and discussed "our commitment to advancing fuel security in the Indo-Pacific, including by strengthening their respective strategic petroleum reserves and stockholdings".

On advancing commercial diplomacy, it said the Quad ministers announced the first-ever Quad Business Leaders' Forum to foster greater ties across our public and private sectors.

'PUBLIC IMPEACHMENT' OF CEC

Keep Rahul as your mock PM for life: BJP's swipe at INDIA bloc

Press Trust of India
New Delhi, October 31

THE BJP on Saturday accused the INDIA bloc of making a "mockery" of Parliament and democracy after the grouping held a symbolic "public impeachment" of CEC Gyanesh Kumar, and said that the Congress will not succeed no matter how much it tries to "launch" its leader Rahul Gandhi.

"Go ahead and hold your mock parliament or take out your marches; the world has already understood that Rahul Gandhi simply lacks the fuel. This 'satellite' is never going to launch," BJP spokesperson Sambit Patra said at a press conference at the BJP headquarters.

Terming Congress's allegations of "vote chori" a "lie", he alleged that "it was Pandit Jawaharlal Nehru who became PM by 'vote chori'. He stole Sardar Vallabhbhai Patel's vote and became PM." The INDIA bloc was "making a mockery of democracy by holding a mock parliament today", Patra said.

"... please, do not dismantle this mock parliament you have created. Just seat Rahul Gandhi on the treasury benches... Keep him as your 'mock Prime Minister' for life; we have absolutely no objection," Patra said.

Describing the Opposition's mock parliament as a "drama", Patra rejected the opposition's charge of changes in Form 6, and accused Congress president Mallikarjun Kharge of lying on the issue.

"Only a declaration has been added with Form 6. No one's vote has been stolen... The SIR exercise is not yet complete. Those who were absent are being added. Those 6 crore voters, who have shifted (from their previous address), will also be added once they complete the process," Patra said.

NVS-03 launch successful, will strengthen India's navigation system

Anonna Dutt
New Delhi, October 31


ISRO Chairman V Narayanan

LIFTING OFF past midnight on Friday, ISRO's GSLV-F18 (Geosynchronous Satellite Launch Vehicle) rocket placed the NVS-03 satellite into orbit, restoring critical positioning and timing services for India's Navigation with Indian Constellation (NavIC) network.

"This mission was accomplished with the least turnaround time of just 56 days between successive GSLV missions. Last month, on September 4, we accomplished the GSLV-17/EOS-05 mission. Today, all the vehicle systems have performed as predicted and as expected," said ISRO Chairperson V Narayanan.

He said that this was an important component of the 'One Nation, One Time' project.

Prime Minister Narendra Modi congratulated the ISRO scientists. He said, "This mission marks an important step in strengthening NavIC, our indigenous satellite navigation system. Equipped with enhanced capabilities, NVS-03 will further our pursuit of self-reliance in critical technologies and support navigation services that benefit our people."

Over the next week, the spacecraft will execute a series of manoeuvres to transition from its elliptical orbit to its targeted high, circular orbit. This was the exact stage where NVS-02 failed last January, failing to reach its intended orbit and leaving it unable to provide positioning data.

The ISRO Chairman stated that launching the fourth operational satellite into the NavIC constellation has restored the minimum configuration needed for location data. The system had lost positioning capabilities due to satellite retirements, atomic clock malfunctions, and launch failures.

NavIC — operational name for the Indian Regional Navigation Satellite System (IRNSS) — is a seven-satellite constellation in the Indian subcontinent and 1,500 km around it. It is a regional satellite-based navigation system like America's Global Positioning System.

The system, when functional, can provide better coverage over the Indian landmass compared to GPS, whose signals are received in India at an angle that makes it difficult to access in certain areas, like valleys and forests. The ISRO chairman also said that the mission was significant considering that 80% of the contribution for the vehicle came from the Indian industry.


Jammu and Kashmir Chief Minister Omar Abdullah and journalist Nidhi Razdan pose for photographs as they announce their marriage. PTI

'It's done bro': Omar Abdullah, Nidhi Razdan announce wedding

Express News Service
Srinagar, October 31

JAMMU AND Kashmir Chief Minister Omar Abdullah on Saturday announced his wedding to journalist Nidhi Razdan.

"A new journey began yesterday," the 56-year-old Omar said in a post on X, tagging Razdan and sharing four photos from the private wedding function.

Sharing the same pictures, Razdan posted. "It is done bro."

Razdan, a Kashmiri Pandit originally from central Kashmir's Budgam, is a senior journalist and television anchor who worked with NDTV for more than two decades, eventually rising to executive director. She is the daughter of M K Razdan, the former editor-in-chief of the Press Trust of India (PTI), India's largest news agency.

The wedding took place three months after the Supreme Court said it would dissolve the marriage between Omar and his former wife Payal Singh.

The court made the decision after Omar and Payal told it they had mutually agreed to end their relationship.

Omar and Payal got married in 1994 after they met at Delhi's The Oberoi hotel, where they were working. They have two sons, Zahir and Zamir.

In 2011, Omar announced that they had separated, and a divorce case remained pending before the court for several years before the Supreme Court dissolved the marriage.

EXPRESS special

Why J&K Cabinet expansion has triggered revolt within NC

Unfulfilled poll promises, sidelining of senior leaders have ruffled feathers in party

Bashaarat Masood
Srinagar, October 31

THE MEETING of 18 aggrieved National Conference legislators in Srinagar on Friday has exposed the latest fault lines within the party leadership over the Cabinet expansion, with the leaders signalling that they were "unwilling" to accept the party's decision.

This comes days after four new ministers were inducted into the Cabinet. According to legislators, even before the cabinet expansion, individual outbursts and murmurs of discontent within the National Conference had already begun surfacing. But the cabinet expansion brought this discontent to a head, triggering an organised pushback in the form of the meeting at the residence of a party MLA in Srinagar.

"It (cabinet expansion) was never going to be an easy decision. Discontent had been simmering since the government was formed in 2024 as some senior leaders felt sidelined. There was a feeling that people close to the chief minister were getting preference," said a National Conference legislator. "With limited cabinet berths, the discontent was expected. But what has angered everyone is the arbitrariness of the decision. Once again, the senior leaders, who have remained loyal to the party through thick and thin, have been left out."

While choosing a Cabinet was always going to be a difficult exercise for Chief Minister Omar Abdullah, particularly with more contenders than available berths, his election promises further complicated the task.

During an election rally in Tangmarg, the CM had urged voters to give a decisive victory to party candidate Farooq Ahmad Shah, saying: "The bigger the victory margin, the bigger the portfolio."

At an election rally in Sopore, Omar made a similar pitch for National Conference (NC) candidate Irshad Rasool Kar. "If Irshad Kar sahib secures the biggest victory margin in the Baramulla district, he will be made minister in the next government," Omar told the rally. At Rajpora in Pulwama, he gave a similar assurance while campaigning for NC candidate Ghulam Mohidin Mir.

In all three constituencies, the NC candidates were first-time legislators, with Omar's public assurances raising their expectations.

"What was the need to promise a cabinet berth for everyone when he (Omar) knew that he could induct only nine ministers," said a party legislator from South Kashmir.

The legislators who met on Friday have several demands. These include dropping ministers who have been in the Cabinet for the past two years, fulfilling promises made to legislators and the public, and addressing grievances against two senior party leaders — CM's advisor Nasir Aslam Wani and NC treasurer and parliament member Gurwinder Singh Oberoi, popularly known as Shammi Oberoi. While Wani lost the Assembly elections, Oberoi did not contest.

"Neither has been able to secure people's mandate, yet both of them enjoy close access to Omar sahib and are part of the key decision-making," said a NC legislator from north Kashmir.

Omar Abdullah's biggest challenge now is to keep the flock together amid growing discontent among the party's old guard. Senior NC legislators Mubarak Gul from Srinagar and Abdul Majid Larmi from South Kashmir's Anantnag have publicly voiced their resentment over being left out of the Cabinet, while their supporters have staged protests demanding ministerial berths for them. Another senior party leader, Nazir Ahmad Khan, who represents Gurez, is understood to be upset over the "rebuke".

In an apparent attempt to pacify the disgruntled leaders, National Conference president Farooq Abdullah appointed Gul as the party's general secretary in place of Ali Mohammad Sagar, who was inducted into the Cabinet. However, Gul's refusal to accept the post has further complicated matters. Larmi, a three-time legislator, is also upset over being overlooked in favour of his junior, Altaf Ahmad Wani, who represents the Pahalgam Assembly constituency.

PUNJAB'S FALL HAS BEEN SLOW ENOUGH NOT TO SHOCK, BUT DEEP ENOUGH TO DEFINE A GENERATION

Sops, debt and Ed Sheeran song: At 60, why Punjab falls, Punjabi rises



NORTHERN LIGHTS

BY MANRAJ GREWAL SHARMA

A WEEKLY DISPATCH ON THE POLITICS AND IDEAS SHAPING NORTH INDIA

ANNIVERSARIES MAY prompt one to look back and ask some tough questions. On November 1 every year, Punjab remembers the formation of a smaller, Punjabi-speaking state in 1966.

The state was carved after years of the Akali Dal-led Punjabi Suba movement which was initially dismissed as parochial in the wake of India's Partition. The 1955 States Reorganisation Commission, in its report, refused to recognise Punjabi as a distinct, independent language. The Arya Samaj had also once urged Punjabis to abandon their language. That battle is now history.

Punjabi has travelled farther and wider than its critics ever imagined. Even the renowned British singer Ed Sheeran uses it effortlessly. Remember his 2025 hit song "Sapphire" in which he sang the line, "*Cham cham chamke sitare wargi* (she shines like a star)", like a true-blue Punjabi? And late Sidhu Moosewala continues to command a loyal fan base across states, including Bihar and beyond. So the Punjabi language or its survival are no longer the issues.

Troubled arc

Sixty years on, the state's real conversation is with "younger brother" Haryana, which seems to have outrun it. In Punjab's drawing rooms, their comparison still rankles in conversations.

To be fair, Punjab won the first round in this sibling rivalry. The Green Revolution made it India's food bowl. With just 1.53% of the country's land, it once accounted for about 70-73% of wheat and 40-45% of rice in the central pool in the early 1980s.

Punjab's per-capita income remained the highest in India until the mid-1990s despite releling from militancy. Till the early 2000s, it ranked near the top among major states in per-capita income.

Today, however, Punjab finds itself near the bottom, plunging to around the 10th spot on the per-capita score by the 2020s, and to the last position among major states on the NITI Aayog's Fiscal Health Index in 2025 and 2026.

Punjab's fall has been slow enough not to shock, and deep enough to define a generation. Its farmers have steadily continued to produce despite the diminishing returns and the spectre of rice drying up most of its water table. Despite the decades-long pitch for crop diversification, the acreage under rice cultivation keeps growing. This year, it touched a record 32.76 lakh hectares.

The costs are visible on the ground. In central Punjab, the water table has crashed from an average 7.8-9 mts below the surface in the late 1990s to more than 21 mts now. In many districts, ground water is falling by more than a metre annually as per the Central Ground Water Board. Some observers say Punjab may be exporting its ground water to the rest of India through rice.

The Centre also no longer needs Punjab the way it once did. Other states have become self-sufficient or surplus in food production. Punjab's share in the central pool has plummeted — wheat from 70% in the 1980s to about 30% in recent years, and rice from 40% down to 20-25%. While the procurement of grains in absolute terms remains large, the state's old leverage is gone.

Freebies amid crisis

The reasons for Punjab's economic troubles, however, go much beyond agriculture. The state has seen a slew of populist policies being implemented as welfare schemes with successive governments across party lines vying with the other to champion them.

In 1996-97, the then Congress chief minister Rajinder Kaur Bhattal first gave free power to small farmers just as her tenure was about to end. The succeeding Akali Dal-BJP government led by CM Parkash Badal promptly extended it to all farmers. It also started Shagun, a cash gift scheme for poor families for the marriage of their daughters.

In 2002, the new Congress government led by CM Capt Amarinder Singh scrapped the free power policy and introduced a flat tariff regime. But political pressure forced it to restore power subsidies in 2005.

After his return to the helm, Parkash Badal launched the "atta-dal" scheme in 2007 and, in 2015-16 during his second consecutive term, the free pilgrimage programme for the elderly. In 2021, the Amarinder-led Congress government rolled out free bus rides for women.

The current Bhagwant Mann-led AAP government, which assumed power in 2022, has taken the freebie model to a new level. It provides 300 units of free electricity monthly to domestic consumers. The power subsidy bill alone costs the state an amount raging from Rs 15,500 crore to Rs 20,500 crore per annum.

In July this year, the Mann government launched the Mawan Dhiyaan Satkar scheme to give monthly cash to every eligible woman in the state. These are popular sops, which many say could buy loyalty or silence. They also lock the state's finances into a debt trap.

Once a freebie is given, it is virtually impossible to withdraw it. Every government inherits the dole and the bill. The result is a state budget in which interest payments, power subsidy, salaries and pensions together swallow most of the revenue. What remains is too little for roads, schools, hospitals, skill centres or industry. Punjab's gross capital formation, the money spent on assets that create future growth, has lagged behind the national average by 16-26 percentage points for two decades. The cumulative investment shortfall runs into lakhs of crores.

Prof R S Ghuman, in his 2025 study "Walking with the Ups and Downs of Punjab Economy", says over 18,700 industrial units have shut down across the state since mid-2000, 43% in Amritsar alone. Batala, the foundry hub, is almost deserted, and Mandi Gobindgarh, the steel town, is tottering.

Fraught future

From manufacturing, Punjab has shifted its focus to real estate, even as the flight of capital continues. An industrialist from Malerkotla recently said he was making investments in Telangana despite the language barrier. Most of the state's old industrial houses have units in states as far as Chhattisgarh. There has not been any major new investments into Punjab — and the menaces of drugs, gangs, gun culture, and a hostile border do not help.

The numbers show the scale of the crisis. Punjab's outstanding debt stood at Rs 3.46 lakh crore in 2023-24. It is projected to cross Rs 4.17 lakh crore by 2025-26 and to Rs 4.5 lakh crore by 2027. The state's debt-to-GSDP ratio remains in the mid-to-high 40s, indicating that its outstanding debt is equivalent to nearly half of its annual economic output. Interest alone consumes more than a fifth of revenue, while debt servicing takes over 40%. The state is no longer able to balance its books without fresh borrowing. "Punjab's finances are in the ICU," says economist R S Ghuman.

The IT boom bypassed Punjab. The question now is, would it be the same for the AI wave, which is reshaping the world?

Observers however believe that Punjab could still do course-correction if it cuts indiscriminate freebies, raises productive investment, forces real crop diversification, and rebuilds its industry. Or else, it can just keep borrowing, distributing sops, and watching the next generation leave the state.

Sixty years after the state's reorganisation, Punjabi continues to flourish. It is Punjab itself that needs to be rescued.

(MANRAJ GREWAL SHARMA IS NATIONAL EDITOR, NORTH, THE INDIAN EXPRESS)

President Murmu opens Nashik Kumbh Mela 2027

Alok Deshpande
Nashik, October 31





(Above) People perform *aarti* at Ramkund near Godavari River; President Droupadi Murmu during the ceremonial launch of 2027 Nashik-Trimbakeshwar Simhastha Kumbh Mela in Nashik on Saturday. DEEPAK JOSHI

PRESIDENT DROUPADI Murmu on Saturday said that the gathering of devotees at Kumbh Melas over centuries reflected India's cultural and spiritual unity.

"The organisation of such Kumbhs for centuries without fail is an indication of the country's mythological, historical, cultural, social and spiritual power. For centuries, innumerable devotees gather at Kumbh Mela on designated dates and it is an example of India's cultural and spiritual unity. It represents examples of India's devotion towards faith and social harmony (Samajik Samrasata)... I believe this Kumbh will connect our historic inheritance to modern dimensions," she said.

President Murmu was speaking ahead of the Maha Goda Aarti ceremony on Saturday evening. Earlier in the day, she unfurled the Dharmadhwaja, or religious flag, at Ramtirtha on the banks of the Godavari in Nashik, marking the launch of the 2027 Nashik-Trimbakeshwar Simhastha Kumbh Mela.

The President said India had an ancient tradition of religious and spiritual gatherings, with historical records showing that people participated in such events even about 1,400 years ago. "Times have changed, and generations have passed; however, the flow of faith in the hearts of Indians has remained uninterrupted," she said.

Murmu also referred to Maharashtra's history of valour dating back to Chhatrapati Shivaji Maharaj, its contribution to social change and its entrepreneurial spirit.

Speaking ahead of President Murmu's address, Chief Minister Devendra Fadnavis said that Sanatan culture brought together different streams of thought, forms of worship and sects, just as rivers meet an ocean. "Kumbh is an expression of all these and therefore Kumbh is an expression of our Sanatan culture. When the world sees all these different ideas taking a dip in river Godavari, it realises that the oldest culture in the world is our Sanatan thought," he said.

He also described Kumbh as a symbol of Samrasta (social harmony), citing the participation of 6,500 tribal people in the Godavari puja. Addressing the saints and members of the akharas (monastic orders), Fadnavis said he was their servant and sought their blessings for the successful conduct of the Kumbh.

The Simhastha Kumbh will continue until July 2028. The flags will be lowered in ceremonies at Trimbakeshwar on July 24, 2028, and at Nashik on July 29, 2028, bringing the approximately 21-month festival period to a close.

UP voter roll 'discrepancies': Disable login IDs of all 806 computer assistants, orders CEO

Maulshree Seth
Lucknow, October 31

AFTER REPORTS of alleged discrepancies in the voter lists in Azamgarh and Pilibhit districts, Uttar Pradesh Chief Electoral Officer (CEO) Navdeep Rinwa on Saturday directed the district election officers (DEOs) to immediately deactivate the ECINET login credentials of all 806 computer assistants deployed in 403 Assembly constituencies of the state.

Once their access to the portal is withdrawn, voter-related entries will be made by booth-level officers (BLOs), the CEO office said. Two computer assistants each assigned to every Assembly seat have been working as operators at voter registration centres in the offices of electoral registration officers (EROs).

In the October 31 order, the CEO's office asked the DEOs to ensure that all computer assistants' login IDs in their districts are marked inactive or disabled forthwith. The EROs concerned will confirm the deactivation, while DEOs must personally verify compliance and submit an action-taken report to the CEO's office, the directive stated.

Also, the outsourcing agency concerned has been directed to terminate the services of the computer assistant allegedly involved in discrepancies in electoral roll entries in the Pilibhit Assembly seat.

The office said the instructions must be implemented on priority, stressing that no laxity will be tolerated in "maintaining the integrity, security and transparency of electoral roll-related work".

Explaining the rationale behind the decision to deactivate the login IDs of computer assistants, a senior official told *The Indian Express* that the ECI had initially provided computer assistants the access to the portal because many BLOs were not equipped to work on the BLO application at the time. But since most BLOs have now been trained to use the application, the need for operators' assistance was no longer felt.

"Only BLOs concerned will submit forms relating to the polling booth assigned to them. Forms can either be submitted either online on ECINET/BLO app or through physical submission, which will be digitised," the official said.

BJP yatra to mark 650th birth anniv of Sant Ravidas

Lucknow: The BJP will organise a yatra from Jalandhar to Varanasi from November 18 to mark the 650th birth anniversary of Sant Ravidas and spread his message of social harmony, a party leader said on Saturday. The 2,558-km journey will pass through eight states and UTs, BJP national vice-president Lal Singh Arya said. It will begin in Jalandhar on November 18 and conclude in Varanasi on December 3. PTI

TAMIL NADU MARITIME BOARD
(GOVERNMENT OF TAMILNADU)
No.171, South Kesavaperumalpuram, Off Greenways Road,
Raja Annamalaipuram, Chennai – 600 028.

Ref No: 4244/S1/2026 Dated 02.11.2026

INVITATION FOR EXPRESSION OF INTEREST (EoI)

Expression of Interest (EoI) are invited from ferry operators for operation between Nagapattinam (India) and Kankesanthurai, Jaffna (Sri Lanka). The EoI Document can be downloaded from the website https://tntenders.gov.in/nicgep/app from 11.00 hrs on 02.11.2026 onwards.

VICE CHAIRMAN AND
CHIEF EXECUTIVE OFFICER.

DIPR.949/DISPLAY/2026

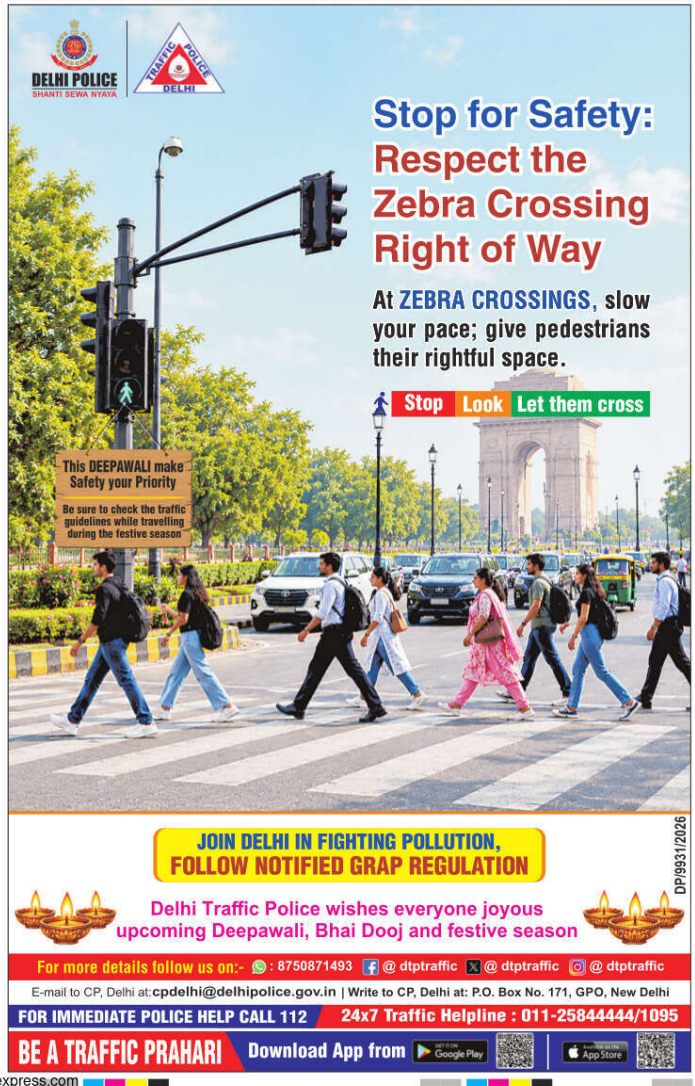
CHANDRAPUR CANCER CARE FOUNDATION

PT. DEENDAYAL UPADHYAY CHANDRAPUR CANCER HOSPITAL,
an initiative of Department of Medical Education and Research (Government of Maharashtra), District Mineral Foundation-Chandrapur and Tata Trusts, is seeking qualified candidates for the following positions in Chandrapur, Maharashtra:

Position / Role	Educational Qualification	Experience
Medical Director	Any post graduate medical degree i.e., MD / DM / MS / MCH recognized by National Medical Commission (NMC) or Medical Council of India (MCI).	10+ years of experience after finishing required super specialty degree, and minimum 15 years after finishing broad specialty degree in any subject related to Oncology. Administrative experience as Head of Department (HOD) of Oncology department will be preferred.
Assistant / Deputy / Medical Superintendent	MBBS & PG in Hospital Administration	3+ years of experience in handling a unit independently
Consultant – Nuclear Medicine	MD / DNB in Nuclear Medicine from a recognized institute	1 year post DNB / MD experience preferable
Consultant – Surgical Oncology	MCH / DNB in Surgical Oncology from a recognized institute	3 years' experience in Surgical Oncology
Senior Resident – Surgical Oncology	MS / DNB in Surgical Oncology from a recognized institute	1 year post DNB / MS experience
Consultant – Head & Neck Surgical Oncology	MCH / DNB in Head & Neck surgery from a recognized institute, or MS ENT / DNB ENT	2 years' experience in Head & Neck surgery from a reputed oncology hospital
Senior Resident – Head & Neck Oncology	MD / DNB in ENT from a recognized institute	1 year post DNB / MD experience
Senior Resident – Radiation Oncology	MD / DNB in Radiation Oncology from a recognized institute	1 year post DNB / MD experience
Consultant – Medical Oncology	DM / DNB in Medical Oncology from a recognized institute	1 year post DM / DNB experience preferable
Consultant – Anesthesiology & Intensive Care	MD / DNB from a recognized institute	1 year post DNB / MD experience preferable
Senior Resident – Anesthesiology	MD / DNB in Anesthesia from a recognized institute	1 year post DNB / MD experience
General Duty Medical Officers / Resident Medical Officers	MBBS	0–3 years of experience
Team Leader / Senior Staff Nurse / Staff Nurse	GNM or B.Sc. (Nursing)	0–8 years of experience with hospital
General Surgeon	MBBS with Postgraduate qualification in general surgery with valid medical registration.	1–3 years of experience in surgical oncology or cancer surgery is preferred; complex cancer surgery usually requires specialist oncology training and credentials.
Consultant Physician – Internal Medicine	MBBS with postgraduate qualification in internal medicine or the locally recognized equivalent, and current medical registration.	1–3 years of experience in managing cancer patients' general medical needs and treatment-related complications is valuable; oncology training is preferred for specialist cancer-care duties.
Operations Manager	Masters in Hospital Administration, Healthcare Management, business administration, or Equivalent field.	10+ Years of experience required in which 3–5 years of hospital operations experience is expected, ideally including oncology or another specialty service.
Business Development Manager (BDM)	MBA in Marketing	7–10 years with managerial experience in healthcare business development, referral networks, outreach, and service-line growth.
HR Executive	Bachelor's degree in HR, business, or a related field	1–2 years of experience in hospital recruitment, onboarding, employee relations, and healthcare staffing or compliance.
Medical Social Worker (MSW)	Master of Social Work, ideally with medical or psychiatric social-work training.	1–3 years of experience in supporting patients and families, coordinating care, counselling, and connecting people with financial or community resources. Oncology experience will be preferred.
Senior Executive – MRD (Medical Record Department)	Bachelor's degree or diploma in health information management, medical records, or a related field.	2–3 Years of experience in patient records, coding, confidentiality, medical terminology, and electronic health-record systems is required.
Legal Assistant	Bachelor's degree in law or a related field; an LLB may be required depending on the employer and duties.	0–2 years of experience in contracts, legal research, documentation, and healthcare or hospital matters is preferred.
Medical Transcriptionist	Certificate, diploma, or relevant training in medical transcription, with strong English, typing, listening, and medical terminology skills.	1–2 Years of experience required especially familiarity with cancer diagnoses, treatments, medications, and pathology terms.

To know more about the qualification / experience / job role of above vacancies and also apply for other position, please visit www.chandrapurcancercare.org/careers Candidates interested in applying for the role, may also send their CVs at careers@chandrapurcancercare.org Last date of submission of application is **30 November, 2026**





Moments after Azam steps out of jail, ED arrests him in PMLA case

Express News Service
Lucknow, October 31



A videograb of former UP minister Azam Khan speaking to mediapersons before being arrested by the ED in Rampur, Saturday.

SENIOR SAMAJWADI Party leader and former Uttar Pradesh cabinet minister Azam Khan was arrested by the Enforcement Directorate in connection with a PMLA case moments after he stepped out of the Rampur district jail on Saturday evening.

Khan, along with his son Abdullah Azam Khan, was granted bail by the Allahabad High Court in a double PAN card case two days ago. Abdullah, also lodged in the Rampur jail, went to his home after being released from jail.

The HC, however, had dismissed their plea for staying their conviction and had fixed the hearing in the revision petition in January. The two have been in jail since their sentencing in November last year.

The case pertained to Abdullah obtaining two PAN cards with different dates of birth, and his father was named as an accomplice in the alleged forgery.

The ED had registered the PMLA case over alleged financial irregularities in the construction of Mohammad Ali Jauhar University in Rampur. Azam Khan is the founder of the university and the chairperson of the Maulana Mohammad Ali Jauhar Trust that runs the institution.

He will be produced in a designated court in Ghaziabad on Sunday since the case is being investigated by the agency's Delhi branch, it is learnt.

The ED had initiated its probe after the Rampur district administration and police started filing cases against Azam and the Trust on charges of constructing the university on the land belonging to government or owned by locals, when the Samajwadi Party was in power in Uttar Pradesh and he was a minister.

On October 13, the Rampur police also lodged another case against Khan and the Trust under charges under the Bharatiya Nyaya Sanhita (BNS) and the Prevention of Corruption Act in connection with alleged financial irregularities in the construction of the university.

As soon as Azam and Abdullah walked out of the jail gate around 6.30 pm amid sloganeering by their supporters, the ED officials approached him and showed some him documents apparently related to an arrest order.

The SP leader was seen shouting at the agency officials who asked him to accompany them. After a heated argument, Azam said addressing the mediapersons standing nearby, "*Kya kahne ko hai. Kahne ko raha kya hai. Musalman hone ki saza hai. Galati ye hai..university banayi ek Musalman ne. Ye hai gunaah. Bachchon ke school banaye. Ye hai gunaah hamara* (What is left to say. This is the punishment for being a Muslim. This is the offence. A Muslim set up an university. This is the offence. Established schools for children. This is my offence)."

EXPRESS special

As Uttarakhand chopper crash probe widens, focus on flights that took off before and after

Flying operations in Badrinath Valley were suspended for 3 hours on Friday, but resumed after conditions improved

Vidheesha Kuntamalla
Dehradun, October 31

NOT LONG after the Trans Bharat Aviation helicopter, which crashed in Uttarakhand's Sthan Marwadi on Friday, took off, two other choppers departed from Badrinath and landed safely at their destinations, The Indian Express has learnt. One left just eight minutes after the aircraft, and another nearly an hour later, officials told The Indian Express, adding that two other flights that flew before the Trans Bharat chopper also completed their journeys safely.

This, officials indicated, will be considered as part of the probe as they try to understand whether the crash was the result of "adverse weather conditions" – as initially suggested by the authorities – or a combination of factors.

While flying operations in the Badrinath Valley had been suspended for three hours on Friday morning because of inclement weather between 9 am and noon, they resumed after conditions improved.

The Trans Bharat helicopter departed from Dehradun at 12.20 pm and landed at Badrinath at 1.11 pm. Immediately after landing, it is learnt that the pilot picked up five passengers for the return journey to Dehradun. The helicopter crashed while making this journey.

"It was not like the flight was starting from Badrinath; it had already made a successful trip from Dehradun to Badrinath and was going back to Dehradun... Two flights were flown successfully before this flight too. And two flights were again safely able to reach Dehradun after this flight... We are not sure what exactly went wrong – it could be a local weather phenomenon or some other issue," an official told The Indian Express on the condition of anonymity.

He added that authorities are speaking to pilots who had flown in the region around the time of the accident to understand the conditions prevailing at the time.

The Aircraft Accident Investigation Bureau (AAIB) team has reached the accident site, and efforts are underway to retrieve as many aircraft components as possible to reconstruct the sequence of events.

"We have not received the black box yet. The team is at the accident spot. And we are trying to retrieve as many parts as possible to analyse the situation completely," the official said.

The wreckage has been almost entirely destroyed, he said, with the tail section being the only part that remains relatively intact.

The Chamoli district administration's initial Action Taken Report had said the helicopter encountered adverse weather conditions in the Hathi Parvat area and crashed while descending towards a lower altitude. The India Meteorological Department had issued an orange alert for Chamoli on October 30, warning of thunderstorms accompanied by lightning, hail and gusty winds of 40-50 kmph in isolated areas.

Meanwhile, the recovery of the six bodies from the crash site has been hampered by the difficult terrain. The accident site is 20-22 km from the nearest roadhead and can only be accessed through a difficult trek.

A joint team of the National Disaster Response Force (NDRF) and State Disaster Response Force (SDRF) was dispatched on Saturday morning to retrieve the bodies and bring them to the nearest roadhead.

Speaking to The Indian Express, Uttarakhand Civil Aviation Development Authority Chief Executive Officer Prateek Jain said, "They have been on the route for the last 12 hours, and will be reaching by tonight to the nearest roadhead... the district administration will transport them by ambulance from Joshimath to Rishikesh. Post-mortem examinations will be conducted there, after which the bodies will be handed over to the families."

Meanwhile, the DGCA has decided to make the presence of a co-pilot mandatory for all charter helicopter operations for the remainder of the season, the official said. A meeting was held on Saturday to discuss flight operations for the remainder of the season, following which the regulator decided against allowing single-pilot operations for charter flights.

"The DGCA has taken a decision that we will not allow single-pilot operations. It's a mandatory requirement now. We have set it in stone that a co-pilot will be mandatory for all the charter operations from now on; further investigation into the cause of the accident is underway," Jain said.



SDRF personnel carry mortal remains of the Chamoli air crash victims, on Saturday. PTI

यूको बैंक UCO BANK
Honours your trust
Zonal Office : 75/4, Siddhi Sadan, Halsey Road
Near Badshahi Naka Police Station, Kanpur - 208001
E-mail : zokanpur.rec@ucobank.co.in

SALE NOTICE FOR SALE OF IMMOVABLE PROPERTIES [See proviso to Rule – 8(6)]

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

Notice is hereby given to the public in general and in particular to the Borrower(s) and Guarantor(s) that the below described immovable property(ies) mortgaged/charged to **UCO Bank** Secured Creditor, the possession of which has been taken by the Authorised Officer of **UCO Bank** Secured Creditor, will be sold on **"As is Where is", "As is what is"** and **"Whatever there is"** basis on **17.11.2026,** for recovery of Bank's Dues from Borrower(s) and Guarantor(s) to **UCO Bank** Secured Creditor. The details are described as below:

Sr. No.	Name & Address of Borrower(s)/ Guarantor(s)	Demand Notice Date / Possession Notice Date	Description of Immovable Property(ies) with known encumbrances, if any	Bank's Dues	Reserve Price / Earnest Money Deposit
Branch:- Firozabad, District -Firozabad; Contact Number(s):- +91-9713287746, +91-8789356663; Email Id:- firoza@ucobank.co.in, zokanpur.rec@ucobank.co.in					
1.	**Borrower:** Mr. Ram Naresh Rajput S/o. Shri Nathu Ram @ Natu Ram Rajput **Co-Borrower:** Smt. Malti Rajpoot W/o. Shri Ram Naresh Rajpoot **Both Address-1:-** H. No. 95, Gayakwad Nagar (Santosh Nagar), Raipura Road, Opp. Sati Ashram, Firozabad-283203 (U.P.) **Both Address-2:-** H. No. 370, Nagla Karan Singh, Kotla Road, Firozabad-283203	28.06.2018 06.10.2018 (Symbolic Possession)	All that part and parcel of the property consists of land and building measuring **760.00 Sq. Ft. (70.68 Square Meter)** as per Bahi No. **1**, Zild No. **9724**, Page No. **163 to 190**, Sl. No. **12525**, Registered on **29.11.2013** at **Sub-Registrar-I, Firozabad,** situated at **Mohalla – Gayakwad Nagar, Tehsil & District Firozabad** standing in the name of **Shri Ram Naresh Rajput S/o Shri Nathu Ram Rajput** R/o. **H. No. 95, Gayakwad Nagar (Santosh Nagar), Raipura Road, Opp. Sati Ashram, Firozabad-283203 (U.P.).** **Details of Boundaries (As per Deed): East:** Plot Sunita Jain, **West:** 8 Ft. Wide Way, **North:** 14 Ft. Wide Way, **South:** Plot Sanjay Jain Known Encumbrances, if any - **Nil**	**Rs. 39,04,002.80/- (Rupees Thirty Nine Lakh Four Thousand Two & Paisa Eighty only)** as on **28.10.2026** plus Unapplied interest and charges as applicable	**Rs. 20,99,000/-** **Rs. 2,09,900/-**
Date :- 29.10.2026		**Place : Firozabad**		**Authorized Officer (UCO Bank)**	
Branch:- Rawatpara (0301), District -Agra; Contact Number(s):- +91-8218607534, +91-8789356663; Email Id:- rawatp@ucobank.co.in, zokanpur.rec@ucobank.co.in					
2.	**Borrower(s):** Mr. Gulshan Kumar S/o Mr. Bharat Singh, Mr. Dal Chand S/o Mr. Panni Lal, Mr. Bharat Singh S/o Mr. Panni Lal, **All Address 1 :** 55/185, Bagh Nanak Chand, Near Idgah Bus Stand, Shahganj, Agra-282001 **All Address 2 :** 56/11F/1E, Chak Doyam, New House Nagla Fakir Chand, Agra-282001	07.04.2026 09.07.2026 (Symbolic Possession)	All that part and parcel of the property consists of Land and building, measuring area **125.55 Sq. Mtr.** registered at Book No. **1**, Volume No. **3837**, Page No. **393 to 395** at Sr. No. **1250** registered on **04.07.1989 Sub-Registrar Office Agra Tehsil-Sadar & District Agra** situated at **House No. 56/11F/1E** situated at **Chak Doyam, New House Nagla Fakir Chand, Agra** Property standing in the name of **Mr. Dal Chand** and **Mr. Bharat Singh S/o Late Pannilal** resident of **55/185 Baag Nanak Chand Shahganj, Agra 282001.** **Details of Boundaries (As per Deed): East:** House of Gupta Ji, **West:** House of Kamla Dixit, **North:** Road, **South:** Other Proprty Known Encumbrances, if any - **Nil**	**Rs. 21,84,015.46 (Rupees Twenty One Lakh Eighty Four Thousand Fifteen Paisa Forty Six Only)** as on **28.10.2026** plus Unapplied interest and charges as applicable	**Rs. 35,82,000/-** **Rs. 3,58,200/-**
Date :- 29.10.2026		**Place : Rawatpara, Agra**		**Authorized Officer (UCO Bank)**	
Branch:- BKD Jhansi, (1950) District -Jhansi; Contact Number(s):- +91-8630229224, +91-8789356663; Email Id:-bundel@ucobank.co.in, zokanpur.rec@ucobank.co.in					
3.	**(Borrower):** Rajneesh Kushwaha S/o Shri Hariram Kushwaha **(Co-Borrower):** Ms. Aradhana **Address 1 of Both:** 24 Kammod Nagar Royal City Jhansi-284003 **Address 2 of Both:** 40/1, Mau Dehat, Mauranipur Jhansi-284204 **Guarantor(s):** Shri Hariram Kushwaha S/o Bhagwan Das **Address:** 24 Kammod Nagar Royal City Jhansi-284003	13.01.2017 18.03.2017 (Symbolic Possession)	All that part and parcel of the property consists of land and building measuring area **74.35 Sqr. Mtr.** or **800 Sq. Ft.** As per Bahi No **01**, Zild No. **5282**, Page No. **199-216** at Sl. No. **4045**, Registered on **18.05.2015** at Sub Registrar Jhansi, Situated at **Arazi No. 445, Mauza -Bijauli Abadi Rajgarh, Teh Nad Distt-Jhansi.** Property Standing in the Name of **Mr. Rajneesh Kushwaha S/o Hariram Kushwaha** Resident of **24 Kammod Nagar Royal city Jhansi-284002.** **Details of Boundaries (As per Deed) East:** Plot of seller, **Weast:** Plot of Gaurav Kushwaha. **North:** Plot of Khuman, **South:** Road 5.49 meter wide. Known Encumbrances, if any - **Nil**	**Rs. 30,42,928.51/- (Rupees Thirty Lakh Forty Two Thousand Nine Hundred Twenty Eight & Paisa Fifty One only)** as on **28.10.2026** plus Unapplied interest and charges as applicable	**Rs. 7,78,000/-** **Rs. 77,800/-**
Date :- 29.10.2026		**Place : Jhansi**		**Authorized Officer (UCO Bank)**	
Branch:- Bada Bazar (0310), District -Jhansi; Contact Number(s):- +91-9651042174, +91-8789356663; Email Id:- jhansi@ucobank.co.in, zokanpur.rec@ucobank.co.in					
4.	**Borrower(s):** M/s. Kanchan Garments (Proprietor: Shri Nitin Kanchan) **Address:** Shop No. 208, Sarafa Bazar, Jhansi U.P.-284002 **Proprietor: Shri Nitin Kanchan S/o Shri Suresh Kanchan** **Address:** 92 (old), 110/3 (New), Hazaryana, Jhansi-284001 **Borrower(s):** Shri Nitin Kanchan S/o Shri Suresh Kanchan **(Co-Borrower):** Smt. Sushma Kanchan W/o Shri Suresh Kanchan **Address:** 92 (old), 110/3 (New), Hazaryana, Jhansi-284001	02.07.2019 08.11.2019 (Symbolic Possession)	All that part and parcel of the property consists of land and building measuring **564 sq. ft. (52.42 square meter)** as per Bahi No. **1**, Zild No. **5680**, Page No. **253 to 276**, Sl. No. **2136**, Registered on **26.03.2014** at **Sub-Registrar-I Jhansi,** situated at **H. No. 92(Old), 110/3 (New), Mohalla Hazaryana, City & District Jhansi** standing in the name of **Shri Nitin Kanchan S/o Shri Suresh Kanchan** resident of **92 (Old), 110/3(New), Hazaryana, Jhansi - 284002.** **Details of Boundaries (As per Deed): East:** House of Ramdas; **West:** Rasta 6.10 Meter; **North:** House of Neeraj Batra; **South:** House of Pradeep Kanchan Known Encumbrances, if any - **Nil**	**Rs. 20,74,091.68 (Rupees Twenty Lakh Seventy Four Thousand Ninety One Paisa Sixty Eight Only)** as on **28.10.2026** plus Unapplied interest and charges as applicable	**Rs. 15,00,000/-** **Rs. 1,50,000/-**
Date :- 29.10.2026		**Place : Jhansi**		**Authorized Officer (UCO Bank)**	

Date of Inspection 09.11.2026 11:00 AM to 16.11.2026 12:00 PM | Last Date for submission of Earnest Money Deposit (EMD) for Bid : 16.11.2026 upto 12:00 PM as per (IST) Date & Time of E-auction :- 17.11.2026 from 01:00 PM to 5:00 PM as per (IST) with unlimited extension of 10 minutes each with Bid Incremental Amount of Rs. 10,000/-

For detailed terms and conditions of the sale, please visit the websites **https://baanknet.com**

Note:- Hindi & English versions of this Notice are being published in Hindi & English Newspapers respectively. It is clarified that in case of any contradiction in Hindi and English version of the Notice, the English version of the Notice will prevail.

Chorbagan stampede: SIT questions 13 people, seeks accounts of police

Express News Service
Kolkata, October 31

THE SIX-MEMBER SIT probing the Chorbagan stampede on Saturday questioned 13 people, including police personnel who were on duty at the time of the incident. The panel, headed by retired Calcutta High Court judge Anindita Roy Saraswati, held its second meeting at Writers' Building to review the probe. "We questioned 13 people today, particularly police personnel from Girish Park police station who were on duty during the tragedy. We also spoke to some fire service personnel," Saraswati said. She said the panel would summon eyewitnesses and local residents.



Delhi to Agra in 59 mins: PM approves bullet train corridor

Press Trust of India
Varanasi, October 31

RAILWAY MINISTER Ashwini Vaishnaw announced on Saturday that Prime Minister Narendra Modi has approved the north corridor of the bullet train project, which is expected to transform the lives of many people. He emphasised that the construction work for the bullet train, from pillar to girder, will be done in India.

"The construction is progressing rapidly. It will be fully 'Make in India', built by the youth and welders of India," he said.

Speaking before flagging off the new Vande Bharat Sleeper Express services between Varanasi and New Delhi from here, Vaishnaw said, "The prime minister has approved the north corridor of the bullet train, which will change the lives of many. The vision for the bullet train shared by the prime minister will greatly benefit the youth, the middle-income group, and artisans in small-scale industries. People will remember Prime Minister Modi for the next 100 years for this initiative." He detailed the north corridor's route, which will connect Delhi, Agra, Kanpur, Lucknow, Ayodhya, Varanasi, Prayagraj, Patna, Siliguri, and extend to Guwahati.

According to Vaishnaw, travel times will be significantly reduced: the journey from Delhi to Kanpur will take 1 hour and 45 minutes, from Delhi to Agra will take 59 minutes, and from Delhi to Lucknow will take 2 hours and 12 minutes. Additionally, the trip from Lucknow to Varanasi will take 1 hour and 21 minutes, while Varanasi to Delhi will take 3 hours and 35 minutes.

UP CM Yogi Adityanath said that a plan has been prepared to operate a bullet train between Delhi and Varanasi.

"This will allow the journey from Delhi to Varanasi to be covered in 3.5 hours...," he said.

Office of the Director, Disease Control & Farms,
Department of Animal Husbandry, U.P., Lucknow
No. 1027/Gen-1/X-84/MVU-ESVHD/2026-27, Dated 30 October, 2026

e-Tender NOTICE

This is to inform that the Department of Animal Husbandry, U.P., Lucknow, invites tenders for Packages B, C, and D, in connection with the operation of Mobile Veterinary Units (providing veterinary services and support to livestock through mobile veterinary units) in the state, via the e-tender portal: etender.up.nic.in.

The Scheduled dates and time for the e-Tender are :-

1-	Availability of Online Tender Forms:	Date 02-11-2026 from 05.00 P.M.
2-	Submission of Online Tender Forms start date:	Date 02-11-2026 from 05.30 P.M.
3-	Pre Bid Meeting	Date 16-11-2026 at 03.00 P.M.
4-	Last Date for online submission of tender form:	Date 23-11-2026 up to 02.00 P.M.
5-	Opening of Online Tender Forms (Technical bids):	Date 23-11-2026 up to 02.30 P.M.

The interested vendors can go through the documents and submit e-Bids on e-Tender Portal etender.up.nic.in only, as per the terms and conditions mentioned in the tender document. The detailed information will be also available on Departmental website **http://www.animalhusb.upsdc.gov.in/en**.

UPID-260021 Dt. 31/10/2026
www.upidadv.gov.in

Sd/-
Director,
Disease Control & Farms,
Department of Animal Husbandry,
Uttar Pradesh, Lucknow

PUBLIC NOTICE
ATTENTION

Restriction on Entry/Plying of Vehicles in Delhi

1. Vehicles Registered Outside Delhi

- Every year, from 1 November to 31 January, Other State registered BS-IV and below vehicles will not be allowed to ply in Delhi.

2. Commercial Goods Vehicles & Buses Registered Outside Delhi

- With effect from **1 November 2026, commercial goods vehicles (LGV/MGV/HGV)** and **buses which are BS-IV and below** will not be permitted to enter Delhi. This also includes buses operating under **All India Tourist Permit and other service regimes**.

Exemptions: The above restrictions shall not apply on BS-VI, CNG, LNG, Electric, emergency/sovereign-duty vehicles and vehicles registered in Delhi.

Note 1: Violation shall attract action as per law.

Note 2: GRAP restrictions shall also apply, as and when enforced.

Sd/-
Transport Department
Government of NCT of Delhi

DIP/Shabdarth/Classified/0259/26-27

CM warns CPM: Will reopen Nandigram, Chhoto Angaria cases, won't spare anyone

Atri Mitra
Kolkata, October 31

WEST BENGAL Chief Minister Suvendu Adhikari on Saturday threatened to reopen cases related to the Chhoto Angaria massacre of 2001 and the violence in Nandigram in 2007, warning that those involved would not be spared. Addressing a 'Save Democracy' rally in Garbeta, he also accused the CPI(M) and the Trinamool Congress of joining hands to revive political violence in West Bengal.

Targeting CPI(M) state secretary Mohammad Salim, Adhikari said, "You had the temerity to say that the BJP came to attack the CPI(M) and people resisted." He said he would reopen cases against those who allegedly travelled from the CPI(M) office in Garbeta to Nandigram with firearms during the 2007 anti-land acquisition movement.

"I will reopen the crime files committed during the Left Front era in Nandigram and Chhoto Angaria. I will reopen the cases of those who went from the CPI(M) office in Garbeta with guns to create the bloody sunrise in Nandigram in 2007. Not a single person will be spared," he said.

Adhikari also recalled a confrontation with former CPI(M) leader and minister Sushanta Ghosh, claiming that party leaders had threatened to break his legs if he entered the area. "Within three days, I went to Chandrakona Road and held a meeting standing on Sushanta Ghosh's chest," he said.

The CM accused the CPI(M) and the TMC of coming together to create unrest in the state. "What the Trinamool is today is the CPI(M). The two have merged and want to bring back those days of anarchy," he said.

He also referred to the alleged assault on BJP MP Pranata Tudu during the 2024 elections and asked her to send him a copy of the FIR. He said he would examine how many people had been arrested and threatened action against those still at large.

"We have not forgotten what they did. They did the same thing in Keshpur. The time has come to settle all accounts," he said, recalling an alleged attack on him at Chandrakona Road while he was returning from Purulia.

The Chhoto Angaria massacre refers to the alleged killing of 11 TMC supporters by CPI(M) workers in the village in Paschim Medinipur district on January 4, 2001.

IIT-B student's suicide: Parents move HC, seek CBI probe or SIT

Express News Service
Mumbai, October 31

SEEKING A fair and independent investigation into the death of their 20-year-old son, Sahil Wakode, the parents of the deceased IIT-Bombay student have approached the Bombay High Court. Their petition seeks a transfer of the probe to the Central Bureau of Investigation (CBI) or, alternatively, another Special Investigation Team (SIT), and monitoring of the investigation by a retired High Court judge.

A separate plea has also been filed before a special court designated under the Scheduled Castes and Scheduled Tribes (Prevention of Atrocities) Act. It seeks a status report on the action taken on six representations Sahil's father has made to the police so far, along with directions for the preservation of evidence and action over the alleged unauthorised circulation of CCTV footage, private phone conversations, his apology letter and other information.

Sahil, a second-year BTech student, allegedly died by suicide on September 18. The institute has said the incident followed his being caught using his mobile phone during an examination.

However, the petition by Sahil's parents, Ravindra and Sonali Wakode seeks a probe into allegations of abetment of suicide linked to "acts and illegal omissions of persons in authority at IIT Bombay".

The petition claims that the police have so far failed to investigate the case with the seriousness the law demands. Sahil's father has been on a hunger strike, demanding justice for his son.

Ujjwal Nikam appears as SPP in Ketan Agarwal murder case

Express News Service
Pune, October 31

TRIAL IN the Ketan Agarwal murder case began at Wadgaon Maval court in Pune district on Saturday.

Ujjwal Nikam, a senior lawyer and Rajya Sabha member, who has been appointed as special public prosecutor in this case, was present in the court. All three accused Siya Goyal (20), Chetan Chaudhary (22) and Ritesh Hange (22) were also brought before the court.

Nikam said, "We requested the court to initiate the procedure to frame charges against the three accused persons. Court has allowed us to submit a list of documents pertaining to the evidence gathered against the three accused, on which the prosecution would be relying," he said.

Meanwhile, lawyers representing Siya and Chetan filed applications seeking bail and claimed there was no evidence against them. Siya's counsel also submitted an application seeking her discharge from this case.

Nikam told the court these applications by defence lawyers cannot be heard till the prosecution submits its case and the list of evidence. Court will hear the prosecution arguments and the applications by accused in the next hearing on November 17.

Meiteis, Nagas hold rally in Imphal for SoO truce pact abrogation

Jimmy Leivon
Imphal, October 31

IN WHAT is arguably one of the largest public gatherings in Manipur since the start of the ethnic conflict in 2023, a massive rally was held by Meitei and Naga groups in Imphal on Saturday. The demonstration follows a recent flare-up in tensions involving both groups and the Kuki-Zo community.

Organised by the Coordinating Committee on Manipur Integrity (COCOMI), the rally was held to demand lasting peace, justice for victims of the prolonged crisis, safe resettlement of internally displaced persons, and abrogation of the Suspension of Operations (SoO) agreement with Kuki militant groups.

Naga apex body, United Naga Council (UNC), endorsed Saturday's rally. It began at Tiddim Ground in Kwakeithel and culminated in a meeting at Thau Ground in Thangmeiband, Imphal West district.

Thousands of people from different walks of life took part, raising slogans such as 'Remove SoO', 'End proxy war', 'Bring peace in Manipur', and 'Manipur needs justice'. In response to COCOMI's protest call, business establishments and educational institutions remained closed, while public transport services were suspended.

Authorities barricaded roads leading to the Chief Minister's bungalow and Raj Bhavan as a precautionary measure. Security personnel also conducted frisking and implemented traffic diversions at several locations, including Keishampat Junction, Konung Mamang, Palace Gate and Kangla Western Gate.

Describing the massive turnout as historic, COCOMI Convenor Khurajam Athouba said the rally demonstrated unity among Manipur's indigenous communities in their demand for justice.

"This is a testimony that the indigenous population of Manipur is united and ready to stand against the injustices meted out to them by the Central Government through the State Government," he said.

He alleged that the Centre had failed to address the concerns over the lives and properties of indigenous people, terming the prevailing situation a "proxy war". He said communities across Manipur, including Nagas, Meiteis and other ethnic groups, remained concerned about their security and future.

"The proxy war campaign carried out by the Government of India using Chin-Kuki-Naga Terrorists must be stopped immediately," he said.

Athouba warned continued indifference by the Centre towards the plight of indigenous communities could compel them to determine their own course of action against what he termed "narco-terrorism".

Extending support to COCOMI's demands, the United Naga Council (UNC), along with its federating units, sub-constituencies and Naga civil society organisations, also organised protest rallies in several hill districts, particularly in Naga-dominated areas such as Senapati and Chandel.

UNC president N G Lorho said Nagas across the hill districts had united to defend their ancestral land. "We are the owners and guardians of our land from time immemorial. We will not surrender our ancestral right," he said. A Naga representative, Achung Gangmei, alleged that indigenous communities were being subjected to a "proxy war" and accused Manipur government of using Kuki militants against other communities.



During the joint rally in Imphal on Saturday. ANI

Three Kuki-Zo men killed in Noney district in exchange of fire

Jimmy Leivon
Imphal, October 31

THREE KUKI-ZO men died following an exchange of fire with unidentified armed miscreants at Kekru Naga village in the Nungba sub-division of Manipur's Noney district on Saturday.

Following the incident, police heightened security but did not specify the cause of the shootout or the identities of those involved.

Unconfirmed reports indicate the firing began around 10 am and lasted for several hours, following 48 hours of intermittent attacks on Kekru Naga village and adjoining areas by armed miscreants.

The identities of the dead are yet to be confirmed.

The Kuki Inpi Manipur (KIM), the apex body representing Kuki tribes, condemned the incident, stating the victims were village volunteers and accusing the NSCN-IM and ZUF(K) of the killings.

Accusing authorities of failing to provide adequate security to vulnerable Kuki-Zo communities, KIM stated that the government must ensure civilian safety in the affected areas.

Expressing solidarity with the bereaved families, the organisation demanded justice, accountability, and immediate intervention to prevent further violence.

The police have not publicly identified the perpetrators in the statement confirming the incident.

BRIEFLY



An excavator clears debris after a landslide triggered by rain blocked the Kaipur-Gangabad road in Gajapati on Saturday. ANI

ODISHA

12 missing in Ganjam landslide triggered by Cyclone Arnab

AT LEAST 12 people have gone missing after a landslide triggered by torrential rain under the influence of Cyclone Arnab struck a hilltop hamlet in Odisha's rain-battered Ganjam district. Officials said the search operation had been intensified to trace the missing persons. The incident occurred on Friday at Gidipabali village under Bhanjanagar block, located on a hilltop along the Ganjam-Kandhamal border, officials said. "The hamlet had a total population of 26, of whom 13 people were relocated following heavy rainfall... So far, one person has been rescued alive and taken to a relief shelter. A full-fledged rescue operation is still underway to trace the remaining missing persons," said Odisha's special relief commissioner Rajesh Patil. ENS

2 college students electrocuted near Hyderabad

TWO ENGINEERING students died after coming into contact with an electric wire at a paddy field on the city outskirts, police said on Saturday. A group of 10 students from a private engineering college gathered at an agricultural field late on Friday night for a birthday celebration, they said. The students panicked after noticing a patrol vehicle approaching them and rode their bikes into the fields, while others ran on foot. Soon after, they found two of their friends lying on the ground. PTI

Engineer dies during election duty in Kota

AN ASSISTANT engineer posted on poll duty as Returning Officer in the Sarpanch election in Kota district's Kukdakhurd allegedly died of a heart attack during the counting of votes, officials said on Saturday. Suresh Meena, an assistant engineer at Kota Thermal Power Station, was a native of Kanwas area in the district. He was living with his family in Kota and was serving as the Returning officer during the Sarpanch election in Kukdakhurd Gram Panchayat on Friday, they said. PTI

EXPRESS special

On the outside, UP factory produced rose water, seized inside: Over 1,000 kg of drugs

Rs 200-cr worth mephedrone found a month after the factory came up

Manish Sahu
Lucknow, October 31

IN THE early hours of Thursday, residents of Rampura village in Uttar Pradesh's Jalaun district were roused from their sleep by the sound of vehicles passing by.

Curious about the unusual movement, a few villagers followed the convoy. They watched as the vehicles pulled up outside a rose water manufacturing unit. Several people dressed in civilian clothes, some in black, stepped out and entered the premises. A local police team arrived sometime later.

It was only later that villagers learnt what was allegedly happening inside: men were allegedly manufacturing mephedrone, with the rose water business serving as a front to conceal the operation.



The alleged drug-making apparatus in the factory at Rampura village in Jalaun district. EXPRESS

The Directorate of Revenue Intelligence (DRI), in a joint operation with the UP Anti-Terrorism Squad (ATS), raided the premises and seized 1,102.88 kg of mephedrone and precursor chemicals, valued at over Rs 200 crore on the international market. Officials said this was the biggest drug haul in recent months.

Hemendra Kushwaha, 27, and Santosh, 37, who were allegedly involved in making the drug, were arrested. The team searched their homes, recovering additional quantities of mephedrone and precursor chemicals. DRI officials said the plot owner, a local resident named Shailendra Singh Pal, 25, is on the run.

Mephedrone, also known as Meow Meow or White Magic, is a synthetically manufactured stimulant of the amphetamine and cathinone category. Till early 2010s, the drug was not included in the list of contrabands under the Narcotics Drugs and Psychotropic Substances (NDPS) Act. But after multiple seizures of large quantities of the drug and rising instances of its consumption as a narcotic in large cities, authorities included it in the list in 2015.

Behind closed gates

Rampura, with a population of around 900, is nearly 10 km from the district headquarters and falls under the Dakor police station, around 8 km away. The unit was on the outskirts of the village, fenced off and fitted with a large gate. The fencing was covered with green fabric, keeping the activities inside out of public view.

According to village pradhan Omkar Pal, the factory had come up just over a month ago on a one-and-a-half-bigha plot owned by a Shailendra. "He claimed he had invested money in the business after taking a bank loan, projecting it as an established and profitable venture," Pal said.

Local resident Shivam Rajput claimed that once the factory became operational, vehicles and people from outside the village began arriving there regularly. "Only three people, including the two men who have now been arrested, were allowed inside. No other villager had access to the premises," he claimed.

Pal said he had visited the factory once in connection with some work but was not allowed inside. "They had installed a heavy-duty generator to meet the unit's electricity requirements. The people present there told me that a gulab jal manufacturing unit was being set up and that its products would be supplied to different districts and states. A brand-new car was also parked inside the premises," he claimed. It was only after the raid that Pal got to see the premises from inside. "The manufacturing unit was inside a tin shed, occupying around 450 square feet. Three doors separated it from the outside, and several large containers were kept inside," the pradhan said.

Police said Hemendra is from Hamirpur district, while Santosh hails from Mumbai. Both had been living in Jalaun in rented accommodation.

"Neither Hemendra nor Santosh had any known association with the villagers. We are surprised how Shailendra, who is unmarried and has lost both his parents recently, came into contact with them," Pal said.

Engineer suspended in MP over 'voluntary bribe' remarks

Express News Service
Bhopal, October 31

THE MADHYA Pradesh government has suspended a Panna-based executive engineer of the Water Resources Department after his remarks that he accepted money offered voluntarily, even if he did not demand it, went viral on social media.

C B Ahirwar, was suspended with immediate effect through an order issued by the department on October 30. The suspension order described his conduct as "unbecoming" of a government servant and said his remarks amounted to a violation of the state's service rules.

The action came two days after he made the remarks to the media following a Lokayukta operation in which two employees of his department were allegedly caught accepting a bribe of Rs 45,000.

The Sagar Lokayukta police had caught two Water Resources Department employees in Panna on October 27, allegedly accepting Rs 45,000 from a contractor in connection with the clearance of a pending payment.

The contractor, Gaurav Tomar, a registered contractor from Gwalior, was executing construction work on a canal sluice under the Majhgayan Medium Project. According to reports, three of his bills had been cleared, while the department employees were allegedly demanding money for approving his fourth and final bill.

After Tomar approached the Lokayukta police, the complaint was verified and a trap was laid. Divisional accounts officer Deepak Singh Parmar and assistant grade-II employee Arvind Kumar Pathak were allegedly caught accepting the money.

Ahirwar was not among those allegedly caught in the operation. However, when asked whether he had a fixed percentage for contractors, Ahirwar told the media: "...If someone gives something willingly, I'm happy with it. I tell them beforehand, brother, if you are giving it willingly, then give it. I have no fixed percentage. This has been the policy since I joined the office".

GIVES GUARDS A SLIP AT PRISON ENTRANCE AFTER HANDCUFFS REMOVED

Days after Theni mass escape: Robbery accused flees police custody in Coimbatore twice in 24 hrs

Arun Janardhanan
Chennai, October 31

A ROBBERY accused escaped from the Coimbatore Central Prison complex after his handcuffs were removed during admission, marking his second escape from police custody in 24 hours and another security breach days after 17 prisoners fled a jail in Tamil Nadu's Theni district.

Raghavan, a native of Annur in Coimbatore district, had been brought to the prison following a court order. Personnel removed his handcuffs while escorting him between the first and second gates of the prison's two-tier entrance system. He allegedly broke away and fled, prompting a search by Race Course police.

The previous evening, Raghavan had allegedly escaped from Annur police station, only to be chased down and caught. His latest escape came despite tightened security at Coimbatore prison following the Theni jailbreak.

On Wednesday, Central Reserve Police Force personnel wearing protective gear and helmets conducted a parade inside the complex, carrying lathis in a demonstration of preparedness for unrest.

Prisoners were instructed to finish work and return to their cells by 5.30 pm, half an hour earlier than before. Staff were directed to carry walkie-talkies and lathis.

Established in 1872, the prison houses about 2,300 convicts and remand prisoners. Around 300 prison guards and police personnel oversee security, supported by CCTV cameras and mobile phone jammers.

Security was also reinforced at the prisoners' ward in Coimbatore Medical College and Hospital, with a sub-inspector and armed personnel deployed at its entrance.

An accused wanted in more than 40 cheating cases in Andhra Pradesh and Telangana had escaped from the ward months earlier before being recaptured.

The Coimbatore breach follows the October 26 escape at Theni district jail, where 17 remand prisoners fled after allegedly attacking staff when one of them feigned a seizure. All have since been brought back into custody: 15 were caught and two surrendered.

After the incident, the Tamil Nadu government transferred Director-General of Police (Prisons) Sandeep Rai Rathore, posting him as DGP/Chief Vigilance Officer, Tangedco, Chennai. K Shankar, ADGP, Enforcement Bureau-CID, was posted as ADGP, Prisons and Correctional Services. Theni Prison Superintendent Nageshwaran was suspended on Friday.

All 17 remand prisoners who were recaptured will be shifted to different prisons across the state.

A widow, a toddy shop and a fight to break Keralam's glass ceiling

Shaju Philip
Thiruvananthapuram, October 31

IN JULY 2024, when she first approached a toddy shop where her late husband had worked in Thrissur district's Irinjalakuda toddy range, Sophy Kunjupalu was turned away — women couldn't be employed there because of the law. Instead of accepting it, Sophy chose to fight back, taking the battle for her right to work to court.

In August this year, that battle culminated in a progressive ruling — the Kerala High Court struck down a clause barring women from working in toddy shops, saying it violated the principles of equality.

But for Sophy, a resident of Ponjanam in Thrissur who will join the toddy shop either as a saleswoman or manager, the court case wasn't a grand gender battle. It was a more fundamental fight for survival — workers in the toddy sector earn between Rs 35,000 and Rs 45,000 a month, depending on sales.

In July 2024, two months after her husband's death, Sophy approached the shop, hoping to secure a job on compassionate grounds since her husband had worked there. But her request was turned down under Rule 7(37) of the Kerala Abkari Shops and Disposal Rules, 2002, which regulates liquor and toddy shops and prohibits the employment of women in toddy shops.

Sophy petitioned the High Court in August 2024. Opposing the petition, the government argued that toddy shops are often situated in remote places and that the rulemaking authority was bound to ensure women were not employed there to safeguard their safety and well-being.

After 28 rounds of hearings, the court held that the provision violated constitutional provisions, rejecting the government's argument that the rule was intended to protect women.

Days after Arnab, Andhra braces for another cyclone

Anjali Marar
Bengaluru, October 31

LESS THAN a week, after 'severe cyclone' Arnab wrecked havoc along its coast, Andhra Pradesh will have to brace for another cyclone.

The India Meteorological Department (IMD) said that a cyclone would develop in the southeast Bay of Bengal and cross the Andhra Pradesh coast at a location between Nellore - Narsapur during early hours on November 3.

On Saturday, a well-marked low pressure area had developed along the southeast Bay of Bengal, close to the Andaman and Nicobar islands in the Andaman Sea.

Later in the day, it intensified into a depression and moved west-northwestwards. It will further move west-northwestwards, the system is expected to strengthen into a deep depression during the wee hours of Sunday.

"The system will intensify further into a cyclonic storm over southeast and west-central Bay of Bengal on Sunday. It will reach near the Andhra Pradesh coast around evening of November 2," the IMD said late on Saturday night.

"It will cross south Andhra Pradesh coast as a 'severe' cyclonic storm with wind speed of 100 to 110 km per hour gusting to 120 km per hour between Nellore and Narsapur," the national weather agency added.

As per the latest satellite imagery and IMD's updates on Saturday, the system was located about 960 km east-southeast of Chennai, 980 km southeast of Visakhapatnam and 1,030 km southeast of Machilipatnam and 1,080 km east-southeast of Ongole.

Once the cyclone develops, it will be identified as Murasu, or 'drum' in Tamil.

In view of the approaching cyclone, Andhra Pradesh and Rayalaseema are bracing for very heavy to extremely heavy rainfall (115mm - 200mm or more in 24-hours) on November 2 and 3.

Rajasthan: Amid probe against IAS officer, his IPS wife removed from post

Hamza Khan
Jaipur, October 31

A DAY after the Rajasthan government approved an investigation by the Anti-Corruption Bureau (ACB) into senior IAS officer Shikhar Agrawal over allegations of collusion with a private firm, the state government placed his wife, IPS officer Prashakha Mathur, on Awaiting Posting Order (APO), citing "administrative reasons".

A 1995-batch IPS officer, Mathur was posted as Additional Director General in charge of Planning, Modernisation and Welfare.

On Friday, the government approved an ACB investigation into Agrawal after the bureau said its assessment indicated "prima facie evidence" of alleged collusion between him and the firm. According to the ACB, Agrawal allegedly colluded with a private firm, "abusing his position and influence, thereby conferring undue benefits upon himself and the related company, and causing substantial financial loss to the state government."

PANCHKULA SCHOOL HORROR

Class 3 student attacks 6-yr-old with brick, takes victim's father to the spot

Girl stable; school booked for negligence; govt forms probe panel

Express News Service
Panchkula, October 31

A KINDERGARTEN student was grievously injured when an eight-year-old student allegedly attacked her with a brick and a flower pot inside an empty classroom at a government school in Haryana's Panchkula, said the police.

The girl, who sustained facial fractures, including a nasal fracture in the October 28 incident, is undergoing treatment at PGIMER, Chandigarh. She regained consciousness on Saturday, the third day of her hospitalisation, and her condition has improved, Panchkula DCP Aditi Singh said.

During investigation prima facie lapses on part of school administration came to fore following which an FIR has been registered under relevant sections of the Juvenile Justice (Care and Protection of Children) Act, 2015, and relevant BNS provisions.

"The case will be investigated thoroughly, impartially and seriously," DCP Singh said.

The Haryana government constituted a five-member committee to probe the incident and ordered a comprehensive safety audit of schools across the state. The government will also bear the girl's entire treatment cost. The Haryana State Commission for Protection of Child Rights, which has taken suo motu cognisance of the incident, said the child was now out of danger.

CCTV footage of the incident shows the Class 3 student grabbing the 6-year-old by her hair and repeatedly banging her head against a desk. After she falls, he kicks her and hits her with a brick and a flower pot multiple times, continuing the assault even after she loses consciousness. In another video, the boy is seen returning to the classroom after some time and attacking her again with the brick and stomping on her.

The girl's uncle said the boy had lured her to an empty classroom on the pretext that her father was calling her.

"She went upstairs to her classroom at around 3.15 pm. The assault probably took place between 4.15 pm and 4.30 pm. The boy told her, "Tere papa aa rahe hain school' (your father is coming to school), and took her to another classroom," he said.

The uncle alleged that the boy hit her seven to eight times with a brick, banged her head against a bench and also struck her with an aluminium dustbin. He then left the room but returned around half an hour later and attacked her again. The family came to know about the incident when the autorickshaw driver arrived to pick up the girl but could not find her.

"The boy who had attacked her met her father and told him, 'Uncle, I will take you upstairs. She is there'. Her father found her lying unconscious in a pool of blood. She had been lying there for more than two hours," the girl's uncle said.

The family said the school subsequently examined the CCTV footage and called the boy's parents. The boy allegedly narrated the incident when questioned by a teacher.

A Panchkula police team took the eight-year-old boy to PGIMER on Saturday for a mental health assessment. DCP Singh said the assessment is mandatory in cases involving children between seven and 12 years of age. A Juvenile Justice Board later sent the boy to an observation home in Ambala.

Class 10 student, friend attacked with chainsaw in Andhra school, accused held

Sreenivas Janyala
Hyderabad, October 31

A 15-YEAR-OLD Class 10 student of a zilla parishad school in Anantapur district, Andhra Pradesh, was seriously injured after a 21-year-old man allegedly entered her classroom and attacked her with a mechanised chainsaw on Friday.

The girl suffered deep cuts to her neck and abdomen, and her right hand was nearly severed. Another girl, who tried to intervene, was also injured. Both are battling for their lives at a private hospital, said the police.

The accused, a relative of the girl, was arrested from Dharmavaram railway station. He is a wholesale tomato vendor. Police teams are investigating the circumstances surrounding the incident.

The family of the Class 10 girl is still struggling to come to terms with the incident. They said they are unable to understand why she was targeted.

"She hardly spoke with anyone. She is shy and only interested in her studies. She is close only to the friend who tried to protect her. We do not know if he spoke with her or pursued her. Every morning, she went by autorickshaw to school with other students and returned in the same vehicle," one relative said. Her brother said: "She is a brilliant student."

Anantapuram Circle Inspector C Srikanth said the school's main gate was closed and all students were in their classrooms when the incident occurred. Around 10.30 am, when a Class 10 mathematics lesson was underway, the school watchman went inside to fetch a bucket of water for the plants on the premises. The accused allegedly entered the school during that time.

Police said eyewitness accounts indicate that the man may have been waiting outside the school for several hours before the attack. The girl's brother is also reported to be studying at the same school. "The family is distraught and is not in a position to give a statement. We have to establish if there was any connection between the suspect and the girl before the attack," a police officer said.

The Zilla Parishad school has several CCTV cameras and police have collected the recordings. With the incident leaving students and teachers shaken, the school will remain closed on Monday. A multi-disciplinary team of doctors is treating the girl and her friend. They may be shifted to a super-speciality hospital in Bengaluru for advanced treatment.

The incident has triggered outrage across Andhra Pradesh and Telangana, with politicians and citizens expressing concern. Chief Minister N Chandrababu Naidu expressed deep anguish over the attack. He spoke to officials to enquire about the girl's condition. He directed the medical team to accord her the highest priority and provide the best possible care.

Condemning the attack, he said those who target young girls inside schools have no place in society. Naidu spoke to the student's mother over the phone and assured her that the accused would be punished. He assured the family that every possible effort would be made to save the student's life.

Education Minister N Lokesh Naidu expressed deep shock over the incident. "We will crush such maniacs with an iron fist... There will be no leniency for anyone—no matter how powerful they may be—who shows negligence regarding the safety of children," he warned.

AICTE unveils four schemes to boost innovation, research

Gayathri Mani
New Delhi, October 31

THE ALL India Council for Technical Education (AICTE) on Saturday launched four schemes under infrastructure and capacity building (IDC) initiatives to strengthen experiential learning, research and improve the quality of technical education.

The four schemes, unveiled for the current academic year, are the IDEA Lab, Grant for Organizing Conference (GOC), Modernisation and Re-structuring for Outcome Based System (MODROBS), and Margdarshan Scheme. Eligible institutes will get financial assistance, said officials.

"These four schemes are important steps towards fulfilling the aspirations of our country. Through IDEA Labs, we can encourage students to develop new ideas and translate them into practical solutions. It is time to rethink our teaching methods, promote experimentation and make our classrooms more interactive and student-centric," said Yogesh Singh, chairman of AICTE.

AICTE Member Secretary Shyama Rath encouraged institutions to utilise the opportunities being offered by AICTE to strengthen their capabilities and improve learning outcomes for students.

The IDEA Lab scheme promotes hands-on learning through the concept of "learning by doing", enabling students to apply STEM concepts to real-world challenges.



New IAF chief takes charge

Air Chief Marshal Amar Preet Singh (left) with Air Chief Marshal Ashutosh Dixit, who assumed charge as the Indian Air Force chief, in New Delhi on Saturday. PTI

{ SANJAY GUPTA • 1969-2026 }

Filmmaker who brought Hollywood-inspired crime thrillers home

Alaka Sahani & Apoorva Agashe
Mumbai, October 31

FILMMAKER SANJAY Gupta, who created a distinctive space for himself in Hindi cinema through gangster dramas, crime thrillers and stylised action films like *Kaante* and *Shootout at Wadala*, died after falling in the kitchen of his Mumbai residence Friday night. He was 57.

"This (Saturday) morning we received information that (Sanjay) Gupta was found at his residence in an unconscious state. He was rushed to a hospital where the doctors declared him dead. We have registered an ADR (Accidental Death Report) and will investigate," said zonal DCP Purshottam Karad.

According to police, Gupta's head hit a sharp object when he slipped in the kitchen and remained unattended for hours. "Prima facie, the incident took place around 2.30 am when Gupta was in the kitchen. He slipped and his head banged against a sharp object. He was left unattended, due to which he might have succumbed to his injuries," the police said.

His wife, Anu Lekhi — they remarried in 2009, five years after their divorce — their son Shivansh and daughter Dalai were at home at the time of the incident, but did not realise that Gupta was lying unconscious in the ground floor of the house.



Sanjay Gupta with Sanjay Dutt. EXPRESS ARCHIVE

"His wife, their two children and the household were on the first floor and they did not realise he had fallen. In the morning, the family saw him," police said.

"We do not suspect any foul play," police said. Gupta's body had been sent for postmortem.

Sanjay Gupta, whose career spanned three decades, often drew inspiration from American and South Korean action thrillers, but brought his own style and swag to his movies. His preoccupation with crime, action and morally ambiguous characters was evident from his directorial debut, *Aatish* (1994), a multi-starrer featuring Sanjay Dutt, Karisma Kapoor, Raveena Tandon and Aditya Pancholi.

With potboilers that followed, including *Hameshaa*, *Khauff*, *Ram Shastra* and *Jung*, Gupta punched a mix of thrills and action, but did not make a big impact at the box office.

Eight years after his directorial debut, Gupta made much-talked about *Kaante*, a heist thriller he co-wrote and directed, with an ensemble cast of Amitabh Bachchan, Sanjay Dutt and Suniel Shetty. *Kaante* showcased Gupta's distinctive visual signature, marked by dramatic lighting, slow-motion action, sharp editing and stylised violence.

While *Kaante* drew inspiration from crime thrillers such as Quentin Tarantino's *Reservoir Dogs*, John Houston's *The Asphalt Jungle*, Stanley Kubrick's *The Killing*, and Ringo Lam's *City on Fire*, another much-discussed film of his, *Zinda* (2006), featuring his frequent collaborators Dutt and John Abraham, was based on Park Chan-wook's *Oldboy*.

As a producer, he made films such as *Dus Kahaniyaan* (2007), *Acid Factory* (2009) and *Pankh* (2010) under his White Feather Films banner. Among his other significant directorial outings was *Kaabil* (2017), featuring Hrithik Roshan as a visually impaired man who sets out to avenge a personal tragedy.

In an interview earlier this year, Gupta had revealed plans for a sequel to Kaante, a project delayed by legal issues.

In his social media post, Sanjay Dutt remembered their years of friendship and said he will make Kaante 2. "I will miss you, our conversations and all the times we spent together. We were just discussing Kante 2 recently, I will make Kaante 2 your dream, in memory of you my brother..."

Filmmaker Hansal Mehta recalled how he had stood by him during a difficult phase. "I watched some of the best films of my life in his theatre. I borrowed some of the best books I've read from his shelves," Mehta wrote. Hailing Gupta as a "stylish filmmaker", director Rahul Dholakia said he was among the first to use trailers and cut promos to pitch film ideas to actors and distributors. Actor-director Anupam Kher shared that Gupta was "an encyclopaedia of films". "You could ask him practically anything about movies, and a conversation would remind you how much he loved the world he belonged to."

Tarantino grunge, slo-mo staple

Shubhra Gupta
New Delhi, October 31

SANJAY GUPTA was one of those mainstream directors who found their voice in rip-off Korean cinema, but continued to be heard in the last few years, even when the quality of his work had dipped considerably, simply because he had the courage to question.

His most memorable films may not have been original, but were stylish and entertaining. When *Kaante* released in 2002, it became a huge hit. The slo-mo walk, a clutch of Bollywood stars, led by the redoubtable Amitabh Bachchan, flanked by Sanjay Dutt, Suniel Shetty and co, was a memorable moment. Till then, it had been an Ajay Devgn trademark; post-*Kaante*, it became the thing that true baddies had to do to pass the cred-test.

It wasn't as if directors before him hadn't done crime thrillers but Gupta's distinctive stylised grunginess, and his grey-green palette, laced with kinetic doses of characters killing each other, heavily influenced by Quentin Tarantino and the S Koreans, became his very own.

There's a thrill of a very particular kind to watch actors, togged out in mafia-style trench coats, who had mostly done goody-two-shoe roles, enjoy their grey avatars. *Kaante*'s bad quotient is still something to watch, and it remains one of the few films of that era which can match up to actioners of today.

Same with *Zinda*, one of Sanjay Dutt's more memorable films, which gave his hard-edged character a softer side. Yes, it was based on *OldBoy*, though there was nothing official about it, but it delivered, in spades, on its promise of being a satisfying bone-cruncher.

You can count *Shootout At Wadala* and *Mumbai Saga* in the list of his box office successes. But the one film he made with a highly unusual combination of Irrfan Khan and Aishwarya Rai Bachchan was a flop. While I was working on my book on Irrfan, I asked him exactly how he chose an actor like Irrfan for a film like *Jazbaa*, he shared an interesting anecdote.

They had got to know each other when Irrfan was working in one of his productions, *Acid Factory*, back in 2009. During their conversations, Irrfan had asked to be cast in a film in which he could get to do a Salman Khan-like cop, with his one-liners, and was thrilled when he got to know that he would be working with Aishwarya.

Gupta said he couldn't think of anybody else for that role, as he wanted "an actor who would bring gravitas as well as come commercial viability, of which he was the perfect combination at that point". That film, regardless of its box-office status, gave Irrfan two of his most memorable lines, the first being: *toh kya main Singham banke ghumu?* You could literally feel Irrfan, an actor known for his serious performances, crack up while delivering that line.

And the other, '*mohabbat hain is liye jaane diya... zidd hoti toh baahon mein hoti*'. If anyone else had said that line, it would have sounded corny, Gupta told me, but in the way he delivered the line, you knew Irrfan was being honest.

One of those steeped-in-old-school-Bollywood walas who had no illusions about the industry he belonged to, he was outspoken about many of the things his contemporaries had stopped commenting on — a rarity given the growing anti-Bollywood sentiment in last few years. He tracked new films and shows on OTT, and was generous with his praise when he liked something, not something most filmmakers are prone to. They were also indicative of a filmmaker with spine, who used mainstream devices with a degree of panache to tell his brand of stories, top-lined by colourful goons and gangsters, and a few good guys.

'Near human habitat': Bengal minister in Assam as teams move to capture tigress

Ravik Bhattacharya
Kolkata, October 31

THE WEST Bengal Government on Saturday announced that it plans to capture the tigress that strayed into Assam last week, travelling 100 km from Buxa Tiger Reserve, and bring it back.

The tigress, Doars Rani, brought from Bihar and released into Buxa on October 2 as part of Bengal's first relocation programme, has already killed three domesticated pigs and four piglets after it entered Raimona National Park in Assam. The tigress was located first near Hatigarh village and then near Narayanpur village.

Forest Minister Manoj Oraon visited Assam on Saturday and held a meeting with forest department officials of both Bengal and Assam. The minister said that the Assam government would write to the National Tiger Conservation Authority (NTCA) for permission to cage it.

"Had the tigress been in Raimona forest, we would have let it be. But since it is located near human habitat and has already killed domesticated animals, we have decided to capture and cage it. Kali Puja and Diwali are coming, and people will burst crackers. This will disturb the tigress. That's why we plan to capture it," Oraon told reporters in Assam. The minister said they expect to get the permission from NTCA on Saturday. "We have already written to the Assam government. I have spoken to the chief minister (Suvendu Adhikari) too. Our teams are ready. We will start operations to capture and cage the tiger from tomorrow."

According to sources, signals from the radio collar of the tigress failed on Thursday, following which search teams of the Bengal and Assam forest departments were pressed into action. But on Friday, her position was located.

Oraon said that the borders of Bengal, Assam, and Bhutan are man-made, which the animal does not know.

"The animal's basic instinct, after release, is to explore the area and then settle down; like what happened in the case of tigress Zeenat, which travelled from Simlipal to Jharkhand and then Bengal. It was captured in Bengal," he said.



The 3-year-old tigress, T-138, has killed 3 domesticated pigs and four piglets near forest villages in Assam. FILE

"The tigress is safe now, and we know its location. It has covered around 100 km and even crossed a national highway. We are calling it Doars Rani," Oraon added.

According to sources, teams from Bengal and Assam are placed in the area where the tigress is presently located. Teams equipped with trap door cages and tranquiliser guns are waiting for a go-ahead for the mission.

In December 2024, tigress Zeenat, hailing from Simlipal in Odisha, travelled 300 km, crossed Jharkhand and entered Bengal. It was later tranquilised and caged in Bankura.

According to sources in Assam's Raimona National Park, the tigress is presently located at Narayanpur village in Gossaingaon sub-division in Kokrajhar district.

After entering Assam seven days ago, the tigress was located first near Hatigarh village and then Narayanpur village. It has already killed three domesticated pigs and four piglets.

Tigress Doars Rani aka T-138's introduction in Buxa Tiger Reserve, a protected forest and national park spanning approximately 760 square km in West Bengal's Alipurduar district, was part of a larger reintroduction plan. Historically an important tiger landscape in North Bengal, habitat degradation, changes in land use and a decline in prey availability have significantly affected the conditions needed to sustain a resident tiger population, the Ministry of Environment, Forest and Climate Change had said in a statement.

The tigress's release was meant to mark the beginning of a phased recovery.

After being tranquilised and caged in Valmiki Tiger Reserve in Bihar, the tigress was flown in on a military aircraft to Hasimara Air Force Station in Alipurduar early on September 30. It was then taken to the Rajabhatkhawa forest area under Buxa Tiger Reserve.

On October 2, Chief Minister Suvendu Adhikari released the tigress into the wild from its 2.2-hectare soft enclosure.

epaper.indianexpress.com

Rupee slide: Panic is no policy



OFF THE RECORD
BY P VAIDYANATHAN IYER

THERE IS some panic about the falling rupee in a section of Delhi, the country's capital, which makes policy. Such nervousness generally gets amplified when transmitted to Mumbai, the city which makes and regulates financial markets. A week or ten days back, a discussion paper by the Reserve Bank of India captured this phenomenon just perfectly: to address Delhi's anxieties, the RBI proposed ideas to control dollar outflows, which did well only to alarm everyone.

The RBI is learnt to have proposed disallowing resident individuals from sending money abroad for buying real estate and shares, overseas direct investment, opening bank accounts, and giving loans to NRI relatives under the Liberalised Remittance Scheme (LRS). Further, the LRS limit for all current account transactions, including overseas travel, but excluding health and education, may be reduced to $50,000 a year from $2,50,000 a year, it has suggested.

It is a drastic measure, and a typical bureaucratic response to a situation when there are no easy and quick solutions. Put very simply, a fall in rupee can be stemmed either by strong dollar inflows or by rationing dollar outflows. Given the flux in the global financial markets, foreign investors are not necessarily queueing up to invest in India. And strong macroeconomic fundamentals alone do not guarantee robust FDI or FPI inflows. So, RBI thinks restricting dollar outflows, which is under its control, can help – after all, LRS remittances in 2025-26 stood at roughly $29 billion dollars.

First things first: What is the panic all about?

The rupee is depreciating, and fast. In the last 12 months, it has fallen by almost 7 per cent to 94.95 from 88.84 against the US dollar. This matters because it makes imports expensive. So, a barrel of crude oil valued at $100 will now cost Rs 9,495 compared with Rs 8,884 a year ago. Similarly, gold. It makes foreign travel and education too expensive.

To save dollars and arrest the rupee fall, the PM exhorted people to cut fuel consumption, avoid gold purchases, and postpone overseas travel to save dollars. Dampening the demand for dollars bodes well for the rupee. On its part, the RBI sold dollars, or bought rupees, to shore up its value. It also hiked the key policy rate; higher interest rates make rupee assets like bonds attractive for foreign investors, and facilitate its appreciation. But nothing really helped. The market continues to bet the rupee will fall.

> Mumbai is getting to hear two confusing messages from Delhi. One is of panic over the depreciating rupee – what is RBI doing with such huge reserves. The other is – no need to intervene, let the rupee find its floor. Both are fraught with risks

The global storm: Why India finds itself in a tight spot

Crude oil prices have topped $115 a barrel, and there is no respite from the two wars — Russia-Ukraine and Israel/ US-Iran. US President Donald Trump is difficult, and China strategically leverages its dominance in manufacturing, rare earths, electric vehicle batteries, solar panels, etc, while dealing with India and others. All this has kept most countries on tenterhooks, and markets hate uncertainty.

Meanwhile, the US government continues to borrow, leading to rising yields, making the greenback attractive relative to other currencies. The difference in yields between 10-year US bonds (about 5 per cent) and Government of India bonds (about 7.5 per cent) is probably at its two-decade low of 2-2.5 per cent. What this means is foreign investors would rather invest in US bonds since they do not have to worry about rupee depreciation or inflation.

Further, US companies in the Artificial Intelligence space and building large language models are attracting whatever remaining dollar is available. India, unfortunately, does not really have any AI play. So, along with other emerging markets, it finds itself in a difficult situation.

What's lacking: Conveying a coherent strategy

India's macro fundamentals are good. Growth is robust, inflation is under control, and the government is fiscally prudent. Lacklustre private sector investment, stagnant wages and lack of enough jobs continue to be sentiment dampeners.

RBI is estimated to have sold $75-80 billion during June-October defending the rupee. Its outstanding net forward sales (contracts to sell dollars on a future date at an exchange rate agreed upon today) stood at $239 billion in September end. At $720 billion, foreign exchange reserves are comfortable. More cushion is always better.

Mumbai is getting to hear two confusing messages from Delhi. One is of panic over the depreciating rupee – what is RBI doing with such huge reserves. The other is – no need to intervene, let the rupee find its floor. Both are fraught with risks. And, what is surprising is that the institution of RBI has reacted to Delhi in the most possible defensive manner. Curbing LRS outflows may result in spreading the panic further than stabilising the rupee.

What the market is looking for is probably credible communication that acknowledges the vulnerabilities – that, like many other countries, India is also caught in a global capital vortex. It would be happy with a near-term coherent strategy.

The writer is Managing Editor, The Indian Express. Off the Record is a fortnightly column

Turning democracy into a farce



FIFTH COLUMN
BY TAVLEEN SINGH

FOR ME, the defining image from last week was of the Prime Minister gently fondling and feeding calves in a Gujarati dairy. He smiled benignly down at the calves and they, in their fashion, smiled benignly back at him. He was so happy with these pictures that he posted them on Instagram, saying that these were special moments from his visit to Gujarat. Did he do this to increase his popularity on the social media platform that the Cockroach Janta Party today understands better than any mainstream Indian political party? Perhaps.

What can be said for sure is that Narendra Modi seemed to want to get as far away from the political events in Delhi as possible. Personally, I understand and sympathise with his need to flee the polluted air of our capital city at a time when it is about to get a lot more polluted because we Indians find it hard to celebrate Diwali without firecrackers. Modi may also have wanted to distance himself from the clampdown his government has ordered, in which thousands of posts on social media have been censored. For the first time, one of my posts was reduced to a black frame the size of a postage stamp, and I was told that it would not be visible in India. I have no idea what was in this censored post.

Other things were going on in Delhi that Modi would have liked to stay well away from. The Congress Party's rally today in Ramlila Maidan being one of them. Why this rally is happening just before we celebrate our most important festival remains a mystery. What is clear is that the Congress Party believes that after thousands of supporters gathered in the streets of Delhi to show approval of Rahul Gandhi, they are now in the political driving seat once more. It certainly looks as if there are bad times ahead for the Modi government and the BJP.

It was these thoughts I was mulling over before I sat down to write this piece, and then came a piece of news that reminded me Modi can continue to rely on Rahul to help him out of a difficult spot. Somehow, I had missed the news that the Congress Party was planning a 'public impeachment' of the Chief Election Commissioner. When I did hear of it, I was not just astounded but seriously worried about whether our oldest political party has now been reduced to a circus filled with clowns.

If schoolchildren had come up with a mock impeachment of Gyanesh Kumar, they would have been advised by their wiser teachers that charades were a bad idea in the high realms of governance and politics. If the Cockroach Janta Party had come up with this idea, it could be dismissed as the idiocy of novices, but when the once-mighty Congress Party reduces serious political issues to a farce, it is much harder to forgive. How does it help the case against the Election Commission to impeach the Chief Election Commissioner in this mock trial? If anything, it helps the BJP prove that the opposition parties are not interested in saving democracy at all.

This newspaper's excellent investigation into the functioning of the Election Commission is what gave everyone good reason to demand answers. Rahul Gandhi's minions like to say that it was he who came up with the 'vote chori' idea. He did indeed, and it made no difference to the voters he was trying to appeal to. The Congress Party failed to make it an issue of national importance until the 'cockroaches' came up with catchy slogans and huge rallies. All this will now have been in vain because of this 'public impeachment'.

The Congress Party suffers from severe amnesia, or it would remember that its own record of appointing election commissioners is not exactly glorious. Many could and should have been impeached many times over for the way elections were conducted in troubled states like Bihar. A whole case study on how not to conduct elections could be done on the way they were conducted in the former state of Jammu and Kashmir for decades.

It is my view that even when elections are rigged in favour of a particular party, it cannot change the course of an entire election. Except in Kashmir. In this state, it was a rigged election in 1987 that many pundits believe was what made young Kashmiris lose faith in Indian democracy and flee across the border into the Islamist Republic next door to return as violent jihadists. The men who started this new chapter in Kashmir's tragic history contested in that ill-fated election and were made to lose allegedly because of cheating. Is there nobody in the Congress Party who remembers any of this?

Meanwhile, the Prime Minister can continue to cuddle cows in Gujarat with a benign smile on his face because if there is one thing that will make ordinary Indians realise that his charge that Congress leaders have no respect for institutions is this farcical 'public impeachment'. If the Congress Party's leaders have so little faith in Indian elections, would it not be best for them to stop contesting them? It is not possible in any contest to be both a player and a protester at the same time. If you participate, you must accept victory and defeat.



INSIDE TRACK | BY COOMI KAPOOR

MODIFYING MINORITY GROUP

In the 1990s, when the Essar group attempted a takeover of the Tamilnad Mercantile Bank, the Nadar community protested what it termed a "Marwari outsider" acquisition of their bank. Even though Essar had purchased the majority of the shares, the RBI refused to let the group control the bank's management. In contrast, the Parsi community initially was largely silent over what many others perceived as a Tamil Brahmin backdoor takeover of the 150-year-old quintessentially Parsi business house, Tata Sons, without purchasing a single share.

The recently appointed Parsi representative of the Minorities Commission, Berjis Desai, a lawyer and author of *Modi's Mission*, believes the Tata controversy does not fall within his brief, as the Tata Trusts are secular charities. Former commission member Kersi Deboo, however, disagrees, pointing out that the major achievement during his tenure was reclaiming community properties in Valsad, Navsari, Thane, Bharuch, Surat and elsewhere from encroachers, including government agencies. Last week, Deboo wrote to PM Modi, urging protection for the Tata group's philanthropic legacy and charitable shareholding. He was not seeking an exemption from the law, but requesting that the law be applied fairly. Six major Parsi and Zoroastrian organisations, in India and abroad, have finally woken up and written to the government, objecting to recent attempts to undermine the renowned Parsi business house.

The Gujarati-speaking Parsis' initial complacent carelessness was perhaps because they assumed that Modi and Amit Shah have a special affection for their community, which, unlike most minorities, supported Modi in 2014. It has come as a rude shock that the PM has not intervened in the messy Tata impasse. Business circles view as significant the fact that the Ministry of External Affairs arranged a meeting last fortnight between US Secretary of State Marco Rubio and N Chandrasekaran whose reappointment as chairman of Tata Sons has been challenged before the Company Law Board — and not Noel Tata, the bona fide head of the Tata Trusts (After his retirement as Foreign Secretary, S. Jaishankar worked for the Tatas for a year). RBI Governor Sanjay Malhotra's recent public comment on the Tata's need to list was certainly unorthodox too. The elephant in the room actually is not listing alone, but the insidious attempt by the Maharashtra charities' commissioner to bar the two main Tata trusts from voting on the group chairman's dubious appointment, citing hastily drafted and legally ambiguous amendments to the Maharashtra Public Trusts Act that were rushed through the state legislature 2025-end.

HALAL STYLE, NOT JHATKA

There have been no major upheavals in PM Modi's Cabinet since July 2021, when Ravi Shankar Prasad, Prakash Javadekar and Harsh Vardhan were abruptly dropped. Although the media has frequently speculated on ministerial reshuffles in the offing, since June 2024, in Modi 3.0, there have been only minor changes at the MoS level. The only *jhatka* was the forced ouster of Dharmendra Pradhan in July in the wake of the students' agitation. Ministers of state George Kurian and Ravneet Singh Bittu quietly demitted office after their Rajya Sabha terms were not renewed and returned to their home states — ostensibly for party work. L Murugan resigned his Rajya Sabha seat from Madhya Pradesh last month to return to Tamil Nadu. Harsh Malhotra and Pankaj Chaudhary officially continue as MoS, though their key task is as state BJP presidents in Delhi and UP, respectively. Petroleum Minister Hardeep Puri, whose name has been linked to Jeffrey Epstein, appeared to have been put on notice when he was denied an extension last month for UP's Rajya Sabha nomination. But Puri finally won a reprieve and was accommodated as BJP candidate for the Rajya Sabha seat vacated by Murugan. Puri has denied the Epstein allegations, saying their meetings were entirely professional.

RETIRING THE RULES

The PM's seeming reluctance to make ministerial changes is reflected in his penchant for retaining top bureaucrats long after their official retirement. In August 2024, when Cabinet Secretary TV Somanathan was to retire, the Cabinet Committee on Appointments granted him an extension till August 2026. He has since been asked to continue till August 2027. Home Secretary Govind Mohan has received two extensions of a year each and will continue till August next year. Foreign Secretary Vikram Misri was granted a 19-month extension after superannuation on November 30, 2024, followed by another waiver till July 2027. The chairman of the Central Board of Direct Taxes, Ravi Agrawal, was due to retire in September 2024. After two extensions, he will continue in this position till December 2026. The increasingly common practice of extending the tenures of favoured officers affects the morale of the services, depriving those next in line of seniority of an opportunity to occupy the top slot, a cherished ambition of all bureaucrats.

A fire that devastated a river — and sparked its rejuvenation



HISTORY HEADLINE
BY HARIKISHAN SHARMA



Hohenzollern Bridge in Cologne where couples attach locks and throw keys into the Rhine

EXACTLY 40 years ago, there was a fire in an agrochemical warehouse of Sandoz near Basel, Switzerland, on November 1, 1986. To control the flame, firemen used gallons of water, which washed tonnes of toxic chemicals into the Rhine River, killing its fish, including salmon and other aquatic life. The visuals of dead fish floating to riverbanks sent shockwaves across Europe. The incident was close on the heels of two environmental disasters, Bhopal (December, 1984) and Chernobyl (April, 1986), images of which were fresh in public memory. The ministers of the Rhine riparian countries, Switzerland, France, Germany, Luxembourg, the Netherlands, met at Rotterdam on December 19, 1986, and asked the International Commission for the Protection of the Rhine (ICPR) to draw up a plan. The ICPR drafted the Rhine Action Programme (RAP), which was approved on October 1, 1987.

The RAP aimed at achieving three results by 2000. First, higher species previously in the Rhine (for instance, salmon) must be able to return there. Second, the use of Rhine water for drinking water supplies must continue to be possible in the future. Third, the sediment must not be polluted with harmful substances. More wastewater treatment plants were built, accident-prevention measures were optimised, watercourses were restored to a more natural state, and the connectivity between the main course of the Rhine, its tributaries and the North Sea was improved. Rhine's water quality has since "improved significantly compared with the period before the accident", according to the ICPR. "The Rhine now serves as a habitat for more than 70 species of fish once again, and species that had previously become extinct in the river have returned, some of them as part of joint reintroduction efforts (salmon, allis shad)," its statement noted. The salmon became the mascot of Rhine rejuvenation.

ICPR's words, I can say with certainty, are not merely claims. I have observed and studied the Rhine rejuvenation programme as a fellow of the Media Ambassadors India-Germany programme, sponsored by the Robert Bosch Stiftung in May-July 2015. During my stay in Germany, I visited sewage and industrial treatment plants in Koblenz and Ludwigshafen and interacted with the ICPR officials, chemical industry representatives and officials responsible for STP operations. They talked about how their focus is now on checking micropollutants and pharmaceutical residues from flowing into the river. Apart from the achievements shown in the data and technical report, what attracts one's attention is the river's clean current carrying ships and cruises along. The clean water and infrastructure have connected the river to the people. The Hohenzollern Bridge, which crosses the Rhine River right next to the Cologne Cathedral, has become an attraction. Couples come from far away, attach engraved padlocks to the bridge's chain-link fencing and throw keys into the Rhine River as a symbol of everlasting love.

Soon, we will celebrate Diwali, followed by Chhath. Some striking images of Chhath, women standing knee-deep in the white toxic foam of Yamuna at ghats in Delhi, have, of late, caught the public eye, but not triggered the response these visuals warrant. Yamuna is comparable to the Rhine in length, but has remained one of the most polluted river stretches (PRS) in the country. In fact, Yamuna's most polluted stretch is in Delhi. A PRS is two or more polluted locations on a river, in a continuous sequence, with Biochemical Oxygen Demand (BOD) exceeding 3.0 milligrams per litre (the water quality criterion for outdoor bathing). In Delhi, the BOD levels in Yamuna water are several times this limit. The faecal coliform is also several times the desirable value of 500 most probable number (MPN) and permissible level of 2500 MPN per 200 ml.

The occasional outrage over the conditions of rivers has failed so far to shake society's conscience. Building institutions and launching initiatives are pre-conditions for achieving river cleaning, but sometimes they need a catalyst. In India, initiatives to save rivers were launched decades ago — The Water (Prevention and Control of Pollution) Act 1974, The Environment (Protection) Act, 1986, Ganga Action Plan-I (June 1985), Yamuna Action Plan (1993), National Ganga River Basin Authority (2009), National Mission for Clean Ganga (2011), Namami Gange (2014) and National Ganga Council (2016) — but have not yielded the desired outcomes. The devastation to the Rhine resonated in the Parliament, when Congress MP GS Rajhans asked a supplementary question in the Lok Sabha on November 12, 1986. Replying, then environment minister Bhajan Lal said there were 14 polluted rivers in India and Rs 3,000 crore would be required to clean them. Since then, more than eight times that amount has been spent — Rs 24,298.32 crore — on just two rivers, the Ganga and the Yamuna, through GAP Phase I & II (Rs 938.57 crore), YAP Phase I & II (Rs 1,514.80 crore) and Namami Gange (Rs 21,844.95 crore). However, polluted river stretches and locations increased to 296 on 271 rivers in 2025.

The writer is Senior Assistant Editor, The Indian Express

The difficult relationship between hard work & success



ON THE LOOSE
BY LEHER KALA

SILICON VALLEY-based billionaire Vinod Khosla stirred the proverbial hornet's nest with his recent post on X seeking a new "Chief of Staff". Khosla, an early investor in OpenAI and DoorDash, has a formidable reputation for sussing out new opportunities, so anyone working closely under him as his executive assistant, aka CoS, could gain hugely from his vast experience. A quick glance at the Khosla Ventures website makes it clear that he didn't get where he is by attaching any value to work-life balance: his requirements for candidates applying are in-person work, 12 hours daily, some weekends too. Typically, X was aflutter with disgruntled murmurings on our always-on culture and slave-driving bosses expecting constant availability.

Alas, there are always tradeoffs to be made. A chance to be Khosla's right-hand means a crash course in unfamiliar technologies and a bird's eye-view of how a seasoned entrepreneur evaluates and builds businesses. Meaningful work is hard to come by in the post-AI world. Considering the depressing dearth of jobs and how tenuous the future of employment looks — most likely — there'd be a mad scramble for applications for this post. Our feeds may throw up an alarming amount of psychology on "self-care", "boundaries" and "me-time", but anyone with even an iota of sense instinctively knows extraordinary success requires extraordinary effort — and even then success remains elusive. Luck and timing both play their part. To top that, if one is reluctant to forfeit the occasional weekend in the pursuit of something bigger, good luck getting through life.

As Malcolm Gladwell famously observed in *Outliers*, it takes a lot of practice to become excellent at complex tasks — 10,000 hours precisely, he worked out. (For these times, it better be at something AI can't do, like cutting hair or playing golf). Having said that, not much good comes of romanticising striving, or spouting the sermonising mantras we heard in our childhoods, like "work hard and you'll succeed". It's not true. Obviously, someone talented in Gaza has a very different path from their counterpart born in America. The young, in any case, are stuck between dreamy idealism and sobering realities. It is one of the pitfalls of youth that one innocently believes the world is fair. At some level, the students' protests across Europe and India are a desperate cry for reassurance that indeed, effort will be duly rewarded. Past generations were fortunate enough to know that if they did well at work, they'd be promoted and incentivised to stay. In today's landscape, companies have no loyalty to employees, so Gen Z correctly ups and leaves for the first better option that comes along.

High attrition rates across industries in India remain a permanent HR gripe, but 20-somethings are unfairly written off as unreliable foot-draggers. Actually, they're understandably discouraged by the gap between the old-fashioned grind mindset and their dismal economic prospects. Interestingly, the job requirements of the to-be KV CoS suggest a heartening shift from the mere hard-core academic to someone with both soft and technical skills. Prioritising "Achievement, depth and intellectual range", the KV website emphasises, "evidence of these qualities matters more than credentials". Dare we hope, the halo around Harvard and IIT is beginning to fade? I have often wondered what happens to the millions of kids who get 95 not 99 per cent and fall just short of top engineering institutes. Perhaps, this bizarrely exacting standard is giving way to the appreciation of a more well-rounded person and lo and behold, broadening the definition of success. For some of history's most revered thinkers, like Einstein, it's their creative side that led to innovations. Going forward, the only route to (subjective) "success" will be to find something one enjoys and has a natural aptitude for, while making peace with unpredictability. The "objective" version of success will be increasingly rare.

The writer is director, Hutkay Films

NEPAL WAS HIT BY FLASH FLOOD ON AUGUST 26 THIS YEAR

Despite flood, Nepal stepped up power exports to India

Pratyush Deep
New Delhi, October 31

DESPITE FLASH flood damaging hydropower projects and disrupting electricity evacuation in Nepal in August, the country exported electricity worth over Rs 725 crore to India in the two months that followed, data provided by the Nepal Electricity Authority (NEA) shows.

Between August 27, a day after the floods hit Nepal, and October 27, the country exported around 1,262 million units (MU) of electricity to India, the NEA data showed.

This was equivalent to nearly a third of the electricity Nepal exported to India during the financial year 2025-26.

The continued exports came despite apprehensions among Indian government officials about possible disruptions to electricity supplies from Nepal, given the damage to several hydropower plants, including the 14-MW Devighat hydropower plant, which supplies electricity to India.

In September, the Union Ministry of Power had also approved the Nepal government's request for early imports of electricity from India, saying that the "floods have caused significant damage to hydropower infrastructure in Nepal, reducing its domestic power generation capacity and creating an additional requirement for electricity." How, then, was Nepal able to sustain electricity exports to India?

Seasonal surplus and electricity trade

Nepal exports electricity primarily to two countries, India and Bangladesh. And India accounts for the bulk of its exports. Electricity trade between Nepal and India is seasonal, with Nepal exporting surplus power to India during the monsoon and importing electricity during the dry winter months when domestic hydropower generation declines.

Against the odds

- Nepal Electricity Authority attributed this sustained electricity supply to surplus generation
- Nepal had applied to Indian authorities for approval to export electricity from additional power projects within a week of the floods on August 26
- Indian government officials, on the other hand, believe the sustained electricity supplies from Nepal may, in part, be explained by a decline in domestic demand following the floods.
- The damage to homes, infrastructure and transmission networks may have reduced electricity consumption in the affected areas, leaving more power available for export.



As per the annual report of NEA, Nepal had a total available energy of 18,624 MU in 2025-26. Out of total available energy, 12,394 MU has been utilised in Nepal, 3,817 MU and 148 MU were exported to India and Bangladesh, respectively.

Similarly, Nepal had 15,641 MU of available energy in 2024-25, of which 11,343 MU was consumed domestically and 2,380 MU was exported to India.

The seasonal surplus has contributed to a steady rise in Nepal's earnings from electricity exports. Its earnings from electricity exports increased from Nepalese Rupee (NPR) 17.47 billion in 2024-25 to NPR 29.3 billion in 2025-26.

Surplus or low load?

Achyut Babu Ghimire, spokesperson for the NEA, attributed this sustained electricity supply to this surplus generation. He said Nepal had applied to Indian authorities for approval to export electricity from additional power projects within a week of the floods on August 26.

"We have a surplus of electricity during the monsoon, which is why we were able to continue supplying power to India," Ghimire told *The Indian Express*.

Indian government officials, on the other hand, believe the sustained electricity supplies from Nepal may, in part, be explained by a decline in domestic demand following the floods. The damage to homes, infrastructure and transmission networks may have reduced electricity consumption in the affected areas, leaving more power available for export. The scale of the damage to Nepal's power infrastructure was significant.

Nepal's Energy Ministry had said in an earlier statement that the floods had affected 13 hydropower plants, including several under-construction projects, as well as a solar power plant.

Ghimire said the floods knocked around 430 MW of capacity out of the system due to damage to transmission lines, which disrupted the evacuation of electricity.

Of this, around 74 MW of hydropower capacity was directly damaged by the floods.

FULL REPORT ON WWW.INDIANEXPRESS.COM

New phase of India's poverty challenge

Siddharth Upasani
New Delhi, October 31



Globally, the share of income going to labour fell from around 54% in 2004 to 52.6% in 2025. REUTERS

THE WORLD Bank's latest 'Poverty & Equity Brief' note shows that poverty in India fell significantly in 2023 to 2.6% as per a $3-per-day poverty line and to 16.1% if the Lower Middle-Income Country threshold of $4.2-per-day is used. These are significant declines and deserve appreciation.

The World Bank also estimates the poverty rate for 2026 at 14.2% (as per the threshold of $4.2-per-day) which may fall to 12.1% by 2028. These figures will be updated as labour market and macroeconomic numbers are revised or new data become available. And the projected decline in the poverty rate hinges on a key development: India's poorest states creating productive jobs.

The World Bank also noted that youth unemployment has risen over the past year to 15.9% and real earnings have not moved much.

The 'feeling' of growth

To be sure, India has been posting rather impressive growth rates, with the 7.8% expansion of the GDP in the April-June quarter besting nearly all forecasts. And yet, questions have been raised about this rapid growth not being 'felt' on the ground.

This isn't unique to India, with the International Labour Organization (ILO) wondering a couple of weeks ago why life is "becoming harder to afford despite economic growth?" According to ILO Chief Economist Sangheon Lee, the relationship between higher productivity and wages has been weakening; globally, the share of income going to labour declined from around 54% in 2004 to 52.6% in 2025.

Government officials privately acknowledge the tough road that lies ahead, warning that India's demographic dividend cannot be taken for granted.

"Our biggest problem is that we think demographic dividend is a tailwind for India. With social media, smartphones, and now AI affecting cognitive skills, ability to concentrate and read 10 pages at a time, and the impact on mental, physical, and social health, the question is whether the demographic dividend can be taken for granted. Probably not," a government official said.

Problem states

The World Bank estimates that 57% of India's poor now live in a "contiguous belt stretching from Uttar Pradesh to West Bengal". It did not provide state-wise poverty rates.

Luckily, a Reserve Bank of India (RBI) staff paper last year updated India's last official poverty line, set by a committee led by former RBI governor C Rangarajan. The Rangarajan poverty line caused a stir in 2014 when it estimated the national poverty line at Rs 1,407 in terms of monthly per capita expenditure for urban areas and Rs 972 for rural areas. This led to India's poverty rate being pegged at 29.5%. The updated, but unofficial, Rangarajan poverty lines for 20 major states using the Household Consumption Expenditure Survey for 2022-23 produced noteworthy results.

In rural areas, the states with by far the highest poverty rates were Chhattisgarh (25.1%) and Jharkhand (16.6%). Rural Madhya Pradesh was fourth (9.6%), West Bengal seventh (7.5%), Bihar ninth (5.9%), and Uttar Pradesh 11th (5.7%).

The results were slightly more telling for urban areas. Chhattisgarh again had the highest poverty rate (13.3%), followed by Jharkhand (12.6%), West Bengal (12.4%), and Madhya Pradesh (11.6%). Uttar Pradesh was sixth (9.9%) and Bihar seventh (9.1%). It was not all bad news for these states, because they had recorded huge declines in poverty levels between 2011-12 and 2022-23. For instance, the fall in poverty in urban Bihar was the highest of any state, from 50.8% in 2011-12 to 9.1% in 2022-23.

Wages and youth

While the World Bank noted that employment increased by 13.4 crore between 2017 and 2023, the challenges for the Uttar Pradesh-to-West Bengal states are apparent too. Consider the following:

- Wages of factory workers in Jharkhand declined 5.2% in 2024-25 against a 5.3% all-India rise. It was the only state to see a fall in wages.
- In 2025, 81% of districts in Bihar — the highest in the country — had more than a quarter of all youngsters aged 15-29 were neither employed nor in education or training. West Bengal was second at 75%, with Uttar Pradesh not far behind at 69%.

FULL REPORT ON WWW.INDIANEXPRESS.COM

SEBI keeping an eye on Tata developments, says Pandey

Press Trust of India
Kolkata, October 31

SEBI CHAIRMAN Tuhin Kanta Pandey on Saturday said the market regulator is monitoring developments relating to governance at the holding company level in the Tata Group, and pointed out that the group's listed companies and their promoters are subject to SEBI's disclosure and compliance norms.

The comments came amid differences over governance matters at Tata Sons, the group's holding company, including the reappointment of N Chandrasekaran as chairman and the question of its proposed listing.

"At the holding company level, there are some issues, as that's not really a listed company. The rest of the companies, those which are listed, follow all the LODR (Listing Obligations and Disclosure Requirements) norms," Pandey told reporters on the sidelines of the launch of the Bharat Chamber Investors Forum. These listed companies and promoters of those firms are subject to all norms, he said.

Asked whether the SEBI was keeping track of Tata Group's developments, he said, "Yes... I mean in the sense of, you know, we have to keep monitoring all the developments."

IBBI rules seek to keep completed projects out of resolution process

Dheeraj Mishra
New Delhi, October 31

IN A step to address the concerns of homebuyers, the Insolvency and Bankruptcy Board of India (IBBI) has mandated that, where a company has multiple real estate projects, the resolution professional shall place the project-wise completion status before the Committee of Creditors (CoC) so that a decision can be made on whether any project can be kept out of the corporate insolvency resolution process (CIRP).

The board said that the project-wise information should include RERA registration details, stage of completion, status of possession and occupancy, and details of completed and incomplete units. "Based on this information, the Committee of Creditors (CoCs) may, with at least 66% voting share, recommend to the Adjudicating Authority the exclusion of any real estate project from CIRP, along with recorded reasons," said the Board in its new regulations issued on Friday.

This enables project-wise treatment of real estate insolvencies, minimising disruption to completed and occupied projects and focusing resolution efforts on projects that genuinely require intervention, said the IBBI.

Under the Insolvency and Bankruptcy Code (IBC) framework, which came into effect in 2016, homebuyers have been identified as financial creditors and can initiate insolvency proceedings against defaulting real estate developers. However, over the years, it has also been observed —especially in Delhi-NCR projects — that once a holding company goes into insolvency, it affects even those real estate projects that are nearing completion.

The IBBI regulations said that the resolution professional will undertake a project-wise technical and cost-to-complete assessment before inviting expressions of interest for such projects. "The assessment shall cover the physical status of construction, regulatory approvals, sold and unsold inventory, estimated completion costs, funding requirements, timelines and risks affecting completion. The assessment shall form part of the Information Memorandum and be made available to prospective resolution applicants," said the board.

FULL REPORT ON WWW.INDIANEXPRESS.COM

Binance heist: Crypto exchanges call for quick moves to bolster defences

New York: Crypto exchanges are taking quick action to bolster their defences and urging greater industry-wide information-sharing after a record $6.3 billion hack of Binance exposed their vulnerability just as they become more embedded in mainstream finance.

Coinbase said it made adjustments to its systems that store cryptocurrency keys offline "solely out of an abundance of caution," while Kraken said it was monitoring industry incidents for lessons it could apply to its defenses.

But the industry will need to move urgently, analysts and industry executives said, as US President Donald Trump's regulators promote deeper integration of digital assets into the financial system, raising the stakes for an industry with a history of big hacks.

"For crypto to reach its full potential, the security situation must be addressed immediately," said Chris Perkins, Franklin Templeton's head of crypto.

Binance, the world's largest crypto exchange, halted withdrawals after Thursday's attack — which analysts blamed on North Korea — and said it would use company funds to cover the losses.

Binance co-CEO Richard Teng said on X that the "complex attack" may have begun with a compromised software engineer's laptop, giving hackers access to systems used to process withdrawals.

The company later found additional breaches, while software designed to erase traces of the attack hampered the investigation. REUTERS

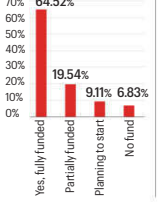
INDIAN WORKERS LACK FINANCIAL PREPAREDNESS

While India's workforce is confident about its financial future, many may be ill-prepared to withstand prolonged income disruption, said a report by Grant Thornton Bharat report.

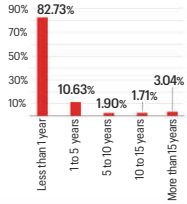
63% feel financially stable and confident

83% say their emergency savings would last less than a year if their income stopped

Emergency fund



Financial buffer in the event of job loss



- **62%** say their income growth will not keep pace with future inflation, rising to 70% among those aged 25–34.
- **91%** rely on employment as their primary income source, and 92% of respondents under 34 are unprepared for retirement.
- Despite wider participation in formal financial systems, financial resilience remains a challenge, as per the report.

SOURCE: GRANT THORNTON BHARAT - INDIA'S FINANCIAL RESILIENCE REPORT 2026

'BRICS+ must go ahead with a joint cross-border payments'

London: BRICS+ countries should press ahead with a joint cross-border payments mechanism to reduce reliance on the US dollar, but a shared currency would face major economic and institutional obstacles, a think tank report said on Friday.

The paper, published by non-profit policy platform BRICS+ Thinking, urged the expanded grouping of major emerging economies led by Brazil, Russia, India, China and South Africa to commit to such a mechanism and take the steps needed to make it work.

"It is absolutely crucial that their central banks embrace this goal and make sure that all the technical requirements are put in place to allow this mechanism to function," said authors Gregory T Chin, Danny Quah and Jim O'Neill, the former Goldman Sachs economist who coined the BRICS acronym.

Cross-border payments have long been on the BRICS agenda. REUTERS

BRIEFLY

Govt hikes windfall tax on diesel, ATF shipments

New Delhi: The government on Saturday hiked windfall gains tax on export of diesel and aviation turbine fuel (ATF) and slashed the levy to zero on petrol for the fortnight beginning October 31. For ATF exports, the duty has been hiked marginally to Rs 11/litre, from Rs 10.5/litre for the fortnight. The rate of special additional excise duty (SAED), along with road and infrastructure cess on export of diesel, will now be Rs 11.5 a litre, up from Rs 8.5 a litre. Duty on petrol exports has been slashed to nil, from Rs 2.5 per litre, for the next fortnight. PTI

Commerce min sets up panel for better utilisation of RELIEF

New Delhi: The commerce ministry has set up a six-member committee for better utilisation of funds and improved uptake of the RELIEF initiative for exporters. RELIEF (Resilience and Logistics Intervention for Export Facilitation) is an initiative of the government launched under the Rs 25,060-crore Export Promotion Mission (EPM). It is aimed at protecting exporters from soaring freight costs, increased insurance premiums, and maritime trade disruptions in the Gulf and West Asian corridors. PTI

Centre releases additional tax installment to states

New Delhi: The Central government on Saturday released additional installment of tax devolution to state governments totalling over Rs 1.09 lakh crore ahead of festival season. This is in addition to the regular monthly devolution and the second additional instalment this financial year. The Union government released tax devolution of Rs 1,09,019 crore to state governments, the finance ministry said in a statement. PTI

NTPC profit up 41% to Rs 7,351 cr in Q2 on higher generation

New Delhi: State-owned power giant NTPC on Saturday posted a 40.68% growth in consolidated profit to Rs 7,351 crore in September quarter on the back of higher generation and improved operational efficiencies. The strong performance was supported by a 73% increase in profits from subsidiary companies, which rose to Rs 1,990 crore in Q2 FY27 from Rs 1,149 crore in Q2 FY26, a company statement said. In Q2 FY26, the net profit was Rs 5,225 crore. PTI

ELECTRICITY PRICES FOR AMERICAN HOMES HAVE RISEN MORE THAN 10% SINCE 2024 WHEN PRESIDENT DONALD TRUMP WAS ELECTED

Rising power bills, data centre boom put US utilities in spotlight ahead of midterms

Reuters
New York, October 31

US ELECTRICITY prices had flown under the radar in past national elections, but they have become a major political issue in this year's midterms as Americans grow angry over rising utility bills and deals for power-hungry data centres.

Nationwide, according to Energy Information Administration data, electricity prices for homes have risen more than 10% since 2024 when US President Donald Trump was elected along with Republican majorities in both houses of the US Congress. Higher electricity prices have outpaced the rise in costs for other goods and services.

Power bills have grown even faster in political battleground states of Ohio, Michigan and Pennsylvania, which are also hot spots for new data centres. In some cases, electricity bills have soared by triple the inflation rate.

Many politicians vying for top statehouse seats across the country this year have backed cracking down on utilities. Some have proposed freezing utility rate increases and slashing guaranteed returns, steps that could have sweeping consequences for the country's utility industry.

"It could be the first election to feature utilities and electricity, specifically, as a prominent issue in the midterms," said Charles Hua, executive director of PowerLines, a nonprofit that advocates reforming utility policy to favour consumers. "Part of that is because people's utility bills have gone up and up, and they don't see any end in sight."

Utilities are heavily regulated. State regulators generally must approve utilities' requests to spend on the grid and to recover those costs through rate increases. Regulators also set the return on equity utilities can earn on their grid investments.

This year, utilities are on track to match last year's record high $31 billion in rate increase requests to regulators, a PowerLines survey showed. Last year's spending was double the previous record.



Higher electricity prices have outpaced the rise in costs for other goods and services. REUTERS

The investor-owned companies are also expected to carry out a record of nearly $1.3 trillion in capital spending over the next five years, according to an analysis by S&P Global's Regulatory Research Associates.

Utilities spotlighted

Seats on nine state public utility commissions are up for election this year, nearly all the US states where voters elect their utility regulators. These include burgeoning data center hubs Arizona and Georgia.

Governors will be chosen in 36 US states this year, and governors appoint utility regulators in states where commissioners are not directly elected.

In Ohio, Democrat Amy Acton has promised to lower energy bills if she is elected governor. Her campaign said she will also appoint a public utilities commission that was "not beholden to utility companies" and work with the state attorney general to crack down on "excessive rate hikes and predatory practices."

Ohio's residential electricity bills have grown by more than 20% over the last two years, according to EIA data.

Acton has also said she supports a data centre moratorium. Her Republican opponent Vivek Ramaswamy said he would assure Ohioans living near data centres would not pay electricity bills at all.

Some governors who are up for reelection have used their political weight to pressure the power industry to keep prices down.

In April, Pennsylvania Governor Josh Shapiro announced that prominent utility, PECO Energy Company, had acceded to his demand that it withdraw its proposal with state regulators to increase rates. Shapiro, a Democrat running for reelection, said the move would reduce future utility bills by as much as $34 a month.

He followed up with a letter to more utility CEOs seeking changes in how utilities justify spending and returns on equity.

Classifieds

PERSONAL

I, Saiju Anish W/o Anish Mathew C-61, FIRST FLOOR, SECTOR-56, Noida, PO:Noida, DIST:Gautam Buddha Nagar, Uttar Pradesh-201301 have changed my name to Saiju Mathew for all future purposes.
0071069085-1

I,**PUJA** DEVI is wife of Army No.15696719L.Rank:-Havildar Name: Manish Kumar residing at,V.P.O.Pidhauli,PS & Tehsil:Teghra,Distt.Begusarai,Bihar-851133,have changed my name from,PUJA DEVI to,PUJA KUMARI vide affidavit date 31.10.2026.
0040886744-8

I,**Deepak,S/o** Dilbagh Singh,R/o.Q-164,Vikas Vihar,Uttam Nagar,West Delhi-110059,have changed my name to Deepak Singh for all future Purposes.
0040888744-1

I, Mohan Shyam Rawat S/o Ram Prasad R/o-S30, Sunder Block, Shakarpur, Delhi have changed my name to Mohan Shyam for all purposes.
0071069093-1

I,**BUNTY,S/O-SHIV** JEE SINGH,R/O-D-72,J.J.COLONY,SECTOR-24,ROHINI,DELHI-110085,declare that name of my father has been,wrongly written as,SHIVA JEE SINGH,in my 10th-educational documents. The actual name of my father is,SHIV JEE SINGH which may be amended-accordingly.
0040888724-1

I,**DAVENDER** ARORA S/O SURINDER KUMAR ARORA R/O 750/23 DLF COLONY ROHTAK HARYANA-124001.HAVE CHANGED MY NAME TO DAVANDER ARORA.
0040886744-10

I,**Anish** Ahmad,S/O-Rafiq Ahmad,R/O.B-148,Shalimar Garden Main,Sahibabad, Ghaziabad,UP-201005,Have Changed My Name To,Anees Ahmad.Anish Ahmad And Anees Ahmad Is,One And The Same Person.
0040888744-3

I, Nayna Kumari D/o Sh. Krishna Kumar Chaudhary & Vibha Devi, R/o-B-821, Gali.no-4, Sai Nagar, Mithapur, Badarpur, South Delhi-110044 have changed my name to Naina Chaudhary for all future purposes.
0071069128-1

I,**RAJESH** AGGARWAL,S/o-Harkesh Agarwal,R/o-E-44 Guru Nanak Road,Adarsh Nagar North-West Delhi-110033,have changed my minor son name,KHEYAT AGGARWAL aged 14 years to KHYATT AGGARWAL
0040886724-3

I, Seema Devi W/o Rajender Singh R/o J-706, Arihant Arden, Sector-1, Greater Noida West, G.B Nagar, UP-201306, have changed my name to Seema Singh for all future purposes.
0071069073-1

I, Madhu, W/o Sudhir Kumar, R/o House No.194, Village Maincha, Greater Noida, Gautam Buddha Nagar(U.P.) have Changed my name from Madhu Bhati to Madhu for all future purposes.
0071069162-1

I,**Sarika** Mehra,W/o Vineet Mehra,R/o-E-200 First-Floor,East Of Kailash,Delhi-110065,have changed my name to Sarika Vineet Mehra,Permanently
0040886629-1

I,**Nafisha** Begum,D/O,Abdul Hameed,R/O.B-40,Shalimar Garden Main, Sahibabad,Ghaziabad,U.P-201005,Have Changed My Name To Nafeesa. Nafisha Begum And Nafeesa Is One And The Same Person.
0040886744-5

I, Chandani Sharma W/o Rudraksh Bhadoriya, resident of Flat No. 001, Tower-C, Ace City, GH-01, Sector-1, Bishrakh, Gautam Buddha Nagar, Uttar Pradesh-201306, have changed my name from Chandani Sharma to Chandni Bhadoriya. Henceforth, I would be known by the name of Chandni Bhadoriya for all future purposes.
0071069136-1

I hitherto known as,B Gurprasad Rao,S/o-Late B.Gopal Rao,R/o-Shop No-4, 1st Floor,Bada Bazar,Old Rajinder Nagar,Rajender Nagar, Central Delhi,Delhi-110060,have changed my name and shall hereafter be known as,Guru Prasad Rao.
0040886724-5

I,**JAYMALA** is mother of Service No.15729056N,Rank:-Havildar Name:-Jadhav Dadaso Ramchandra residing at,Flat No.C-504,Casalino Tower,Handewadi, Hadapsar Road,Near Tulja Bhavani Hall,Undari (Part)(N.V.),Pune-411060,have changed my name from,JAYMALA to JAYMALA RAMCHANDRA JADHAV,vide affidavit date-31.10.2026.
0040886744-7

I,**ANJALI** D/O DEEPAK ARORA R/o House No.103, Ground-Floor Left-Side, Gali-No.2, Govindpuri, Kalkaji, New Delhi -110019,have changed my-name to ANJALI ARORA.
0040886724-9

I Raja Ram Sharma S/o Sh KP Sharma added Bhawan Dutt Bijalwan S/o Sh Kameshwar Prasad Bijalwan R/o D-650,Gali no.17 &18,Near pahari Dharamshala Bhajanpura North East Delhi-110053. Both name belongs to one and same.
0071069088-1

I,**NARESH** KUMAR S/O RAM LAL BATRA R/O 1452 SECTOR-15 SONIPAT HARYANA-131001.HAVE CHANGED MY NAME TO NARESH KUMAR BATRA.
0040886744-9

I,**Seema** Begum,W/O,-Anees Ahmad,R/O.B-148,Shalimar Garden Main Sahibabad,Ghaziabad,UP-201005,Have Changed My Name To Seema.Seema Begum And Seema Is One And The Same Person.
0040886744-2

I, Rudraksh Bhadoriya, resident of Flat No. 001, Tower-C, Ace City, GH-01, Sector-1, Bishrakh, Gautam Buddha Nagar, UP-201306, have changed my minor daughter's name from Rithanya Sharma to Rithanya Bhadoriya. Henceforth, she would be known by the name of Rithanya Bhadoriya for all future purposes.
0071069134-1

I, Malvika Chauhan d/o Brijesh Singh Chauhan r/o B-75, Rosewood City, Sector-49, Gurgaon, Haryana-122018 have changed my name to MALVIKA.
0040886602-1

It is for general information that I,SUDHA RANI,W/o-VIJAY KUMAR SHARMA,R/o-102,New Layal Pur-Colony,Krishna Nagar,Delhi-110051,declare that name of mine has been wrongly written as,SUSHIL in my Kisan Vikas Patra No.24798,and 24799,Dated.21 may 2005.The actual name of mine is,SUDHA RANI respectively,which may be amended accordingly
0040886724-2

I,**Abhishek,S/o-Sh.Mohan** Jha,R/o-Chhotu Ram Nagar,Ward No.-10,Near Hanuman Mandir,Line Par,Bahadurgarh Distt Jhajjar Haryana,have changed my name to Abhishek Jha for all Purposes.
0040886744-11

I, S.Jayalakshmi/ Syamala devi Jayalakshmi, W/o Brijesh Kumar residing at Flat no.15 Pkt-A, New MIG Flats, Mayur Vihar-3, Delhi-110096 is the same person and now the name has been changed to Jayalakshmi for all future purposes vide affidavit dated-29/10/2026 notarised at Delhi.
0071069072-1

I, Maninder Pal Kaur W/o Avtar Singh D/o Balbir Singh R/o S-221/24A, S-Block, Gali No. 1, Vishnu Garden, New Delhi-110018, have changed my name to Simran Kaur future purpose. Affidavit No. IN-DL32172428568468Y
0050300625-1

I,**Mahboob** Husain,S/O-Ishaq,R/O.B-40,Shalimar Garden Main,Sahibabad, Ghaziabad,UP-201005,Have Change My Name To Mehboob.Mahboob Husain And Mehboob Is One And The Same Person.
0040886744-4

I,**UROOSA** ANAS, W/o-ANAS IQBAL R/O 6 ATAWR REHMAN LANE,UNDER HILL ROAD CIVIL LINE DELHI-110025, Have changed my name to UROOSA FAREED
0040886724-4

I Dipak Kumar S/o Ruphchandra Prasad R/o Vill- Dhangain Ward No-9, PO- Bikramganj, Bikramganj, Rohtas, Bihar- 802212, have changed my name to Samar Raj
0071069084-1

I hitherto known as GURPREET SINGH LOHIA S/O MANJEET SINGH residing at PLOT NO 68-D, F/F, RIGHT SIDE ROAD VIPIN GARDEN, NEAR METRO PILLAR NO 798, UTTAM NAGAR, WEST DELHI 110059 have changed my name and shall hereafter be known as GURPREET SINGH.
0040886639-1

It Is For General Information That I,Anees Ahmad,S/O-Rafiq Ahmad,R/O.B-148, Shalimar Garden Main,Sahibabad, Ghaziabad,UP-201005,Declare That Name Of My Late Mother Has Been,Wrongly Written As,Khalida Sultana Alias Kaniz Fatma,In My Passport No.K5900328.The Actual Name Of My Late Mother Is,Sameena.Which May Be,Amended Accordingly.
0040886744-6

I Bebi Mishra W/o J K Mishra R/o Siliguri, Netaji Sarani Haiderpara, Ward No- 39, Siliguri (M Crop), Haiderpara, Rajganj, Jalpaigiri, West Bengal- 734006 , have changed my name to Baby Mishra
0071069137-1

I Momeen,S/o-Buniyad Ali,232 Block A Sangam Vihar South Delhi 110062 Have changed,My Name to Momin For All Future Purpose.
0040886724-6

I, PATEL ROSY PRABHU S/o PRABHU, aged 20 years, residing at Kotharpada, Amboli, PO: Amboli, DIST: Dadra and Nagar Haveli, Dadra and Nagar Haveli- 396230, have changed my name from PATEL ROSY PRABHU TO RAJVIRR PATEL for all future purposes, vide Affidavit dated 27/10/2026 sworn before Notary Hiteshkumar K Bhandari, Silvassa.
0071069083-1

MATRIMONIAL



SCHEDULED CASTE

SC,AD,32 years, Tamil ,BTech ,own companies 20LPY, Seeks bride from same caste. 7708850383
0050300130-2

SC,AD,38 years, USA Green card holder, CEO, divorced, seeks bride from same caste. 9791175571
0050300131-2

SIKH / PUNJABI

Canadian PR Jatt Sikh Sidhu boy, 25-12-1994, 6'2", B.Tech. E.C. Diploma in HVAC, Driving in Canadian Cottage Dept. Contact :- 94651-73523, WhatsApp: 75289 - 43234
0020522891-1

PUBLIC NOTICE

सार्वजनिक सूचना

सर्वसाधारण को सूचित किया जाता है कि मेरे मुवक्किल श्री पीयूष कुमार अरोड़ा पुत्र श्री सोना राम निवासी मकान नं० 30, पॉकेट-एफ-25, नजफ़गढ़ सेटोरी स्कूल, सेक्टर-3, रोहिणी, दिल्ली-110089 ने अपने पुत्र वर्ष अरोड़ा एवं उनकी पत्नी नेहा अरोड़ा को उनके द्वारा अपने व्यवहार घर में शांति का माहौल खराब करने, आपस में लड़ाई-झगड़ा करने व नियंत्रण में न होने के कारण अपनी चल व अचल सम्पत्ति के साथ-साथ समस्त रिश्तों से बेदखल कर सभी प्रकार के सम्बन्ध विच्छेद कर लिये हैं। भविष्य में इनके द्वारा किए गए किसी भी कार्य के लिए मेरे मुवक्किलगण या उनका परिवार जिम्मेदार नहीं होगा।

JAI BHARAT BHARTI (Advocate)
Ch. NO.163-C.L. JOSEPH BLOCK, DELHI-110044

PUBLIC NOTICE

"Be known to all that my client Smt. Jasmine, W/o Shri Bunty Pitar, R/o T-315, Padam Basti, Nangal Raya, New Delh-110046 has discowned/debarred her stepson namely Shri Sahil, S/o Shri Bunty Pitar, R/o Not known and anyone claiming through him from all her movable and immovable properties as he is not in her control. Anybody dealing with him shall be doing so at his own cost, risk and consequences. My clients shall not be responsible for the same in any manner whatsoever. **Yashver Singh Kadian Advocate Chamber No. K-145A, Tis Hazari Courts, Delhi-110054**

PUBLIC NOTICE

Information is given to general public at large upon instruction from Mr. Kailash Aggarwal who intends to mortgage Property No.20, measuring 280 sq. yds., situated in the layout of the Aviation Employees Co-operative House Building Society Ltd., colony known as Gagan Vihar, Delhi-110053 who is the owner through Release Deed dated 15.11.2017 executed between Mrs. Sunita Mittal vide Doc. No.5901, Book No.1, Vol. No.1149, page 154-180, on 16.11.2017 (SR IIIA, Delhi). THAT ORIGINAL Release Deed dated 15.11.2017 in favour of Mr. Kailash Aggarwal vide Doc. No.5901, is misplaced and no traceable.

That, online F.I.R. has been lodged through Mr. Kailash Aggarwal on 31.07.2024, vide I.R No. 1398686/2024 PS. Crime Branch, New Delhi.

Any person(s), institution(s) having any claim and/or objection in respect of the said property shall communicate the same to the undersigned at our address within 10 days from the publication of this notice with documentary evidence in support thereof, failing which all the claim, if such person(s)/ institution(s) shall not be binding upon the said property or Kotak Mahindra Bank Ltd.

Mohd K. Hussain (Advocate)
B-21, Basement, Block-D, Jangpura Extn.
New Delhi-110014, 8810389172

PUBLIC NOTICE

Information is given to general public at large upon instruction from Mrs. Monika Parashar and Mr. Naveen Parashar who intends to mortgage Freehold Built-up Property bearing No. 20, area measuring 180.9 sq. yards, Block No. 38, situated at Shakti Nagar, in the layout plan of Northern City Extension Scheme No. II, Delhi-110007 are the owners through Sale Deed dated 15.07.2020 executed by Mrs. Neetu Shukla in the favour of Mrs. Monika Parashar and Mr. Naveen Parashar vide Doc. No. 2026/1981/10291. That Original prior documents i.e. 1) Deed dated 08.01.1954 executed by DIT, Doc. No. 78, 2) Deed dated 21.06.1966 executed by DDA Doc. No. 9991 in respect of the property and 3) SPA dated 02.02.2017 executed by Mr. Daya Krishana, Sarvjeet Rajender Kumar and Mr. Prem Kumar in the favour of Mr. Neeraj Krishana are misplaced and not traceable. That, online F.I.R. has been lodged through Mr. Naveen Parashar on 21.10.2026, vide I.R No. 7390/9/2006/ PS. North District, New Delhi.

Any person(s), institution(s) having any claim and/or objection in respect of the said property shall communicate the same to the undersigned at our address within 10 days from the publication of this notice with documentary evidence in support thereof, failing which all the claim, if such person(s)/ institution(s) shall not be binding upon the said property or Kotak Mahindra Bank Ltd.

Mohd K. Hussain (Advocate)
B-21, Basement, Block-D, Jangpura Extn.
New Delhi-110014, 8810389172

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CORRIGENDUN NOTICE

Date of deposition of EOI duly completed for supply of branded computer, laptop and printer published vide The Indian Express dated 16 Oct 2026 is extended till 14 Nov 2026.

Chairman

TRANSMISSION CORPORATION OF TELANGANA LIMITED
e-TENDER NOTICE

The TGTransco invites online Bids under e-procurement platform for Supply of the following Equipment.

Sl.No.	Tender Specification No.	Description of Equipment
1	TGPMM11-22/2026	33 kV Isolators 2000 Amps
2	TGPMM11-23/2026	33 kV Isolators 800 Amps
3	TGPMM11-24/2026	33 kV Isolators 1200 Amps
4	TGPMM11-34/2026	(i) 220 kV 800A Isolators without Earth Switch (ii) 220 kV 800A Isolators with Earth Switch
5	TGPMM11-37/2026	132kV Metering CTs (75/1)A

Bidders can have further details and download the tender schedule from e-procurement market place i.e., www.tender.telangana.gov.in Contact Nos: 040-23396000 (Extn.:3670/3583/3276/ 3522/ 3343/3275).

Sd/-
DIPR R.O. No. : 721-PP/CL-AGENCY/ADVT/2026-27, Date: 31-10-2026
Chief Engineer/P&MM

Tamil Nadu Power Distribution Corporation Ltd.
Notice Inviting Tenders (E-Tendering Process)
TNPDCL / SHORT / PP-49 / 2026-2027

TNPDCL invites E-Tender for procurement of RTC power (00 to 24 hrs) from 18-01-2027 to 15-06-2027 from both Interstate and Intrastate generators on firm basis from CERC / TNERC approved Traders / Generators. Bidding will be done as per the revised guidelines for short term procurement of power notified by the Ministry of Power vide resolution dated: 30.03.2016 and as per amendments dated: 21.02.2022 through e-Bidding portal (DEEP) only and subsequent amendments thereof are applicable to this tender specification. The link for the e-Bidding portal is **www.mstcecommerce.com** and is also available on the website of Ministry of Power **(www.powermin.nic.in)** and PFC Consulting Ltd **(www.pfcclindia.com).** Specification is available in TNPDCL website and MSTC DEEP E-Bidding portal.

Sd..../30.10.2026
DIPR/3331/Tender/2026
Chief Engineer/PPP, TNPDCL

UJVN LIMITED
(An Uttrakhand Govt. Enterprise)
H. Q. "UJJWAL" MAHARANI BAGH, GMS ROAD, DEHRADUN - 248006. CIN No. U40101UR2001SGC025666
Tele.: 0135-2763508, 2763808, Fax: 0135-2763907, website: www.ujvnl.com

Tender No.1024 Date : 31.10.2026

TENDER NOTICE

Office of the Executive Engineer (Maint.), Chibro Power Station, Dakpathar (Dehradun), invites sealed tenders from interested parties Tender No:(1)CH (Maint.)–29/2026-27Servicing & Maintenance of 15 Tonnes Draft Tube Gantry Crane at Chibro Power Station
Estimated cost: (1) ₹ 18,13,304/- (GST extra)
Date of availability of bid on website: 02.11.2026, 18:00 hrs
Last date for submission of tender: 25.11.2026, up to 13:00 hrs
For further details, kindly visit our website. The tender documents can be downloaded from the Nigam's website **"www.ujvnl.com"**

(Executive Engineer, Maint., Chibro)
"Avoid wasteful use of Electricity"

NATIONAL INSTITUTE OF URBAN MANAGEMENT (NIUM)

No: E 1088894/NIUM/59/2026-PH-NIUM-Part(1) Date: 28.10.2026
RECRUITMENT: CHIEF INVESTMENT OFFICER (CIO) - TUFIDC

NIUM invites applications from experienced finance professionals for the position of **Chief Investment Officer** at Telangana Urban Finance and Infrastructure Development Corporation (TUFIDC), Hyderabad.
Qualification: Postgraduate in Finance, Economics or Business Administration from premier management institutions such as IIMs, or equivalent.
Experience: Minimum 5 years in banking, finance or financial institutions. Experience in project finance, municipal finance, pooled municipal bonds and urban infrastructure financing preferred.
For details: www.nium.org.in/careers/jobs | Email: hr@nium.org.in
Last date: 15.11.2026

Director General
NIUM
Executive Director
NIUM

No.: 12869-PP/CL/ADVT/2026-27 Date: 31-10-2026

GOVERNMENT OF WEST BENGAL
PWD TENDER NOTICE

1st Corrigendum to e-N.I.B. No. 03 of 2026-2027 of The Superintending Engineer & Project Director, Project Implementation Unit-I, circulated vide This office Memo No. 326-R/PIU-I, Dated. 14.10.2026 for the work " Consultancy Services for preparation of Techno Economic Feasibility Report (TEFR) and Bid Documents (RFP and CA etc.) for development of Ropeway from Kurseong to Darjeeling connecting Sonada and Ghoom in the state of West Bengal under Public Works Directorate." Tender ID : 2026_WBPWD_5080250_1, 2nd Pre-Bid Meeting in hybrid mode (both online and offline): 04.11.2026 at 13.00Hrs. Start Date & time of Submission of Bid (Technical Bid & Financial Bid) (on line): 06.11.2026 at 15.00 Hrs. Last date & time of Submission of Bid (Technical Bid & Financial Bid) (on line) i.e Proposal Due Date (PDD): 25.11.2026 upto15.00 Hrs. Date of Opening of Technical Bid: 27.11.2026 after 15.00 Hrs. Details of N.I.T. and Tender documents may be downloaded from https://tenders.wb.gov.in Sd/- SE & PD, PIU-I, PWRD, GOVT OF WB.

ICA/119456(1)/2026

"IMPORTANT"

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PUBLIC NOTICE

My client namely **Mrs. Raj Chandel** W/o Ganesh Chandel, R/o Pocket E-2/123 and 127, Rohini Sec-11, PO: Rohini sector-7, Distt: North, Delhi-110085, has debarred and disherited her son **Sh. Vivek Chandel** S/O Mrs. Raj Chandel from all her movable and immovable properties due to his misbehavior and misconduct with my client as my clients have no control over him and my client has no concern with him in any manner or with his acts in future.

Sd/-
M. TARIQ
Advocate
T-16, TEHSIL LANE, TIS HAZARI COURTS, DELHI-110054

PUBLIC NOTICE

Notice is hereby given to the General Public that my clients, Sh. Makeet Singh Pahwa, S/o Sh. Vasakha Singh Pahwa, and Smt. Jasbir Kaur, W/o Sh. Makeet Singh Pahwa, both R/o WZ-280 F, Street No. 4, Varinder Nagar, New Delhi-110058, have disowned and debarred their daughter Smt. Jaspreet Kaur, W/o Sh. Saurabh Rehan, R/o J-7/33, Ground Floor, Rajouri Garden, New Delhi-110027, from their family affairs and all their movable and immovable properties, and have severed all ties with her.

My clients shall not be responsible or liable for any act, deed, transaction, debt or claim of Smt. Jaspreet Kaur, whether in her own capacity or purportedly on behalf of my clients. She has no right or authority to represent or bind my clients, or to use their names, documents or properties.

The General Public, banks, financial institutions and government departments are cautioned not to act upon any representation or transaction by her purportedly on behalf of my clients. Any person dealing with her does so entirely at his/her own cost and consequences, and my clients shall not be liable for any resulting loss or dispute.

Dr. Imanjeet Singh Bawa (Advocate)
Office: 171, Pocket 26, Sector-24, Rohini, Delhi-110085

PUBLIC NOTICE

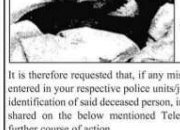
PUBLIC NOTICE IS HEREBY GIVEN that my client **KAWALJEET KAUR** and **JASMEET KAUR** are the absolute owners, with all rights/interest of the immovable property situated at C-45, GROUND FLOOR, STREET NO. 1, WEST CHANDER NAGAR, DELHI-110051. It is hereby notified to the general public that no person, tenant, or third party has any right, title, interest, claim or permission to enter, reside, possess, sell, mortgage, or deal with the aforementioned property. Any person(s) residing in the said property without explicit written authorization from the owner are trespassers and unauthorized, and strict civil and criminal action will be initiated against them.

Sd/-
Sukhbir Singh Sirohi
Advocate
G-518, G-Block, Karkardooma Court, Delhi-110032

DPHQ UDHAMPUR
No: CB/Look Out Notice/2026/72588-99 Dated: 29.10.2026

LOOK OUT NOTICE

As requested by Dy.SP Hqrs. Udhampur that on 23.10.2026 an information was received at PS Udhampur from PCR Udhampur that one unknown person who was admitted at GMC Udhampur in an unconscious condition and later on he was referred to GMC Jammu for further treatment where doctors declared him brought dead. In order to ascertain the actual cause of death of the deceased, an inquest proceeding U/S 194 BNSS has been initiated by P/S Udhampur vide DDR No. 46 dated 23.10.2026 and enquiry initiated. The dead body of the deceased is kept at mortuary room of GMC Jammu for identification/post-mortem. The Photograph with descriptive roll of deceased is as under:-

Photo	Description
	**Age:-** About 30/35 Years **Complexion :** Wheatish **Wearing:** Black Colour Sweeter

It is therefore requested that, if any missing report of such person has been entered in your respective police units/jurisdiction or any clue leading to the identification of said deceased person, immediate information may kindly be shared on the below mentioned Telephone Nos./Fax/e-mail address for further course of action.

Email: sspoudh@jkpolice.gov.in
Fax: 01992-270027
Phone: 01992-2270210
PCR Udhampur: 01992-276915
SHO P/S Udhampur: 9469707070

Sd/-
DIP/J-13548/26, DATE 31 OCT 2026 **SSP Udhampur.**

Deputy Commissioner Office, Chatra
(District Planning office)
Collectorate office, Chatra- 825401
Email: dpochatra@gmail.com

Request for Proposal (RFP)
Tender Reference No: 900 **Date:** 30-10-2026

Tender Inviting Authority, Chatra invites e-tender proposals for Supply, Installation, Testing & Commissioning of Solar High Mast Light System (SHMLS) on Turnkey basis at Different places in chatra District.

	Information	Details
1	Name of the work	Supply, Installation, Testing & Commissioning of Solar High Mast Light System (SHMLS) on Turnkey basis at Different places in chatra District. Estimated cost approx - 49000000/- (Four crore ninety lakh only)
2	Date of Publication of Bid	30.10.2026
3	Tender fee	Rs. 10000.00 (Rupees ten thousand only (Non-refundable) online at https://jharkhandtenders.gov.in
4	Earnest Money to be Deposited (EMD)	980000/-(Nine Lakh Eighty thousand) online at https://jharkhandtenders.gov.in
5	Last date and time of Submission of Bid	14.11.2026 , till- 5.00 PM
6	Technical Bid Opening	17.11.2026 , 11.00 A.M
7	Financial Bid Opening	After Technical Evaluation
8	Bid submission Place	Online - https://jharkhandtenders.gov.in/
9	Bid Opening Place	DPO office, Chatra
10	Contact Number	7909027970
11	Method of Selection	**Stage 1:** The eligibility criteria documents, Bid Fee EMD submitted by the bidders will be evaluated in the first stage. The bidders meeting the technical evaluation criteria only will be shortlisted for further financial bid valuation. **Stage 2:** Out of the technically eligible bidders, the agency submitting the lowest financial bid will be awarded the project. The rates quoted by the agencies should be valid for 1 year from the issue of the RFP.

Note : No hardcopy/Physical copy is required to be submitted for tender opening/Evaluation. However Department may ask original documents for verification before award of contract.
1. Tender Fee and EMD will be received through online mode only. Bidders can use Internet Banking facility for faster processing of tender fee and EMD. Alternatively, Bidders can use NEFT/RTGS Challan generated for the tender from www.jharkhandtenders.gove.in portal
2. Refund will only be issued to the originated bank account use for the payment of Tender Fee and EMD. So, Bidders are advised NOT to close Bank Account used for online payment/ (NEFT/RTGS) of tender fee and EMD.
3. L-1 Bidder online EMD submitted amount will be refunded in the same bank account through which online tender fee and EMD fee payment has been done after AOC process.

District Planning Officer,
PR 392954 (Planning and Development) 26-27 (D) Chatra.

TENDER NOTICE

Tender Reference No. 3363 **Dated: Palampur 28th Oct. 2026**

E-tenders are invited from firms/agencies fulfilling terms & conditions for the PURCHASE & INSTALLATION OF LIQUID NITROGEN 3000 LITERS TRANSPORT TANKER ON MEDIUM MOTOR VEHICLE CHASSIS OF ASHOK LEYLAND SUPER 914 CBC OBDII" to the Joint Director Animal Husbandry Palampur Distt. Kangra H.P -176061. Firms/agencies willing to participate in the tender may download the tender documents from departmental website https://hptenders.gov.in from 28th October, 2026 on 05:00 PM to 20th November, 2026 (10:00 AM). The last date and time for submission and uploading of filled-in tender document is 20th November, 2026 (10:00 AM) and the same will be opened on 20th November, 2026 (11:00 AM) in the office of Joint Director Animal Husbandry Palampur Distt. Kangra H.P -176061. All subsequent corrigendum, modifications and clarifications in respect of this tender will be published only on aforesaid website. The bidders are advised to visit the website regularly for updates, if any.
Note: The bidder/s who has/have deposited his/their EMD and Tender Cost, need not to deposit it again however they have to upload the documents and BOQ afresh.

No. 4432/2026-2027/HP

PROCLAMATION REQUIRING THE APPEARANCE OF ACCUSED PERSON
See Section 84 Bhartiya Nagarik Suraksha Sanhita, 2023

Whereas complaint has been made before me that accused person **Mohd. Waseem S/o** Mohd. Ibrahim **R/o** Gali No.-03, Gokulpur Village Near Laxmi Madir, PS-Gokulpuri, Delhi, has committed (or is suspected to have committed) the offence in **FIR No. 202/2008, U/S 392/34 IPC, PS I.P. Estate, New Delhi** and it has been returned to a warrant of arrest thereupon issued that the said accused **Mohd. Waseem** cannot be found, and whereas it has been shown to my satisfaction that the said accused **Mohd. Waseem** has absconded (or is concealing himself to avoid the service of the said warrant);
Proclamation is hereby made that **Mohd. Waseem** the said accused of **FIR No. 202/2008, U/S 392/34 IPC, PS I.P. Estate, New Delhi,** is required to appear before this Court to answer the said complaint on or before **17.12.2026.**

By Order
Ms. Preeti
Judicial Magistrate First Class-03,
DP/15246/CD/2026 **Central Distt., Court No.-150,**
(Court Matter) **Tis Hazari Courts, Delhi**

PROCLAMATION REQUIRING THE APPEARANCE OF A PERSON ACCUSED
(See Section 82 Cr PC/84 Bhartiya Nagarik Suraksha Sanhita-2023)

Whereas complaint has been made before me that accused person namely **Sunny Kr S/o Suresh R/o Foot Path West Rohini Metro Station Delhi Also Vill Chhara Karinpur Mohall Aligarh** has committed (or is suspected to have committed) the offence in case **FIR No. 226/21 Dt. 05.12.2026 U/s 379/411 IPC at P.S.: Rani Bahg, Delhi** and it has been returned to a warrant of arrest there upon issued that the said accused **Sunny Kr** could not be found and whereas it has been shown to my satisfaction that the said accused **Sunny Kr** has absconded (or is concealing himself to avoid the service of the said warrant). Proclamation is hereby made that the said accused person **Sunny Kr of case FIR No. 226/21 Dt. 05.12.2026 U/s 379/411 IPC of P.S.: Rani Bagh, Delhi is required to appear before this court to answer the said complaint on or before 05.12.2026.**

By order
Anuradha Jindal
Additional Chief Judicial Magistrate
North West Court No.101, 1st Floor
DP/15092/OD/2026 **Rohini Court, Delhi**

PROCLAMATION REQUIRING THE APPEARANCE OF ACCUSED PERSON
(SEE SECTION 82(2) (ii) Cr.PC/84 BNSS)

Whereas complaint has been made before me that accused person(s) **MUNMUN S/o Sanju R/o U-103, Lal Building, Netaji Nagar, New Delhi** has committed (or is suspected to have committed) the offence in case FIR No./CC No. **117/2018, U/s 381/411 IPC, PS Sarojini Nagar, Distt. South-West, New Delhi** and it has been returned to a Warrant of arrest thereupon issued that the said accused person(s) **MUNMUN** can not be found and whereas it has been shown to my satisfaction that the said accused person(s) **MUNMUN** has absconded (or is concealing himself to avoid the service of the said warrant). Proclamation is hereby made that the said accused person(s) **MUNMUN** of case FIR No./CC No. **117/2018, U/s 381/411 IPC, PS Sarojini Nagar, Distt. South-West, New Delhi** is required to appear before this court to answer the said complaint on or before dated **30.11.2026 at 10:00 A.M.**

By Order
Ms. Vijayshree Rathore
Judicial Magistrate, First Class-05
DP/15025/SW/2026 Room No. 13, Main Building
(Court Matter) Patiala House Courts, New Delhi

PROCLAMATION REQUIRING THE APPEARANCE OF ACCUSED PERSON
See Section 82 CrPc

Whereas complaint has been made before me that accused **Amit S/o Lt. Sh. Sunder Raj R/o H.No. H-1/229, Madangir Ph-1, Ambedkar Nagar, Delhi** has committed (or is suspected to have committed) the offence in case registered vide **FIR No.745/14 U/S 379 IPC, PS Rani Bagh, Delhi** and it has been returned to a warrant of arrest their upon issued that the said accused **Amit** can not be found and whereas it has been shown to my satisfaction that the said **Amit** has absconded (or is concealing himself to avoid the service of the said warrant).
Proclamation is hereby made that the said accused **Amit** of **FIR No.745/14 U/S 379 IPC, PS Rani Bagh, Delhi** is required to appear before this court (or before me) to answer the complaint on or before the day of **01.12.2026.**

By Order,
Anuradha Jindal
Additional Chief Judicial Magistrate
North-West Court No. 101, 1st Floor
DP/15074/OD/2026(Court Matter) **Rohini Court, Delhi**

PROCLAMATION REQUIRING THE APPEARANCE OF ACCUSED PERSON
See Section 82 CrPc / 84 BNSS

Whereas complaint has been made before me that accused **Imran Khan S/o Yunus Khan R/o 36, Gali No. 1, Sourabh Vihar, Hari Nagar Extn., Jaitpur, Badarpur, Delhi** have committed (or is suspected to have committed) the offence in case registered vide **FIR No. 263/2020 U/S 498A/406/377/34 IPC, PS Jagatpuri, Delhi** and it has been returned to a warrant of arrest their upon issued that the said **Imran Khan** can not be found and whereas it has been shown to my satisfaction that the said **Imran Khan** has absconded (or is concealing themselves to avoid the service of the said warrant).
Proclamation is hereby made that the said accused **Imran Khan** of **FIR No. 263/2020 U/S 498A/406/377/34 IPC, PS Jagatpuri, Delhi** is required to appear before this court (or before me) to answer the complaint on or before the day of **01.12.2026.**

By Order,
MS. Shipra Dhankar
Judicial Magistrate First Class(Mahila Court)
DP/15617/SHD/2026(Court Matter) **Room No. 55, 2nd Floor**
Karkardooma Court, Delhi

PROCLAMATION REQUIRING THE APPEARANCE OF ACCUSED PERSON
See Section 82 Cr.P.C.

Whereas complaint has been made before me that accused **Devashish Veerkandaj** S/o Deen Bandhu, R/o H.No. B-95, Mange Ram Park, Budh Vihar Phase-I, Delhi has committed (or is suspected to have committed) the offence **FIR No. 644/2016 u/s 27 DMC Act** at **P.S. Begumpur, Distt. Rohini, Delhi** and it has been returned to a warrant of arrest thereupon issued that the said **Devashish Veerkandaj** cannot be found and whereas it has been shown to my satisfaction that the said **Devashish Veerkandaj** has absconded (or is concealing himself to avoid the service of the said warrant). Proceeding **u/s 82 Cr.P.C.** has been initiated in the case. Proclamation is hereby made that the said **Devashish Veerkandaj** accused of **FIR No. 644/2016 u/s 27 DMC Act** at **P.S. Begumpur, Distt. Rohini, Delhi** is required to appear before this Court to answer the said complaint on or before **05.12.2026.**

By Order: Ms. Anuradha Jindal,
Additional Judicial Magistrate,
North-West, Room No. 101, First Floor.,
DP/15540/RD/2026 **Rohini Courts, Delhi.**

BRIDGE

DEALER: East VULNERABLE: Both

NORTH	SOUTH
♠ AQ5	♠ J2
♥ Q82	♥ AK10965
♦ AK	♦ 87
♣ 87432	♣ K65

SOUTH	WEST	NORTH	EAST
—	—	—	1♠
1♥	pass	2♣	pass
2♥	pass	4♥	pass
pass	pass	—	—

West leads the ten of clubs. East wins the club ace and returns the club queen. Plan the play. If declarer releases the king of clubs too early, the contract can be set. In view of the bidding, West is likely to be able to ruff the king of clubs, and may then shift to a spade, establishing the setting trick before discards are available. A look at the full hand confirms this fear.

THE WEST HAND

♠ 98743 ♥ 73 ♦ 95432 ♣ 10

THE EAST HAND

♠ K106 ♥ J2 ♦ QJ106 ♣ AQJ9

If, instead, declarer holds up his club king at trick two, the best the defence can do is take a club ruff at trick three. However, declarer can then win the spade shift in dummy, draw trumps, ruff a club to establish a trick there, and return to dummy in diamonds to cash the club winner for a spade discard.

DEALER: West VULNERABLE: None

NORTH	SOUTH
♠ Q832	♠ AJ1094
♥ 632	♥ AK7
♦ Q10	♦ 942
♣ J852	♣ A6

SOUTH	WEST	NORTH	EAST
—	1♦	pass	1♥
dbl	2♥	pass	pass
2♠	3♦	3♠	pass
pass	pass	—	—

West leads the king, ace and jack of diamonds; East plays the five and then the three. Plan the play.

SUNDAY CROSSWORD 2606

QUICK CLUES

ACROSS

1. Jump or leap (6)
4. Was plentiful (8)
9. Detest or dislike (6)
10. Chicago's state (8)
11. Assuage (6)
12. Footpath (8)
13. Cow sound (3)
14. Jeans line (6)
17. Talk over (7)
21. Consider deeply (6)
25. Rock group ___ Leppard (3)
26. Compensated for or atoned for (4,4)
27. Walked firmly (6)
28. Mascot (8)
29. Lasso (6)
30. Revokes, abrogates or cancels (8)
31. Deadly (6)

DOWN

1. Adversity (8)
2. Answer (8)
3. Stupid person (8)
5. Seaport in N Spain (6)
6. Joined (6)
7. Simple semiconductor devices (6)
8. Discoverer of the Mississippi (6)
12. Caught game or fish illegally (7)
15. Jet fighter craft (3)
16. Recipe amt. (3)
18. Computer programs (8)
19. Reprove (8)
20. Eastern (8)
22. Actor - "remote" anagram ? (6)
23. Grownups (6)
24. 1994 US Open winner (6)
25. Disney duck (6)

CRYPTIC CLUES

ACROSS

1. One of the smallest could be the nicest (6)
4. Sew together frame? (6,2)
9. Sings of online pests (6)
10. The sort of meeting that leads to an inundation ? (8)
11. Begin again on the synopsis, perhaps (6)
12. A minor irritant may make one feel a bit jumpy ! (4-4)
13. Husband withdraws Hawaiian island political body (3)
14. It is in its rightful place among Latin phrases (2,4)
17. Gridiron maneuvers (3,4)
21. There are doubts associated with this name (6)
25. Finished and poetically made small ? (3)
26. Indian rain-makers (8)
27. It protects Cockney comedian Wendy from talking (6)
28. Situated on the farther side, our tiler fell! (8)
29. People put on weight in a French resort (6)
30. They open out for a novice (8)
31. Loves commercial rambling rose (6)

DOWN

1. Mingle in period nine (8)
2. Director makes his mark with first of Emmys, embraces son (8)
3. One forced to share his time with another (4-4)
5. In Spain you abridged Treasure Islands (6)
6. Mongol shipmates? (6)
7. Elderly in damage from freeze (4,2)
8. Pulverize prisoner of war turned communist (6)
12. Just lies mostly, but children believe in them (7)
15. International body may look into unopened letters to begin with (3)
16. What a blow backwards and forwards this can deliver! (3)
18. Send round instrument to scene of action (5,3)
19. A foreign tradesman stuffs a thousand into a single carrier (8)
20. Artisans tumble for old Royals (8)
22. Question an urchin over gun-shot (6)
23. Dye used by woman at Tobago (6)
24. Quarter turn in the river (6)
25. Walking where the corn's growing? (2,4)

SOLUTIONS TO 2605 **QUICK CLUES ACROSS:** 8 Tiramisu, 9 Allout, 10 Odes, 11 Polly, 12 Nara, 13 Restarts, 16 Arches, 18 Flaw, 20 Tiled, 21 Rosy, 22 Feudal, 23 Suspense, 26 Show, 28 Verve, 30 Lick, 31 Anvils, 32 Trampled **DOWN:** 1 Girdle, 2 Tars, 3 Kipper, 4 Purl, 5 Maryland, 6 Flan, 7 Quarters, 14 Towed, 15 Solos, 17 Curve, 19 Leeching, 20 Televise, 24 Seesaw, 25 Secret, 27 Whim, 29 Roti, 30 Lops **CRYPTIC CLUES ACROSS:** 18 Comatose, 9 Mooted, 10 Scry, 11 Overs, 12 Seas, 13 Specific, 16 Hackle, 18 Base, 20 First, 21 Bade, 22 Pursue, 23 Bird's eye, 26 Ida's, 28 Popsy, 30 Jaws, 31 Dermis, 32 Pedalled **DOWN:** 1 Mob cap, 2 Zany, 3 Fob off, 4 Here, 5 Smash hit, 6 Mobs, 7 Derailed, 14 Clews, 15 Carib, 17 Cubes, 19 Amundsen, 20 Freepost, 24 Riyadh, 25 Yawned, 27 Some, 29 Pipe, 30 Jill

IF IT'S YOUR BIRTHDAY

SUNDAY NOVEMBER 1: Take charge of your health. Physical exercise will be important. Stay grounded and levelheaded. You realize that hard work is required to maintain your lifestyle.

MONDAY NOVEMBER 2: You'll be developing new friendships, starting a new hobby or interest and those with professional ambitions will make a substantial change of direction.

TUESDAY NOVEMBER 3: You may make firm commitments as long as you intend to follow them through. In matters of the heart you are still pursuing a fantasy.

WEDNESDAY NOVEMBER 4: Stick close to people you know best and feelings which are tried, tested and understood. Focus on partnerships which will help achieve your goals.

THURSDAY NOVEMBER 5: Whatever happens over the next few days could be repeated over the coming months, in a more positive and productive manner. A new enthusiasm could carry you to greater heights.

FRIDAY NOVEMBER 6: Today and the next twelve months are perfect for a root and branch reform of every single one of your closest relationships.

SATURDAY NOVEMBER 7: Success comes when you look on the bright side. Wherever you are, whatever you are doing, your best efforts will be rewarded.

YOUR WEEK AHEAD

ARIES (MAR 21 - APR 20): Avoid disputes today about shared property, inheritances, taxes, debt and insurance issues. Just coast. Parents should be vigilant about their kids. Social plans might suddenly change. It's a good day to make art. Tonight: Have fun.

TAURUS (APR 21 - MAY 21): You are set to gain emotionally and financially. This is not the moment to turn the tables on people who have got the better of you, but it is time to stop and consider what can be done when your chance comes.

GEMINI (MAY 22 - JUNE 21): A new partnership will bring good fortune at home. You may have to face a little disappointment openly and courageously. Deal with this well and your eventual success will be all the greater.

CANCER (JUNE 22 - JULY 23): You should always remember that you were born under an ambitious sign and have much to accomplish. The moment you forget this and begin to imagine that you are always a sweet and sensitive person, you'll miss major opportunities.

LEO (JULY 24 - AUG 23): Make a point of broadening your horizons at every turn. It is time to take care of your own needs and aspirations, making it apparent to one and all that you are to be toyed with no longer. People who think otherwise may be in line for a shock.

VIRGO (AUG 24 - SEP 23): It's all too easy to jump to conclusions. Have you considered the possibility that you have got someone all wrong? It may be that you have interpreted a partner's behaviour more in line with what you would like to be the case, rather than in terms.

LIBRA (SEP 24 - OCT 23): You should be less inclined to worry about partners' and relations' behaviour. At work, you should concentrate on getting on with people, as you might need loyal allies in the future.

SCORPIO (OCT 24 - NOV 23): It's a useful moment to consider your physical well-being, taking whatever decisions are necessary to get into shape with diet and exercise. And while you're at it, pursue a new interest now, rather than putting it off.

SAGITTARIUS (NOV 24 - DEC 22): Some of your basic qualities are strengthened today, especially your adventurousness and your willingness to experiment with new lifestyles and ideas. Don't be afraid to break out, just as long as you have taken whatever advice is essential.

CAPRICORN (DEC 23 - JAN 20): There are sound reasons why this is not a good moment to finalise relationship matters unless you are one hundred and ten per cent certain. However, a perfect period in which to open yourself to new partnerships and make new life-long friends.

AQUARIUS (JAN 21 - FEB 19): Whatever praise or approval you now receive will surely be well-deserved, but never let flattery go to your head. Plus, you should watch out for creeping complacency. If you rest on your laurels for a moment, opportunity may begin to slip from your grasp.

PISCES (FEB 20 - MAR 20): Costs may be increasing, but that is of little significance at the moment. What is very much more important is that you make a bid for romantic happiness. In the final analysis it's all down to your ability to alter your perspective on one particular person.

JUMBLED WORDS

Given below are four jumbled words. Solve the jumbles to make proper words and move them to the respective circles below. Select the letters in the shaded circles and jumble them to get the answer for the given quip.

What makes life dreary is the __ of a __. - George Eliot (4,,,6)

KNAEO

INOWMN

ATTIC

AEERVW

SOLUTIONS: Oaken, Tacit, Mimnow, Weaver

ANSWER: What makes life dreary is the **want** of a **motive**. - George Eliot

SUDOKU 6489

DIFFICULTY LEVEL 5s

INSTRUCTIONS

To solve a Sudoku puzzle, every digit from 1 to 9 must appear in each of the nine vertical columns, in each of the nine horizontal rows and in each of the nine boxes.

DIFFICULTY LEVEL

1s = Very easy; 2s = Easy; 3s = Medium; 4s = Hard; 5s = Very Hard; 6s = Genius

			7			4		
1	6			3				
5			8					
6					2			4
	4	3				1	5	
8			6					2
					6			3
				5			8	1
		9			8			

SOLUTION SUDOKU 6488

3	5	1	8	6	4	9	2	7
9	6	4	1	7	2	5	8	3
2	8	7	9	3	5	6	4	1
7	9	3	5	4	1	8	6	2
4	2	8	6	9	7	1	3	5
6	1	5	2	8	3	4	7	9
5	7	2	4	1	8	3	9	6
1	4	9	3	2	6	7	5	8
8	3	6	7	5	9	2	1	4

BANGALORE MEDICAL COLLEGE & RESEARCH INSTITUTE
(An Autonomous Institute of Govt. of Karnataka)
Office of the Director cum Dean, Fort, K.R. Road,
Bengaluru - 560002. Telephone: 080-26700810, Tele Fax: 080-26704342
E-mail: director_bmcri@yahoo.co.in

No: BMCRI/SUP(2)/04/2026-27 Dated: 30-10-2026

E-TENDER NOTIFICATION

E-Tender has been invited as per Karnataka Transparency in Public Procurements Act 1999 tender for **Outsourcing of Laundry Services on Turnkey Basis for BMCRI Attached Hospitals, Bengaluru.**

The tender documents may be downloaded from e-Procurement Website: **https://kppp.karnataka.gov.in from 31-10-2026** and Last Date for Submission of Tenders through e-Procurement Portal is **30-11-2026 upto 5.00 PM.** Those tenders which are not submitted with EMD will be rejected.

For further details contact **Director cum Dean, Bangalore Medical College and Research Institute, Bengaluru.**

Sd/- Director cum Dean, BMCRI, Bengaluru.

DIPR/CP/3455/Adverto/2026-27

PUNJAB REMOTE SENSING CENTRE
(A Government of Punjab Enterprise)
PAU Campus, Ludhiana 141004 www.prsc.punjab.gov.in
(Advertisement No. 05/2026 dated 1.11.2026)

Applications are invited for the posts of **Project Associate; Research Scientists; Research Associate; Research Fellow; Jr. Research Fellow; Geospatial Assistant and Project Assistant** on contractual basis for a period of six months likely to be extended based on candidate's performance review and Project Scheme/Centre's requirements. For further details visit website **www.prsc.punjab.gov.in**

Sd/-
Director

SALUTE THE SOLDIER

CENTRAL RESERVE POLICE FORCE



Veer Balidani Constable Ravinder Singh 77 Bn 6-5-1964 To 1-11-1991

DG and all Ranks of #CRPF pay solemn tribute to Constable Ravinder Singh of 77 Bn, who made the supreme sacrifice after sustaining grievous injuries in a grenade attack while countering an ambush in J&K. CRPF salutes the braveheart and pledges never to let his sacrifice go in vain.



Veer Balidani Head Constable Mohd Moiz 133 BN 4-3-1954 To 1-11-1997



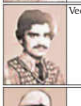
Veer Balidani Constable Ayodhya Prasad Singh 133 BN 12-12-1950 To 1-11-1997



Veer Balidani Lance Naik Damu Tudu 133 BN 10-1-1956 To 1-11-1997



Veer Balidani Lance Naik Bimal Dev Barma 133 BN 6-6-1965 To 1-11-1997



Veer Balidani Lance Naik Sunil Kumar 133 BN 18-1-1964 To 01-11-1997



Veer Balidani Constable Jagbir Singh 133 BN 8-10-1962 To 1-11-1997



Veer Balidani Constable Zahid Khan 133 BN 10-12-1965 To 1-11-1997



Veer Balidani Constable U. S. Mishal 133 BN 17-5-1974 To 1-11-1997



Veer Balidani Constable Amersh Choudhary 133 BN 15-5-1972 To 1-11-1997



Veer Balidani Constable Anil Kumar Kapri 133 BN 21-12-1975 To 1-11-1997

DG and all Ranks of #CRPF pay solemn tribute to ten valiant troopers of 133 Bn, who made the supreme sacrifice after sustaining grievous injuries while countering an ambush by insurgents in Manipur on 1st November 1997. CRPF salutes the bravehearts and pledges never to let their sacrifice go in vain.

CSB Bank PUBLIC NOTICE ON AUCTION OF PLEDGED GOLD ORNAMENTS

The borrowers in specific and interested bidders in general, are hereby informed that on account of non-repayment of the Banks due by the borrowers as under despite the payment notice and recall/auction notice issued by the Bank, the gold ornaments pledged with the bank security by the respective borrowers for the loan availed by them will be sold in public auction on "as is where is" and "non-recourse" at branch premises on **12th November 2026 at 10.30 AM.** The auction may be adjourned to any other later date at the discretion of the bank upon publication of the same in the Bank's notice board. The borrowers are hereby further inform that the gold ornaments will be disposed of by public auction/e-auction, if the auction is not successful, and if there is a further balance to be recovered thereafter, legal action will be initiated against the borrowers for recovery of the balance amounts due to the bank. "In case of deceased borrower, all conditions will be applicable to legal heirs."

S. No.	Auction Center CSB Branch	Account Name	Client ID	No.of Acc.	Bal. Outstanding as on 29.10.2026	Weight (grams)
1	Ashok Vihar - Delhi	Alka Rani	04065431	002	1,79,791.95	18.50
2	Ashok Vihar - Delhi	Arun	08255207	004	14,90,649.02	204.34
3	Ashok Vihar - Delhi	Darshan Gaur	05059461	002	4,48,260.50	71.41
4	Ashok Vihar - Delhi	Seeta Devi	04621225	001	1,32,941.35	37.99
5	Ashok Vihar - Delhi	Tapasya	08190870	001	5,59,750.15	64.90
6	Greater Kailash - Ii	Sukla Dutta	05023029	001	59,792.41	6.34
7	Palam	Babu Lal	04399857	003	16,93,559.55	266.45
8	Palam	Govind Sing	04918025	002	3,68,638.43	35.37
9	Palam	Jasmine Massey	10233025	002	2,43,634.84	22.80
10	Palam	Jyoti	04443926	001	8,59,173.23	83.89
11	Palam	Kamarujama Ansari	10010262	001	6,25,970.19	61.40
12	Palam	Manoranjan Kumar	07098150	001	1,68,055.71	19.30
13	Palam	Narender Mohan	07423984	001	5,60,380.82	70.57
14	Palam	Ram Bilas Jain	04418374	003	9,19,495.93	90.24
15	Palam	Sonu Dahiya	04787011	002	3,76,813.71	73.85
16	Palam	Vinod Kumar	08137977	001	3,50,306.96	32.54
17	Palam	Zeeshan Ahmad	04199482	001	83,839.46	12.20
18	Dwarka	Padam Deswal	10272700	001	3,15,056.14	30.42
19	Dwarka	Pradeep Kumar	10272747	001	55,360.93	5.30
20	Dwarka	Rahul	04792021	002	10,11,878.30	98.91
21	Rohini Sector 7	Alka Rani	04065431	001	1,22,361.43	25.00
22	Rohini Sector 7	Aman	10270382	001	1,94,548.01	19.42
23	Rohini Sector 7	Avadesh Kumar Tiwari	10272733	001	8,59,654.23	80.62
24	Rohini Sector 7	Baba Deen	05083087	001	8,45,467.32	77.56
25	Rohini Sector 7	Bhajan Lal Vishnoi	10296658	001	29,76,295.88	252.32
26	Rohini Sector 7	Jasmeet Kaur	07857807	002	74,80,979.01	705.64
27	Rohini Sector 7	Rekha Ved	08288904	001	11,71,470.08	154.40
28	Rohini Sector 7	Sunny Juneja	05000411	001	54,747.24	5.10
29	Shalimarbagh	Gaurav Agarwal	07579304	003	73,32,791.01	679.85
30	Shalimarbagh	Gaurav Kumar	10078058	001	1,02,387.57	10.70
31	Shalimarbagh	Nadeem	10274067	001	2,58,614.67	27.84
32	Shalimarbagh	Naresh Kumar	10299752	001	5,66,770.60	49.50
33	Shalimarbagh	Rajesh	10162285	002	2,25,211.40	22.90
34	Shalimarbagh	Rajesh Devi	04630523	001	1,14,305.98	11.74
35	Shalimarbagh	Rajni	10214477	001	1,49,181.24	16.00
36	Shalimarbagh	Sandeep	08288904	001	1,62,626.45	15.98
37	Shalimarbagh	Savtri	08232739	002	7,08,252.66	66.08
38	Shalimarbagh	Shyam	04612739	001	7,57,905.30	72.40
39	Shalimarbagh	Urmila Devi	05030218	001	62,163.68	6.00
40	Okhla	Manoj Kumar Wadhwa	07961310	001	7,86,436.95	68.00
41	Okhla	Mohd Shafi Alam Khan	08257584	001	8,21,852.70	82.80
42	Okhla	Sparsh	10268317	001	6,84,990.41	70.66
43	Patel Nagar	Govind	10264410	001	1,16,424.13	10.80
44	Patel Nagar	Sunny Goel	04896655	002	24,62,921.47	259.38
45	Mayur Vihar-New Delhi	Meenu	10178092	001	7,72,738.47	70.63
46	Tilak Nagar, New Delhi	Arjun	10272690	001	1,55,170.49	13.82
47	Tilak Nagar, New Delhi	Beena	07913765	002	11,03,866.21	118.97
48	Tilak Nagar, New Delhi	Murgesh	08280795	002	2,75,431.68	29.68
49	Tilak Nagar, New Delhi	Ravi	10076924	001	8,61,140.61	83.05
50	Tilak Nagar, New Delhi	Vishal K	10161996	001	8,61,967.61	84.88
51	Dilshad Garden	Afsana	05004921	001	1,06,049.66	11.00
52	Dilshad Garden	Raj Kumar	07562270	001	2,15,518.73	30.90
53	Dilshad Garden	Ved Prakash	10052727	001	1,20,869.79	17.40
54	Rajouri Garden	Manoranjan Kumar	07098150	002	6,02,897.49	59.85
55	Rajouri Garden	Md Kaif	10072459	001	2,20,032.97	30.00
56	Rajouri Garden	Monika Singh	10021599	001	5,71,458.56	52.40
57	Rajouri Garden	Neeraj Kumar Yadav	07491544	001	6,18,691.73	61.55
58	Rajouri Garden	Saif	10072652	001	2,21,028.27	30.20
59	Rajouri Garden	Tanya Tank	07947070	002	4,57,188.29	39.68
60	Rajouri Garden	Vinay Khari	10172584	001	5,85,969.17	52.25
61	Rajouri Garden	Vishal Yadav	08185196	001	7,96,293.67	68.10
62	Najafgarh, New Delhi	Arish Khan	04970918	001	43,08,935.08	403.30
63	Narela	Annu Devi	04558473	001	57,473.58	5.50
64	Narela	Gyanti Kumari Mahato	04945368	002	4,09,368.85	37.86
65	Narela	Kailash	10080051	002	2,57,283.05	24.03
66	Narela	Karan Batra	07816776	001	8,36,505.34	76.26
67	Narela	Kavyansh	10068245	001	1,67,464.98	26.80
68	Narela	Sanjeev Kumar	10067583	001	4,83,171.98	53.05
69	Narela	Shivam Bhardwaj	07909239	001	1,78,712.17	16.00
70	Narela	Udit Batra	10271458	001	4,22,741.73	39.10
71	Bhajanpura-New Delhi	Mohd Dilshad	10257535	001	8,73,572.10	91.72
72	Bhajanpura-New Delhi	Shahnaz Fatma	10087780	001	1,33,087.43	13.85
73	Tri Nagar, New Delhi	Rohit Jain	04804410	001	97,352.14	17.50
74	Shyam Nagar-New Delhi	Naved	04719989	001	41,029.32	4.50
75	Laxmi Nagar	Wasim Abbas	10019584	003	12,62,078.47	195.29
76	Paschim Vihar	Sandeep Taneja	05045332	001	2,83,774.29	25.00
77	Saraswati Vihar-Pitampura	Abhishek Vedwal	08103509	001	6,67,083.40	56.40
78	Saraswati Vihar-Pitampura	Bhola Shanker Panday	10263936	001	64,931.50	11.43
79	Saraswati Vihar-Pitampura	Bhoop Singh	08186336	001	8,26,922.90	97.47
80	Punjabi Bagh-New Delhi	Sanjay Jain	10272766	001	1,14,372.12	10.90
81	Punjabi Bagh-New Delhi	Suman	08289694	001	1,34,774.15	29.43
82	Kamla Nagar-New Delhi	Davinder Goyal	10067528	002	3,54,529.74	51.25

For more details/account wise information borrowers/interested bidders may contact respective branches and for participating in the auction

NCT OF DELHI | 01.11.2026 SD/- AUTHORIZED OFFICER, CSB BANK

"IMPORTANT"

Whilst care is taken prior to acceptance of advertising copy, it is not possible to verify its contents. The Indian Express (P) Limited cannot be held responsible for such contents, nor for any loss or damage incurred as a result of transactions with companies, associations or individuals advertising in its newspapers or Publications. We therefore recommend that readers make necessary inquiries before sending any monies or entering into any agreements with advertisers or otherwise acting on an advertisement in any manner whatsoever.

OFFICE OF THE SUPERINTENDING ENGINEER ELECTRICAL CIRCLE (R&B)
NIRMAN SOUDHA BHUBANESWAR
E-mail seec.bbsr2010@gmail.com
Bid Identification No.S.E.E.C (R&B) 37/2026-27

34001/1081/2627

No: 5158 Dt: 29.10.2026

The Superintending Engineer, Electrical Circle (R&B) Odisha, Bhubaneswar on behalf of the Governor of Odisha invites percentage rate bids for E.I. works which are to be received through online bidding, double cover system as detailed in : **https://tendersorissa.gov.in**. The details of bid documents will be available in the above website from dt. 05.11.2026 at 05.00 P.M. to dt.20.11.2026 up to 05.00 P.M. The bidders must possess compatible Digital Signature Certificate of Class II or III. Bids received online shall be opened dt. 21.11.2026 at 11.30 A.M. in the Office of the Superintending Engineer, Electrical Circle (R&B) Odisha, Bhubaneswar. Further details can be seen from the e-procurement portal **www.tendersorissa.gov.in**.

Addendum/Corrigendum, if required, will be available only in the Website.

Sd/-
Superintending Engineer,
OIPR- 34001/34006/1/26-27/0038 **Electrical Circle (R&B) Odisha, BBSR**

WORKS DEPARTMENT
OFFICE OF THE CHIEF CONSTRUCTION ENGINEER, EASTERN CIRCLE (R&B), BALESHWAR
e-mail: - seec bls@rediffmail.com
Government of Odisha "e" Procurement Notice
Bid Identification No. CCEEC- 19/2026-27,
No: 1373 Dt: 29.10.26

34001/1078/2627

1. Nature of work:- **Short term road maintenance Works.**
2. Number of works:- **02 No. Roads.**
3. Amount put to Tender: **Rs. 138.08 lakh to Rs. 138.80 lakh.**
4. Class of Contractor:- **"B" & "A"**
5. Date & Time of availability of bid document in the portal:- **Dt. 05.11.2026 at 10:00 AM**
6. Last Date / Time of receipt of bid in the portal:- **Dt. 19.11.2026 up to 05:00 PM**
7. Date of opening of bid:- **Dt. 20.11.2026 at 11:00 AM**
8. Name & address of the Office inviting bid:- **Chief Construction Engineer, Eastern Circle (R&B), Baleshwar.**
9. The bidders have to participate in **ONLINE** bidding only. Further details can be seen from the e-
10. Procurement portal "**http//tendersodisha.gov.in**." All future corriegendum will be available on ONLINE mode only.

Sd/-
Chief Construction Engineer,
OIPR-34001/34026/1/26-27/0021 **Eastern Circle (R&B), Baleshwar.**

KARNATAKA INDUSTRIAL AREAS DEVELOPMENT BOARD
(A Government of Karnataka Undertaking)
No.2, 2/1 & 2/3, Kalidasa Marg, 1st Main Road, Gandhinagar,
Bengaluru - 560009. Phone No. 080-22265383 website:www.kiadb.in

No.IADB/ENGG/ETND-DPR-06/1016/2026-27 Date:31-10-2026

SHORT TERM NOTICE INVITING TENDER
(Through GOK Karnataka Public Procurement Portal Only)

KIADB invites tender from reputed consultants/firms under two cover bid system with vast experience and proven record of similar nature of work for project mentioned below:-

Name of the work: Providing Consultancy Services for Preparation of Detailed Project Report (DPR) for the formation of new industrial layout, including Economic Analysis, Surveying, Layout Plan Design, Preparation of Cost Estimate, Cost Structure etc., at Manvi Industrial Area, 3rd Phase, Manvi Taluk, Raichur District. (Extent 106.13 Acres).

- Last Date for submission of bids: **13.11.2026** upto **4:00 pm.**

Applicants May download bidding documents from the Karnataka Public Procurement portal **https://kppp.karnataka.gov.in**

Sd/-
Chief-Engineer-2
KIADB
DIPR/CP/3456/CCL/2026-27

TENDER NOTICE

Tender Reference No. 3367 **Dated: Palampur 28th Oct. 2026**

E-tenders are invited from firms/agencies fulfilling terms & conditions for the PURCHASE & INSTALLATION OF LIQUID NITROGEN 4000 LITERS TRANSPORT TANKER ON MEDIUM MOTOR VEHICLE CHASSIS OF MAHINDRA & MAHINDRA FURIO 10D BS6 40D CB17" to the Joint Director Animal Husbandry Palampur Distt. Kangra H.P -176061. Firms/agencies willing to participate in the tender may download the tender documents from departmental website https://hptenders.gov.in from 28th October 2026 on 05:00 PM PM to 20th November 2026 (10:00 AM). The last date and time for submission and uploading of filled-in tender document is 20th November 2026 (10:00 AM) and the same will be opened on 20th November 2026 (11:00 AM) in the office of Joint Director Animal Husbandry Palampur Distt. Kangra H.P -176061. All subsequent corrigendum, modifications and clarifications in respect of this tender will be published only on aforesaid website. The bidders are advised to visit the website regularly for updates, if any.

Note: The bidder/s who has/have deposited his/their EMD and Tender Cost, need not to deposit it again however they have to upload the requisite documents and BOQ afresh.

Joint Director
Animal Husbandry Palampur Distt. Kangra H.P-176061
No. 4431/2026-2027/HP **Phone 01894-230529**

GOVERNMENT OF HIMACHAL PRADESH.
JAL SHAKTI DEPARTMENT.
" Notice Inviting e-Tender"

The Executive Engineer JSV Division Jaisinghpur Invites tenders on behalf of Governor of Himachal Pradesh from approved eligible contractors for the following work (S) through e- tendering process:-

Sr. No.	Name of work	Estimated Cost	Earnest money	Time limit	Cost of form
1	Providing Construction Installation Commissioning of Sewerage Cum Effluent Treatment Plant for Civil Hospital Jaisinghpur including provision of MBBR Technology Sewer Line Civil Structures Site Development and One year Operation Structures Site Development and One year Operation Maintenance in Tehsil Jaisinghpur Distt Kangra HP	5153409/-	53034/-	Six Months	2000/-

Last date of filling / uploading the tender through e- tendering: - 16.11.2026 upto 5.00PM. The tender forms and other detailed conditions can be obtained from the website. **http://hptenders.gov.in**.

Executive Engineer,
No. 4420/2026-2027/HP **JSV Division, Jaisinghpur**

Rohit set to join Mumbai for Vijay Hazare



Rohit Sharma. PTI

Devendra Pandey
Mumbai, October 31

ROHIT SHARMA has told the Mumbai Cricket Association (MCA) that he will be available for Mumbai in the Vijay Hazare Trophy in December.

The Indian Express understands that he will join after India's three-match ODI series against Sri Lanka at home, from December 13 to 19. The matches are in Delhi, Bengaluru and Ahmedabad, and the first falls a day before the tournament begins.

"He has informed us that he will be playing for Mumbai in the Vijay Hazare Trophy and to consider him available after India's three-ODI series against Sri Lanka at home. How many matches he will be available for, he will inform us later," an MCA source said.

The league stage of the tournament runs from December 14 to 29, with the knockouts from January 2 to 8. The ODIs are followed by three T20Is, from December 22, which Sharma will not play. That leaves him the last ten days of the league stage. India's three-match ODI series against Zimbabwe begins on January 3.

The league games are in Ahmedabad, Bengaluru, Ranchi and Rajkot, and the knockouts in Visakhapatnam. The last of the three Zimbabwe ODIs is at the Wankhede Stadium in Mumbai on January 9.

It will not be the first time. Last season Sharma made himself available for Mumbai and played two Vijay Hazare Trophy games in Jaipur, his first in the tournament since 2018. He made 155 off 94 balls against Sikkim in the first, and was out for a golden duck against Uttarakhand two days later. Before that he had played 18 matches for Mumbai in the tournament. He now plays one format for India, having retired from T20Is in 2024 and Tests in 2025.

Sharma may soon have a bigger job at his IPL franchise too. *The Indian Express* has reported that Mumbai Indians are likely to give him back the captaincy for IPL 2027. He is part of the ODI squad for the five-match series in New Zealand, which starts next week. He trained at the MCA-BKC ground a few days ago. India have no ODIs scheduled between the Zimbabwe series and the IPL, and with next year's ODI World Cup ahead, the domestic games would give him match practice.

INDIA'S TOUR OF NEW ZEALAND

Amid defeat, Mayank shows express pace and quiet resolve

On comeback, seamer has showcased not just blistering pace, but also the grit to persevere

Sriram Veera
Mumbai, October 31



Despite India losing to New Zealand at Eden Park, Mayank Yadav was the pick of the Indian bowlers with his three wickets. CREIMAS

THERE IS a story Mayank Yadav tells about Justin Langer and Shoaib Akhtar that captures something of his persona. A few years ago, when Langer was coaching his IPL team, Lucknow Super Giants, he had explained to Mayank why Shoaib Akhtar's "aggressive personality" made him the fastest bowler he had faced.

There were other quicks around, but Shoaib's personality made Langer feel he was "quicker than others". Mayank follows that anecdote with a moment of self-awareness. "I am not aggressive. My nature is to be calm," he had told *Star Sports*. "I work around it on other things."

Grit, perseverance

What he doesn't lack, though, is grit, perseverance and courage. Otherwise, he wouldn't have made it back to top-level cricket after two years in the wilderness, during which a series of injuries kept striking one body part after another. And yet, when he returned a few months ago, his pace was still up there.

He had mapped out his route: Delhi, India Under-19, IPL, India. Once, on *Manjot Kalra's YouTube* show, he recalled bowling at half pace during a Services trial to avoid being selected. A few thunderbolts escaped. A Navy job was offered. He fled in an auto. Speed wouldn't last, the official warned him.

Some aspects of his bowling are still a work in progress. At times, he telegraphs his short ball by dropping his head to the side and cocking his wrist at an angle at the point of release as he looks to bang the ball in short. It is also still not entirely clear what his stock ball is in terms of movement. But what has been noticeable is his improvement in mixing up lengths, and in courage.

On Friday night at Eden Park, in the fourth T20I, which India, having sealed the series, lost by 87 runs, he took 3 for 48 as New Zealand made 259 for 7. His courage was of a kind that doesn't need angry stares or verbal exchanges: sticking to his plan even when under fire from the batter. Take his second over of the innings, to Daryl Mitchell. The first few deliveries were walloped to the boundary, three of them rather full, but Mitchell kept clearing his front leg and scything the ball away.

A bouncer at this stage seemed likely, especially since Mayank had taken a wicket with that delivery in his first over. Perhaps he felt Mitchell might be expecting it, so he went instead for a searing yorker that trapped the batter's back foot right in front of middle and off.

Mayank was quietly back at the top of his bowling mark, waiting for the DRS to confirm his and the umpire's verdict. The next ball was a 149 kmph yorker, six kmph faster than the wicket-taking delivery, which Glenn Phillips managed to stab away.

In fact, even the first over is worth revisiting. Mayank had repeatedly hurled full deliveries at Finn Allen and Tim Seifert. A slice from Allen flew towards third man, who leapt beyond the boundary rope and parried it back into play. This time, Mayank went for the bouncer off the final ball. His head fell over, his wrist took on that familiar crooked angle, and he banged the ball in short.

Seifert leapt into the air for a fierce slash but was beaten by the pace and bounce, and third man snapped up the simple catch.

His next intervention in the game was probably his best. New Zealand were cruising at 109 for 3 after 10 overs, with two of their most in-form batters, Phillips and Bevon Jacobs, at the crease.

Mayank began with three length balls before slipping in his best bouncer of the day to Jacobs. This time, there was no tell, no hint of what was coming, no falling away of the head. Jacobs is tall and strong, and likes to stand erect and crunch his pulls. Perhaps he was lulled by the gentle rhythm of Mayank's run-up and release and did not expect a 142 kmph short ball to climb so rapidly towards him.

But the pull comes naturally to Jacobs, and he went for it. The ball had the pace and bounce to beat the bat rather than the other way around. The resulting miscue was swallowed inside the 30-yard circle.

His final spell with the ball, in the 18th over, proved costly: he conceded three sixes. The left-handed Michael Bracewell smartly used the pace to lap and scoop full deliveries on the leg-and-middle line over the boundary.

The plan wasn't a bad one — to tuck up the left-hander — but Bracewell responded with deftness rather than muscle. Mayank changed tack, slipping in slower balls.

The first worked, eliciting a miscued pull, but Bracewell was ready for the second, on the penultimate ball of the over, and came up with another scooped six. Mayank finally responded with an outside-off yorker that flew through to the wicketkeeper. Was it worth trying that earlier in the over?

Those are the questions Mayank will ponder at this stage of his career. He might not have innate aggression, but grit and courage are nothing to sneeze at.

Nabi added to India squad for New Zealand ODI series



JAMMU AND Kashmir player **Auqib Nabi** has been added to the Indian squad against New Zealand for the first three ODIs. The pacer was initially part of the team for the final two games, but on Saturday, the BCCI announced that he will be part of those first three ODIs as well. The seamer will be in the side in place of Prasidh Krishna, who is suffering from a hamstring injury.

The 29-year-old seamer from Baramulla is only the second cricketer from J&K to make it to the national side after Parvez Rasool. Earlier, Nabi made his debut against West Indies in the 2nd ODI in Guwahati. Nabi claimed 104 wickets across the last two Ranji Trophy seasons, including 60 wickets in the 2025-26 campaign, playing a pivotal role in Jammu and Kashmir's maiden Ranji Trophy triumph.

Son of a school teacher in Kashmir and good at academics, he had to be selected at a talent hunt to convince his parents to let him play in his final year at U19S. As such, he was a terribly late starter. "Back then, there was no formal coaching really in Baramulla. Now things have changed. So I played my first real red-ball cricket only after 19," he recalls, of the early days when T20s was all that cricketers around him played. "I happened to accompany a friend for state trials when I was picked." Till that time, Dale Steyn videos were his virtual coach. ENS

INDIA'S UPDATED SQUAD FOR THE FIRST THREE ODIS:
Shubman Gill [C], Rohit Sharma, Virat Kohli, Shreyas Iyer [VC], KL Rahul [WK], Axar Patel, Naman Dhir, Anshul Kamboj, Gurnoor Brar, Ruturaj Gaikwad, Arshdeep Singh, Ishan Kishan [WK], Mohammed Siraj, Kuldeep Yadav, Nitish Kumar Reddy (only for the first ODI), Auqib Nabi.

•Mayank Yadav 2.0

Numbers since return to Team India

Matches	9
Wickets	13
Average	24.76
Economy	9.74
3-fers	3

•BRIEFLY



Leylah Fernandez beat Kamilla Rakhimova 7-5, 6-3. AP

Leylah advances to Tokyo WTA final with win over Rakhimova

LEYLAH FERNANDEZ has advanced to her third WTA final of the year, with a chance to win her second tournament. The Canadian beat Kamilla Rakhimova 7-5, 6-3 Saturday in the semifinals of the WTA's Pan Pacific Open tennis tournament. In Sunday's final, Fernandez will play third-seeded Diana Shnaider, who beat teenager Mia Pohankova in the second semifinal Saturday 6-4, 7-6 (7). Fernandez had won the Singapore Open in September. AP

England pip India in Hong Kong Sixes

INDIA SUFFERED a narrow three-run defeat against England in the Bowl Division semifinal of the Hong Kong Sixes 2026 on Saturday, missing out on a place in the final after a runfest frm both sides. England will face South Africa in the Bowl Division final, while India will take on Bangladesh in the 11th-12th place playoff match. PTI

King leads WI to 8-wicket win over Bangladesh

OPENER BRANDON King hit an unbeaten 81 as West Indies chased down 170 with ease to beat Bangladesh by eight wickets in the first Test. Bangladesh were bowled out for 142 in the second innings, taking a lead of just 169 runs.
BRIEF SCORES: **Bangladesh** 272 and 142 (Nayeem Hasan 52; Roston Chase 5/36, Jomel Warrican 4/63) **lost to West Indies** 245 and 170 for 2 (Brandon King 81 not out) by 8 wickets. AP

Chennai Open's last edition this year: Amritraj

CHENNAI OPEN will have its last edition this year after India lost the tournament slot to the Philippines, but the Tamil Nadu Tennis Association (TNTA) is working to bring three to four WTA 125 events, Indian tennis legend Vijay Amritraj said. Amritraj said the decision to move it was understandable given the weather conditions in Chennai. PTI

Rymbai helps Shillong beat Mohammedan

SHILLONG LAJONG FC began their Indian Football League (IFL) campaign on a winning note, securing a hard-fought 1-0 victory over Mohammedan SC. Substitute Nelson Rymbai struck in the 90th minute to break the deadlock and hand the visitors all three points. After dominating possession for large periods, Shillong Lajong found the breakthrough in the closing moments. PTI

Pranavi cards 73, slips to tied 23rd at Wistron Open

INDIAN GOLFER Pranavi Urs endured a difficult third round at the Wistron Ladies Open, carding a 1-over 73 to slip to tied 23rd at Sunrise Golf and Country Club. Pranavi arrived in Chinese Taipei on the back of a second consecutive top-four finish at the Hero Women's Indian Open. After opening with a 70 and following it up with a 68, a challenging third round left her at 5-under 211, alongside Pornanong Phatlum. PTI

India complete Commonwealth Kabaddi double

INDIA COMPLETED a double at the inaugural Commonwealth Kabaddi Championship 2026, winning both men's and women's titles with commanding victories in the finals on Saturday. The Indian men's team defeated Sri Lanka 54-20 to clinch the inaugural men's crown, while the women beat Uganda 35-15 earlier in the evening to seal the women's title. PTI

Bad decisions by batters cost Aus, says Cummins

Nick Said
Cape Town, October 31

Cummins made the decision to bowl first after winning the toss, something that had been done only 11 times before in Tests at Newlands since 1889.

AUSTRALIA CAPTAIN Pat Cummins said it was fair to ask questions about his side after they slipped to two defeats in a row against hosts South Africa to lose the three-match series 2-1 at Newlands on Saturday.

Australia next host New Zealand and Cummins said the series loss meant questions were inevitable as South Africa took over from them as the number one side in the test world rankings. "We lost two games in a row. I think it's fair to be asking questions and we'll be asking them internally as well," Cummins told reporters. "We are a very good side but I think we need to get a little bit better if we want to get back to number one (in the world).

"Maybe that's a change of style, maybe it's a change of personnel in some instances. We'll work it out."

Cummins made the surprise decision to bowl first after winning the toss on the first morning, something that had been done only 11 times before in tests at Newlands since 1889. As it proved, batting last was difficult on a wearing surface and Australia fell to the spin of Simon Harmer, who took career-best figures of 10-120 in the match. "We knew it was going to be a high-scoring game," Cummins said. "We probably thought it was going to do a little bit more on day one than it did. "You don't win the toss and think you're going to bowl the opposition out for 100 or 200 but we thought we could get 10 wickets on day one and that would put us right ahead of the game."

Cummins said poor decisions cost his batters and that their chase was as good as over in the first half-hour. "Chasing 280-odd was never going to be easy but we all turned up today and saw a pretty clear path forward. I thought it was achievable but we never gave ourselves a chance," he said. REUTERS

• DETHRONED IN CAPE TOWN

Harmer shines as South Africa defeat Australia, clinch series

Associated Press
Cape Town, October 31



Simon Harmer's 10-for earned him the man-of-the-match honours — a first for a South African spinner against Australia since 1952. AP

SIMON HARMER picked a career-best 6-16 as South Africa bowled out Australia for 111 to win the third Test by 176 runs and clinch the three-match series 2-1 on Saturday.

Australia crumbled in Cape Town after being set 288 to win on Day 5 of the deciding match of the series.

The Proteas rallied from 1-0 down in the first test series between the teams in South Africa since the "*Sandpapergate*" scandal in 2018.

Harmer, a 37-year-old off-spinner, finished with match figures of 10-120 - his first 10-wicket haul in Tests - after South Africa made 329 and 387 in its two innings, while Australia scored 429 in its first to take a 100-run lead at Newlands Kagiso Rabada took 3-39 on Saturday to reach 350 career Test wickets.

Wiaan Mulder and Ryan Rickelton had scored centuries on day four to set up a 288-run target, but Australia collapsed to 60-7 at lunch on Day 5 and was eventually bowled out before tea.

Australia had won the first Test in Durban by 214 runs, and South Africa won the second Test in Gqeberha by an innings and 31 runs.

With the victory, South Africa dethroned Australia for the top spot in the ICC Test team rankings.

Creating history

It is the first Test series loss for Australia since March 2023. Harmer was named player of the match for his 10-wicket haul - the first for a South African spinner against Australia since 1952.

"It was about dealing with the expectation (in the fourth innings). The biggest thing was to get the win today," Harmer said. "We were in the game with the way KG (Rabada) bowled this morning. As a spinner, on a turning wicket, that's what dreams are made of. It has been a tough few weeks, but today was a lot of fun." Australia suffered a harrowing morning session against both pace and spin. Rabada took 3-14 in five overs, while Harmer picked 3-5 in eight overs.

> **"We were in the game with the way KG (Rabada) bowled this morning. As a spinner, on a turning wicket, that's what dreams are made of. It has been a tough few weeks, but today was a lot of fun."**
> SIMON HARMER
> SOUTH AFRICA OFF-SPINNER

Rabada got in-form Matt Renshaw out for a golden duck, caught behind down leg side. Three balls later, Rabada struck for a second time as Marnus Labuschagne (4) was out lbw shouldering arms. Australia was 5-2 after the first over.

Travis Head hit 14 and was next out, caught at gully off Rabada in the seventh over, with the score reading 22-3. It was Rabada's 350th Test dismissal and he became the quickest to reach the milestone ahead of compatriot Dale Steyn.

First innings' centurion Josh Inglis (4) was run out going for a non-existent run at Cameron Green's call.

Complete disarray

Australia's second innings was in complete disarray as Harmer had Alex Carey (2) caught at backward point with Marco Jansen taking another good catch. Two balls later, Cooper Connolly was caught behind for a two-ball duck, leaving the visitors 42-6.

Harmer struck again before lunch, with Mitchell Starc caught at short leg as the ball looped up off his pads.

Starc faced 25 balls without opening his account, even as Green was unbeaten on 25 runs off 73 balls at the other end. After lunch, Cameron Green (27) and Pat Cummins (11) batted 73 balls, before Harmer broke through.

The ball turned in from outside off stump to bowl Green, who faced 110 balls with three fours.

Cummins and Nathan Lyon (33 not out) battled for another 104 balls, adding 45 runs for the ninth wicket which took Australia past 100.

Harmer then sealed the win with two wickets in successive overs. He trapped Cummins lbw in the 56th and bowled Josh Hazlewood (0) to kick off celebrations.

He also became the first South African spinner to pick a 10-wicket haul in Cape Town.

Australia had last won a Test series in South Africa in 2014. Marco Jansen was named player of the series for scoring 198 runs and taking 13 wickets in three Tests.

"It was a very intense series with a lot of pressure, a lot of ebbs and flows, ups and downs, and it feels tiring to be standing here," he said.

"But it was an awesome series to be part of. You have to adapt your game to a certain degree depending on the conditions, so making a different game plan in every venue was key."
BRIEF SCORES: **South Africa** 329 & 387 beat **Australia** 429 & 111 all-out (Nathan Lyon 33; Simon Harmer 6/16, Kagiso Rabada 3/39) by 176 runs.

Antonelli inches closer to crown of youngest F1 champion



Kimi Antonelli. AP

Associated Press
Mexico City, October 31

IF KIMI Antonelli was still feeling the effects of an illness that kept him from a media session, it certainly didn't show on the track. The 20-year-old Mercedes driver — who is aiming to become the youngest champion in Formula 1 history this weekend — finished second and fourth in the two practice session for the Mexico City Grand Prix on Friday.

Ferrari's Charles Leclerc topped both sessions to show continued strong form, having finished third in the last two races. Antonelli, who has the Formula 1 title well within his grasp, missed a media session on Thursday due to a viral infection. But he looked good in his first shot at the Mexico City Hermanos Rodríguez race track. To secure the title and break the record set by Sebastian Vettel — the youngest champion at 23 in 2010 — Antonelli can finish as low as ninth on Sunday.

Antonelli wants to seal the deal with another big result, but he could also do it without scoring another point if someone other than Lewis Hamilton or George Russell wins Sunday's race. "I'm very excited. I would love to clinch the title in style with a great result," Antonelli said after taking his ninth win of the season in Texas last week.

"That's the mindset. I'm just going to try to enjoy every moment because they're moments that will always be remembered." Antonelli can also become the first Italian driver to win the title since Alberto Ascari in 1953.

Mercedes can clinch the constructors' title on Sunday for the first time since 2021. Mercedes hit the ground running under this season's new regulations, with George Russell's victory at the season-opening Australian Grand Prix.

Defying predictions this would be Russell's year, Antonelli surged ahead by winning five consecutive races as his teammate faded. Russell struggled to explain his lack of pace after finishing eighth in Austin last week.

Hamilton's woes

Hamilton finished fourth in the first practice session, and it looked like it might be a good day for the the seven-time world champion. However, he reported a loss of power roughly halfway through the second session. "Something is wrong with the car," Hamilton said over the radio. "I lost all power at turn 13." Ferrari team officials told him to pull off the track and bring his car to a stop.

During the second practice session, there was contact between Max Verstappen and Liam Lawson that resulted in a red flag, and both later received a one-place penalty drop.

QUIET OFF THE MAT, FIERY ON IT

Manisha's journey: A late start, an obsession and now a world title

Starting at 16 and winning no junior medals, the new world champion has taken an unconventional path to top

Pritish Raj
New Delhi, October 31

DOCTORS PRESCRIBE melatonin to help people sleep. Manisha Bhanwala has a different remedy. "I can't sleep if I don't wrestle," Manisha told *The Indian Express* from Kazakhstan.

The 29-year-old, who won the 59kg title at the World Championships, made history by becoming the first Indian woman to win a wrestling world title. Her triumph also ended India's 16-year wait for a world champion, since Sushil Kumar's gold in 2010.

Beyond her wrestling skills, mental toughness and experience, it is Manisha's obsession with the sport that has brought her one of the biggest honours in wrestling. "I become restless if I don't wrestle. Especially after competing at the top level for more than four years, I am becoming more obsessed with the sport. The mat feels like home," she said.

Manisha took up the sport relatively late, at the age of 16. A late bloomer in every sense, she did not win a medal at the junior level. But her willingness to keep grinding has brought her continental success and, now, a world title. "She is obsessed with the sport. Even when she comes home, she would ask me to spar with her," said her brother Rinku, who plays kabaddi. "I am her only brother and when I was getting married, she came only for a couple of days because there was a national camp going on," he added.

National coach Virender Dahiya, who has been working with Manisha at national camps since 2022, initially thought her obsession with wrestling was unusual. "I saw her at the national camp in 2022 and, at first, I thought this girl was mad. In the 45-46 degree summer heat of Lucknow, she would practise for hours," he said at a press conference organised by the Wrestling Federation of India. "Unlike others, this girl doesn't have any other hobbies in life. Her only hobby is wrestling, and the result is in front of you."

That obsession is evident in her bouts. Usually reserved off the mat, Manisha transforms into a powerhouse once competition begins. "She has always been an aggressive wrestler. Earlier, that aggression used to affect her stamina, but eventually we worked on that. Now, Manisha can hold on until the last moment and outlast most of her opponents on the mat," explained her coach, Mandeep.

A strong mindset

Wrestling is fought as much in the mind as it is on the mat. In her four years at the senior level, Manisha has competed in four different weight categories, winning international tournaments in each of them.

According to Dahiya, it is her mindset that makes her so adaptable. "She is always ready to put in the work. Until last year, she was competing in the 62 kg and 65 kg categories, but now she has won two Ranking Series tournaments at 57 kg and a world title at 59 kg. That tells you how strong she is mentally when it comes to adapting to changes," he said.

Changes in weight categories also bring different opponents, and adapting to new challenges is not always easy. Manisha experienced that at the Asian Games, where she faced Japanese legend Akari Fujinami and lost 0-3. "It was not my day against Fujinami at the Asian Games. But the next two years will be fun in the 57 kg category. I am going to improve further after this Worlds medal," said Manisha, who will move down to 57 kg for upcoming tournaments where Olympic qualification spots will be at stake.

Her experience and composure were also crucial in the World Championships final. At one stage, Manisha was trailing 0-6 against American Abigail Nette before staging a comeback to win 8-6. "The night before, we watched all the bouts of the American wrestler. We observed that she gets tired by the fifth minute. I told Manisha to wait for that moment, and that is exactly what she did. She scored in the last minute when the American was tired and had no chance to come back," Dahiya said.



Manisha Bhanwala is India's first-ever women's wrestling world champion. UNITED WORLD WRESTLING

> **"I become restless if I don't wrestle. Especially after competing at the top level for more than four years, I am becoming more obsessed."**
> **MANISHA BHANWALA**
> ON HER PASSION FOR WRESTLING

Sushil Kumar's medal at the 2008 Olympics inspired a generation of Indian wrestlers. India has won at least one wrestling medal at every Olympics since then. Manisha hopes her title can have a similar impact on the next generation of women wrestlers. "Records are meant to be broken. I want other girls to break my record and win more gold medals for India. I really want that. At the LA Olympics, we will create history again."

Dahiya describes Manisha as a wrestler who attacks like a lioness. Having conquered the world, she now has her sights set on the Olympic podium — a place that has eluded Indian women wrestlers at the last two editions of the Games.

After perfect start, India brace for Malaysia test

Express News Service
Mumbai, October 31

INDIA HAVE made a flying start to their Asian Champions Trophy campaign, winning all three matches to book a semifinal berth. But the Harmanpreet Singh-led side can expect a sterner examination when they take on Asian Games silver medallists Malaysia in their fourth round-robin match on Sunday.

While India thrashed Malaysia 5-1 in the Asian Games final in Aichi-Nagoya last month, the Malaysians have traditionally been difficult opponents, capable of making life uncomfortable for the hosts. They will also be keen to settle scores after their defeat in the continental final.

India's campaign so far has been largely comfortable. They began with a 13-0 demolition of Bangladesh before overcoming China 5-2 and Japan 4-1.

A reminder

However, Friday's win over Japan offered a reminder that there is little room for complacency against more organised opposition. After two relatively straightforward outings against Bangladesh and China, India found it difficult to break down Japan's disciplined defence.

Despite committing players forward, they struggled to create clear openings and, tellingly, did not earn a single penalty corner in the first three quarters.

It took until the 47th minute for India to win their first penalty corner, which captain Harmanpreet converted to break the deadlock.

The goal appeared to release the pressure, with India stepping up the intensity in the final quarter to score three times and secure their third successive victory.

Forward Abhishek Nain was the standout performer, marking his 150th international appearance with two impressive field goals. His performance will be encouraging for chief coach Craig Fulton, although India will need greater contributions from the rest of their forward line against Malaysia.

Vice-captain Hardik Singh provided the midfield with stability, but Fulton will expect Vivek Sagar Prasad and Nilakanta Sharma to offer more support. In defence, Sanjay will also need to be sharper after conceding a penalty stroke and giving away a few penalty corners against Japan.



Harmanpreet Singh-led India have won all of their first three matches comfortably. HOCKEY INDIA

Area of concern

India's slow start on Friday is another area of concern. Against a Malaysia side that can be unpredictable and dangerous on the counter, the hosts cannot afford to take too long to find their rhythm. Fulton, meanwhile, is under no illusions about the challenge awaiting his team.

"We defeated them 5-1 in the Asian Games, but Malaysia has always been a tricky opponent for us. I just think I'm glad we're playing a good team and they'll challenge us. We just have to focus on our own game," he said.

India are also likely to bring back in-form forward Mandeep Singh, who was rested against Japan after scoring a hat-trick in the tournament opener against Bangladesh. Malaysia, too, are unbeaten after three matches and occupy second place in the standings, behind India on goal difference. With a chance to avenge their Asian Games final defeat, they will be eager to make a statement against the hosts.

The other matches on Sunday will see South Korea take on Bangladesh and Japan face China.

PLAYING TODAY: South Korea vs Bangladesh (2.30pm), Japan vs China (4.45pm), India vs Malaysia (7pm). Live on Star Sports Network and JioHotstar.

Lakshya zaps out Toma Jr, makes second final of season



Lakshya Sen defeated Toma Jr Popov 21-17, 21-13. BWF/BADMINTON PHOTO

Shivani Naik
Mumbai, October 31

WHEN YOU play Toma Jr Popov, the 6-foot-5 giant from France — as Lakshya Sen did on Saturday — there are two dimensions to tackle. One is his looming reach in retrieves, and then there's his predominant doubles style of play that he can deploy whenever he finds the shuttle pliant: fast, flat exchanges that increase the pace and intensity of rallies to scorching level.

Sen made a mockery of both those assets at the Frenchman's disposal with a zapper of a jump smash, to win the semifinals of the Hylo Open at Saarbrucken, Germany.

Sen, down to World No. 14 now, made his second final of the season with a 21-17, 21-13 win. He has bookended his 2026 with final appearances at the All England and the German Super 500, and little of note in between. But he's been intimidatingly good at both those events, pointing once again to the fact that he can never be written off.

For his good days are devastatingly good, just as his bad days are pitifully poor. It's a straight function of how his back is coping, and he would find it hard to chase consistency when that back is injury-prone.

But when the spine can torque and trust and turn in defence, Sen can be lethal. He fancies Germany — he even beat Viktor Axelsen there once. And like the commentators noted, Sen looked "in the mood" — as his up-and-down form is now well documented. Toma Jr though faced quite the brunt.

> ***When the spine can torque and trust and turn in defence, Sen can be lethal. He fancies Germany — he even beat Viktor Axelsen there once. And like the commentators noted, Sen looked "in the mood" — as his up-and-down form is now well documented. Toma Jr though faced quite the brunt.***

Better on smash

France lucked out at the Thomas Cup in May when Sen suffered a freak elbow impact injury and couldn't play the semis. But at Hylo Open, Sen was out to show up the Eiffel Tower-scaled Frenchman. He won badminton's most basic question: Who has the biggest smash? You would reckon that Toma Jr from his vantage would pepper down steep cannonballs. But the Indian was better on every smash metric.

More winners in yield. Better zip to the smash. Placement perfect — not just when he buried them onto the court from a well-timed jump and that catapult elbow snap. But also when he used the body smash, angling it into Toma Jr's ribs, making it impossible for the man-mountain to parry it away.

Toma Jr peaked at 15-17 in the opener with a 374 kph winner after 31 shots. But Sen was in such a frenzy that he not only defended most of the World No. 13 Frenchman's steep downward strokes, but also belted some really hard-hit bangers at a relentless pace over the 41 minutes.

The French take pride in their physicality and the thumping style they play. But Sen not only matched the speed and strength, he also pulverized Toma Jr with explosive net attacks and crisp winners that preyed on his naturally restricted agility.

Toma's court coverage and defence isn't shabby, but Sen was in murderous mode with his attacks on the day as he went from 8-7 to 14-7 in the second game and cantered to win it 21-13.

Sen has a Thomas Cup bronze and Asian Games team bronze to show for this season after he had looked so promising making the All England final, losing to Lin Chun Yi. There, he had flung his racquet high in his statement celebration, defeating Shi Yuqi in Round 1.

The Chinese would get his revenge later and even mocked the celebration. Sen, meanwhile, stewed from the shock exits at World Championships and Asian Games.

But the racquet was once again airborne as he made the Hylo final - the tournament name homonymous with the contours of his high-low season. Still, a title is awaited. And he will need to fight the winner of Jonatan Christie and Anders Antonsen from the second semifinal. Against Toma Jr though, he brooked no resistance.

Sindhu into final

PV Sindhu had an easy outing against compatriot Anmol Kharb, defeating the 19-year-old 21-13, 21-16 to set up a summit clash with Line Kjaersfeldt of Denmark.

Sindhu got in her net charges, prevailed in paperclip net tumbles, finished her smashes with a punch and used the drops well as Anmol wilted in both sets, lacking the aggression and chutzpah that she had displayed in her quarters win against Unnati Hooda.

DEVILS DEFEATED

Pressure piles on Carrick after Manchester United lose 0-2 to Chelsea

Reuters
London, October 31

THE TRAVELLING fans applauded Michael Carrick when he strode to the corner of the Shed End at Stamford Bridge to acknowledge them but Manchester United's former stalwart midfielder and current manager cut a forlorn figure as he left the pitch after a 2-0 Premier League defeat by Chelsea on Saturday.

A reckless challenge on Wesley Fofana midway through the second half earned Lisandro Martinez a sending off and Chelsea a penalty for their second goal, sealing United's fate in their ninth straight game without a win in all competitions.

The United board decided to stick with Carrick for the Chelsea game despite a 3-0 home defeat by Bournemouth last weekend and a 4-1 drubbing at Como in the Champions League.

But the jubilant Chelsea crowd's rendition of "You'll be sacked in the morning" sounded increasingly portentous as he disappeared down the tunnel.

Carrick sidestepped questions about his future.

"I'm just looking forward to getting the boys ready for mid-week," he said. United meet Roma at home in the Champions League on Tuesday.

United, with captain Bruno Fernandes restored to the side after falling out with Carrick, looked lively in the first half but squandered a series of chances, notably from Fernandes, Matheus Cunha, who had a goal ruled offside, and Amad Diallo.

Bryan Mbuemo also hit the post.

"We didn't capitalise on the moments we had," Carrick said. "Second half got away from us... sometimes you get tough moments in the game and you have to deal with that."

United were punished four minutes into the second half when Morgan Rogers picked up the ball just inside their half and cantered past a hesitant defence before delicately lifting it past goalkeeper Senne Lammens.



Michael Carrick's Manchester United are currently languishing in the 17th position with only seven points. AP

Cole Palmer scored from the spot in the 63rd minute despite Lammens getting his hand to the ball as he dived to his right.

"You give away a bad goal and it's a lot more challenging to be in that position with 10 men," Carrick said.

He praised his players for their spirit of togetherness in a tough run of games, saying they had been "really tested but have stood by each other".

The result means United could find themselves in the relegation zone by the end of the day. They are provisionally in 17th place, one point clear, while Chelsea have moved up to a provisional fourth.

The London side have also suffered a disappointing week, losing 2-0 at home to London rivals Tottenham Hotspur last Saturday and to Liverpool away on penalties in the League Cup on Wednesday.

Manager Xabi Alonso chose to start spirited Brazil winger Estevao, 19, after criticism from fans that he was not being played enough and media rumours that he could leave the club. Estevao's trickery caused United problems and he had a goal disallowed for a tight offside call.

"I'm very happy for him and he deserved to enjoy the game. He has a good connection with the crowd," Alonso said.

MAN UNITED UNDER CARRICK IN 2026/27

Matches	13
Wins	2
Draws	4
Losses	7
Goal Difference	-7

MATCHDAY 9 RESULTS

Chelsea	2-0	Man United
B'mouth	2-0	Leeds United
Coventry	3-1	Sunderland
Man City	0-1	Brighton
Brentford	2-0	N'ham Forest
Hull City	2-0	Ipswich Town

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EYE
NOVEMBER 1, 2026



SCREEN | PAGE 3

'It's a good time for humour'

Nominated for an International Emmy for a third time, Vir Das on his show *Fool Volume*, why Gen Z is funny and his next act as a filmmaker

BOOKS | PAGE 2

NK Singh's life in roses and ragas





screen

'I am my first critic. I don't just love everything I do'

Ace composer AR Rahman on collaborating with Hans Zimmer on Nitesh Tiwari's* Ramayana*, being a nervous performer and the challenge of making music in an era dominated by streaming platforms

Suanshu Khurana

ABOUT 25 YEARS ago, Academy Award-winning composer AR Rahman gave an austere musical expression to faith, an idea that has since become increasingly fraught in India's public discourse.

In *O paalanhaare*, a Krishna bhajan in Ashutosh Gowariker's *Lagaan* (2001), penned by Javed Akhtar and sung by Lata Mangeshkar, Rahman delivered a melody with rare tenderness. One that emerges at a moment of absolute despair, when the villagers pray for a solution. Looming over them is the idea of defeat in a cricket match with the British, which could force a community to pay three times the land tax. There is nothing dramatic in Rahman's composition. The profundity is hidden in its simplicity.

Born Arunachalam Shekhar Dileep Kumar, Rahman lost his father and composer RK Shekhar, when he was nine and learned music as a session artiste. His family's subsequent embrace of Islam would shape his spiritual journey, all of it allowing for music to be drawn from diverse devotional traditions. Probably why *O paalanhaare* carries such grace.

In 2026, over two decades later, Rahman, who has composed the music for producer Namit Malhotra and director Nitesh Tiwari's upcoming mythological action-drama *Ramayana: Rise of a Legend* alongside acclaimed German composer Hans Zimmer, finds himself navigating one of his more demanding encounters with the sacred. Not least because he is positioned in the space between musical innovation and religious tradition or because there is a musical lineage to the epic. Here is a story that has lived for centuries, whose characters have been worshipped, sung about and debated in living rooms and news studios. Therefore, Rahman must now wrestle with an audience that has very specific ideas about what the music for this particular film should sound like.

The social media criticism of *Mangal rang* in the Ranbir Kapoor, Sai Pallavi and Yash-starrer came almost instantly after its release last week. Many were concerned about the song's 'qawwali-like' treatment, when it was attempting to be a composition in a film on the Ramayana. One wonders if the same questions would have been asked of Vishal Bhardwaj, Ajay-Atul or Pritam, or whether Rahman's musical choices are being scrutinised through a conflicting prism. Some wanted music "rooted in Sanatan Dharma". Others felt that the high-energy *Ravana tandava* was too electronic and low on energy. Another section is raising the question of the lyrics by Kumar Vishwas, more a poet than lyricist, that seem to lack some of the fluidity and emotional nuance that Rahman's compositions need — qualities that writers like Gulzar, Akhtar and, more recently, Irshad Kamil have brought so effortlessly to their collaborations with him.

Rahman, who has spent much of his three-decade career challenging established ideas of what Indian film music should sound like, is no stranger to criticism. He has often faced scepticism before a tune is accepted, sometimes taking years to settle into the public imagination. However, this time, the pushback seems to reflect the changing cultural landscape.

"I am my first critic. It is not that I just love everything I do," says Rahman in a conversation over Zoom with *The Indian Express* from his studio in Chennai's Kodambakkam. "We don't decide something in a day. We live with it for months sometimes. There's a thought process. Sometimes you need to take anthropology into consideration. Sometimes, you let something be, like pickle: for certain tunes, the older it is, the better it becomes. But people sometimes see one side. They don't see the whole picture, right? So sometimes you just have to be patient. And they discover it and say, 'oh, that's why you did this' or 'that'." After a while, he says, one must learn not to be bothered by every comment. "It's like what Steve Jobs said: 'If you want to satisfy everyone, go sell ice cream'."

For *Mangal rang*, Rahman drew from *shuddh* (natural) notes of Bilawal as the parent scale, with touches of Maand — the serene raga often used in bhajans and wedding songs as well as elements of the romantic Pahadi. This is unlike qawwali's oft-used *komal* (lowered/flat) notes in parent scales like Kafi, Khamaj and Asavari. The composer was attempting to locate the tune in the familiar realm of devotional traditions. But then, is there any harm if a tune in a Hindi film based on an epic was to sonically veer towards a Sufi space melodically?

Collaborating with Hans Zimmer

When Zimmer, known for sweeping orchestral scores in films such as *Interstellar* (2014), *Inception* (2010) and *Gladiator* (2000), was brought in, Malhotra was looking at the best of East and West. Rahman believes Zimmer's presence will invite a different audience to engage with a story so important to the Subcontinent's cultural imagination. "His name coming in *Ramayana* would bring a whole set of new audience curiosity. The film has a score and it has songs and it has probably like 10 movies worth of work, where there were five different languages and two different versions: Hollywood version and the Indian version and also the kind of pressure the whole team had for every note, every tune. That is when one understands that there's so much at stake for them (the makers) that they want to be really sure. It was great seeing the result, how people are vibing in different parts of the country," says Rahman.

> Hans Zimmer's name coming in *Ramayana* would bring a whole set of new audience curiosity. The film has a score and it has songs and it has probably like 10 movies worth of work

Despite the criticism, *Mangal rang* climbed the charts to claim the top spot on YouTube's trending music chart this week.

But popularity has not been the only measure for Rahman's music. It has often been about his ability to find a musical language for stories without necessarily banking on their most familiar sounds.

His recent, Imtiaz Ali's *Main Vaapas Aaunga* (2026), is a case in point. In this Partition saga, the beauty lay in how effortlessly some of the melodies carried love, loss and longing. Not all emerged from the conventional Punjabi tradition. The synergy between Rahman and Kamil was seamless. "There is always scope to add a word or two with Rahman *saab*; for a lyricist to experiment and complete meanings. One feels a lot of freedom while working with him besides of course the brilliance of his melodies," Kamil had told *The Indian Express* in a recent interview.

According to Rahman, when the three were working for the first time in *Rockstar* (2011), it was not about just working; it was about creating something which they could be "happy and proud of". That continued with *Tamasha* (2015), *Highway* (2014), *Amar Singh Chamkila* (2024) and now *Main Vaapas Aaunga*. "*Highway* was supposed to be one song, and we ended up with 14 different tracks. Because I was just writing things and he was fitting those things. Same with *Tamasha*. Even though he liked one track, I said, can this be better? He said how better? I said the tune could be better. Imtiaz had not shot for the film. The biggest blessing for me is if you have time to improve something. Sometimes it falls in place straight away. Sometimes you feel like it can be better," says Rahman.

For *Main Vaapas Aaunga*, Rahman suggested a theme song and told Ali that "even if we arrive at like 20 per cent, we'll get something like a goldmine. The tune (*Kya kamaal hai*) became the soul of the score".

Hindi cinema, says Rahman, has gradually moved from an older tradition of composing songs specifically for a film, its characters and their journeys, and begun to find a convenient way of selecting different pieces of music (sometimes different composers) and placing them where they seem to fit. "They started picking things like Hollywood, which was convenient. But this integration of understanding lyrics and the characters and doing music for a complete movie, showed what the real soundtrack (in today's times) could be. You know, in a way, I think it was a nice comeback for this kind of score," says Rahman.

His observation also speaks of a larger shift in an industry which is now influenced by algorithms, streaming figures and the pressure to produce music that is reel-friendly. Rahman, too, is no stranger to the world of instant impressions and recalls — before Mani Ratnam's *Roja* (1992) catapulted him into national consciousness, he began his career with jingles, where he had about 30 seconds to get into people's heads and sell a product.

From jingles to Roja

Following his father's death, Rahman began working as a session musician and eventually found his way into advertising. He famously adapted from Mozart's Symphony No. 25 for an ad for Titan Watches, a punchy synth-heavy jingle with Sachin Tendulkar and Kapil Dev for Boost and a veena and flute piece for Leo Coffee. "These jingles were short and catchy. I had to expand as a full film composer. It was like, if I do a 32-second jingle which becomes popular, how can I do a five-minute song? So I literally took the same effort to put many 30-second pieces together to make a five-minute song. Look at *99 songs* (2021), each song was seven-eight minutes long. It had a story; it had travel, a new musical environment. Mainly because I wanted every song to be in the experience. This (making an impression in a few seconds) is not something new for me. But I wanted to work on deeper things intentionally," says Rahman, whose upcoming projects include Shekhar Kapur's *Masoom: The Next Generation*, Mani Ratnam's *Inji Vellam* and *Ramayana: Part 2*.

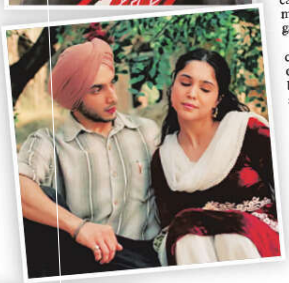
Besides composing for *Ramayana*, Rahman has also spent over a year on his 'Wonderment Tour', which began last year in Mumbai, expanded internationally, including a North American leg and has again returned to India for a multi-city 2026–2027 run. Interestingly, for much of his initial career, Rahman was a reluctant performer, a reticent musician who found greater comfort in the solitude of a recording studio than under the spotlight. But it was in 1996, riding high on the success of *Bombay* (1995) and *Rangeela* (1995), he was asked to perform at the Malaysia Benefit Concert in 1996 to raise funds for the victims of the Bosnian War. This was the first time he performed. "Back in the day, composers had to go with actors to pull people. But I remember, in 2000, Sukhwinder Singh, Hariharan, Shankar Mahadevan, Sonu Nigam... they all came and people thought, great, this is a musical show. That changed the whole game," says Rahman

This was also the time when composers, unlike today, wouldn't step out from behind the recording console to become concert headliners. The Malaysian concert was followed by the 'Unity of Light' tour. The tour took place while the Iraq War was on in 2003 and the world was fragmented. "It was then that I met my spiritual teacher who gave me a new perspective on life... He made me think, in my small and humble way, that I could be a bridge between the two divided worlds," says Rahman in the book *AR Rahman: The Spirit of Music*.

The initial challenge during concerts for him was translating the intricate, layered sound of his studio recordings into live performances. "At the time, it was very difficult to interpret so much of studio work into live," says Rahman. The turning point came around 2015, when percussionist Ranjit Barot, his longtime associate, became music director of his live concerts. "Things loosened up. What was before like a nightmare to be on stage became like, 'oh okay, I'm going to my living room on a piano to play'. In the studio, you're just listening to yourself. But during live when you see people singing your songs back again, I see them as one soul... I was completely a non-performer. But then I questioned myself. Would I like to see somebody behind the keyboard hiding or somebody who can entertain people? Slowly, I changed a little bit, and I started joking around, goofing around, and singing. If I haven't rehearsed properly, I am a nervous performer," says Rahman with a half deprecating smile, all set to get out there anyway.

> We don't decide something in a day. We live with it for months sometimes. There's so much of a thought process. Sometimes you need to take anthropology into consideration. Sometimes, you have to let something be, like pickle: for certain tunes the older it is, the better it becomes







FEEL THE MELODY (Clockwise from above left) AR Rahman; song sequences from *Roja: Main Vaapas Aaunga*; *Ramayana: Rise of a Legend*

THE WORD THIS WEEK

This week, bibliophiles around the world mused about journeys, real and imagined. Three hundred years ago, Jonathan Swift sent Lemuel Gulliver sailing to lands of tiny people and giants, and people still read his voyages today. In Japan, 16 writers boarded an overnight train and tried to finish a novel before they reached the end of the line. A New Zealand author won a major prize for a book set on a spaceship carrying prisoners toward freedom, and fantasy fans made a late-night trip to their local bookshops to return to a world of faerie kingdoms. Japan said its farewell to Ryu Murakami, a novelist whose fiction took readers into the darkest corners of modern life.

AISHWARYA KHOSLA

Pip Adam wins the Le Guin Prize

PIP ADAM, a novelist from New Zealand, has won the annual $25,000 Ursula K Le Guin Prize for Fiction. The prize honours Le Guin, the American author of the *Earthsea* fantasy books and *The Left Hand of Darkness*, who died in 2018 and championed science fiction and fantasy as serious literature. Adam's winning novel, *Audition*, follows three prisoners on a spaceship as they journey from jail toward a world without punishment. The book argues for abolishing prisons, and she based the ship on Syria's notorious Saydnaya prison.

Ryu Murakami, 1952–2026



READERS WORLDWIDE mourned the passing of Ryu Murakami, one of Japan's most provocative novelists. He was 74. Murakami became famous in 1976 with *Almost Transparent Blue*, a short novel about young people lost in drugs and sex. It won the Akutagawa Prize, Japan's most coveted award for new literary writers. He went on to publish more than 40 novels and story collections, including *Coin Locker Babies*.

Gulliver's Travels turns 300



ON OCTOBER 28, 1726, English readers first met Lemuel Gulliver, the narrator of a travel memoir secretly written by Jonathan Swift. It was an instant hit. Three hundred years on, the readership endures. While abridged editions only keep Gulliver's adventures among the Lilliputians and the giants of Brobdingnag, the full book includes a flying island of scientists and land of wise horses, which scholars read as a satire.

Maas sparks a global bookshop frenzy



BOOKSHOPS ACROSS North America and Britain stayed open past midnight for fans of Sarah J Maas's *A Court of Splintered Harmony*, making it the biggest midnight launch ever. It is the sixth book in Maas's *A Court of Thorns and Roses* series that began as a dark retelling of *Beauty and the Beast*. Its blend of magic, war and steamy romance turned "romantasy" into publishing's hottest genre.

A novel in a single train ride



SIXTEEN WRITERS — half French and half Japanese — attempted to write a whole novel together during one overnight train trip in Japan. They set off on October 22 aboard the Twilight Express Mizukaze, a luxury train travelling from Kyoto to Matsue. The idea comes from Oulipo, a Paris writers' circle that invents rules to spark creativity. Its most famous member, Georges Perec, wrote an entire novel without using the letter E.

QUICK VERDICT

HIT

Acerbic and Witty

THIS IS a mordantly clever transposition of Oscar Wilde's *The Picture of Dorian Gray*. Basu abandons Victorian drawing rooms for the febrile, morally porous ecosystem of contemporary Bollywood, following the eponymous Darpan's ascent from aspiring writer to magnetic screen idol, shaped by a Faustian director. Where Wilde weaponised a supernatural portrait to reflect his protagonist's putrefying soul, Basu deploys the hyper-commodified Indian cinema, rife with AI anxieties, as a mirror for modern vanity. While Wilde was celebrated for his epigrammatic brilliance, Basu delights with his acerbic wit. The result is a caustic, propulsive critique of a culture obsessed with perpetual youth and hollow spectacle.

AISHWARYA KHOSLA



THE PICTURES OF DARPAN RAY
SAMIT BASU
HarperCollins
288 pages, ₹599

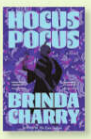
HIT

Casting a Spell

BASED ON the Indian stage magicians who toured the newly formed US in the early 1800s, the novel is set in Boston during the infamous Year without a Summer. Peppered with literary references — from Byron and Marlowe to Shakespeare — it is a feast for those who find magic in intertextuality.

Samuel Thomas, a young conjurer from Madras, leads the well-researched story that places the events accurately in history. With themes of race and colourism, showcasing the colonial gaze through an American's fascination for foreign items, and the exoticisation of Samuel who is forced to perform as the 'Fakir of Benares' to fulfil his desire for fame and success, the novel reinforces Edward Said's theory of Orientalism.

REVA THAKKAR



HOCUS POCUS
BRINDA CHARRY
Picador India
352 pages, ₹599

HIT

A Rebel's Cause

WHAT DOES it feel like to be loved without being ashamed? Shastri Akella attempts to answer in this short story collection. Set across India, the stories takes readers to pre-Partition Punjab, Kashmir's border with Pakistan, a small Gujarat town, an Andhra village, and the Garhwal mountains. Each follows people whose desires or the sense of self don't fit society's expectations.

Written with empathy, the central idea tying the stories together is that love and resistance go together because to love often means to rebel. In one such act, the author notes the existence of the queer community in Hindu mythology, reclaiming the colour saffron, that today has come to be associated with right-wing politics.

ANUSREE K C



A QUEER SHADE OF SAFFRON
SHASTRI AKELLA
HarperCollins
248 pages, ₹599







JUGGERNAUT

TURNING SOIL
NK Singh with Pandit Bhimsen Joshi; in Japan; with MF Husain at his residence; (below) NK Singh

Mari Pangestu

Roses, ragas and the BUSINESS OF REFORM

In Endeavours, *economist NK Singh brings together a life in bureaucracy with an enduring love of gardening, classical music, photography and art*

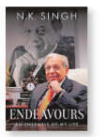
NK SINGH'S latest memoir, *Endeavours: An Ensemble of My Life* is a delightful read that reveals a life well lived. It takes us through his life in a personal way while interweaving the official part of his life, as well as the rich tapestry of his family background. It makes you understand the whole NK Singh, not just his widely recognised, formidable career in the Indian Administrative Service, his prominent roles as a policymaker and his distinguished years spent serving as a member of the Rajya Sabha. Singh emerges as a true 'Renaissance man', perfectly balancing the logical reasoning of his professional life with the rich creative expressions of his personal passions.

One of the most evocative and thoroughly explored sections of the book is devoted to Singh's inherited passion for gardening and roses. He traces this deep-seated love back to his early childhood and the profound influence of his father, TP Singh, who meticulously cultivated a magnificent rose garden at their Sheikhpura farmhouse in Patna. Following his father's premature passing, NK took on the daunting responsibility of preserving and nurturing this ancestral garden, transforming an inherited duty into a disciplined, lifelong endeavour. At its zenith, the meticulously planned Patna garden boasted roughly 2,500 rose plants from over 300 distinct varieties. The description of the fragrance and beauty of the roses come through vividly to the reader — you could almost smell the roses through the pages.

However, two interwoven messages come out for me, especially. How the cultivation of roses for TP Singh and, later, NK was not just a casual hobby but science. It was a deliberate learning process to adapt Western rose-growing techniques to the challenging heat and humidity of the Indian plains. NK reflects that the rose garden in some respect represented an Indian renaissance — to be able to breed roses adapted to varied ecological conditions of India. It was a post-Independence Indian self-confidence. His father saw the rose as not an imported plant but a plant to be tested, understood and naturalised in Indian soil. It was also how the cultivation of roses was a shared passion around a network of senior civil servants, eminent lawyers, judges and public figures brought together by roses and bridge game. "A shared interest in roses could become the basis for conversation, companionship and learning." For a non-Indian observer, this offered an incredible insight.

The second takeaway and thought-provoking insight in *Endeavours* for me is how eloquently NK compares the act of tending to a garden to the way we must look at and nurture public institutions. He borrows the economic concept of "creative destruction" from (Austrian political economist) Joseph Schumpeter to explain that pruning a plant is an act of essential renewal rather than cruelty. In a garden, the exhausted plant or the obstructing branch must be removed to allow fresh growth to thrive, a process that requires both judgment and courage. NK posits that this delicate art of knowing exactly what to preserve, what to remove, what to combine afresh, and what to leave undisturbed is just as crucial for the health of institutions and innovation as it is for gardens. He offers a powerful metaphor, observing that "gardens need proper soil preparation, drainage, watering and attention to seasons". "The impatient gardener who buys a rare plant without preparing the soil is not very different from the reformer who announces change without the creation of the conditions in which change can survive." This message resonates with all of us who are in the business of reforms.





ENDEAVOURS: AN ENSEMBLE OF MY LIFE
NK SINGH
Juggernaut
328 pages
₹999

NK Singh's time in Japan, where he served as First Minister (Economic and Commercial), radically reshaped his visual sensibility and his broader aesthetic philosophy

Beyond the soil of India, the book takes readers on a captivating journey to Japan, where NK served as First Minister (Economic and Commercial) at the Indian Embassy in Tokyo beginning in 1981. He explains how his years in Japan radically reshaped his visual sensibility and his broader aesthetic philosophy. It was in Japan that his early interest in cameras blossomed into a serious, lifelong engagement with photography that intersected with his passion for gardening. He travelled extensively across the country, moving from the severe, drift-ice winters of Hokkaido in the north to the warmer, volcanic landscapes of Kyushu in the south. Through his camera lens, NK learned to appreciate the Japanese devotion to seasonality, capturing the fleeting beauty of cherry blossoms, vibrant autumn colours and the ephemeral summer fireworks. He realised that Japanese aesthetics find profound depth in simplicity and restraint, teaching him that photography is the ultimate tool for preserving a passing instant before it disappears forever. He noted that in Japan, beauty was not treated as a mere ornament but was woven seamlessly into the very fabric of daily conduct, ceremonies and seasonal rituals.

The book also beautifully chronicles NK's deep-seated passion for classical Indian music and art. He details his evolution from someone who appreciates one's cultural heritage to taking on the responsibility of being a custodian. He shares his memories as a devoted listener, sharing intimate memories of legendary artistes such as Pandit Jasraj and Kishori Amonkar, who frequently graced his home with memorable recitals. Rather than viewing himself as a mere collector, NK embraces the role of a custodian of these rich musical traditions and the primal vibrations they represent. His engagement with art has been equally profound, shaped by an early exposure to the archaeological monuments of Bihar and later expanded through visits to the great museums of the world. As former Ambassador Savitri Kunadi highlights, his encounters with heritage invoke (French author) André Malraux's *The Voices of Silence*, demonstrating his belief that works of art can speak across time and transcend cultural boundaries. For me, this part of NK's commitment to India's rich cultural heritage is particularly important. It is cultural "capital" that transcends to the development of the creative economy and innovation, and is as important as other types of capital that make a country.

In addition to these artistic pursuits, NK reflects on his family's long-standing reliance on homeopathy, advocating for its holistic, individualised approach to healing as a steady companion throughout his life. Here, there is an obvious intersection with his passion for gardening.

In closing, *Endeavours: An Ensemble of My Life* shows how a life well lived, interweaves the heritage and values we inherit, whether through our grandparents and parents, education and the places that we live in, as well as our life experiences and the work we do. The multidimensional and vibrant life of NK shows how our private passions, when developed and pursued with discipline and passion, can elevate our existence. Through his vivid reflections on gardens, music, art and his travels in Japan, NK proves that life is a "continuing endeavour" and that the "multiplicity of experiences" we go through are sometimes central and at other times seemingly peripheral, but all contribute powerfully in "shaping a purposeful life". For readers looking for an inspiring, uniquely Indian memoir, this book is a gentle, beautifully written reminder to cultivate our own lives with the same care, patience and wonder of a master gardener.

Pangestu is former Minister of Tourism and Creative Economy, Indonesia, and Special Envoy for International Trade and Multilateral Cooperation, Government of Indonesia

In Search of a Lost Fellowship

When We are Strangers *revisits Gandhi and Bacha Khan's vision of solidarity, asking what remains of their dream of a shared future in a polarised present*

Madhurita Goswami

THE GRAPHIC novel *When We are Strangers* begins with the 1946 Calcutta riots, with an unusual friendship and with an act of love — stealing back from the colonial rulers what they had openly stolen.

The book foregrounds Mahatma Gandhi and Khan Abdul Ghaffar Khan, popularly Bacha Khan among the Pathans, whom he organised to lead the Khudai Khidmatgar movement, and their beliefs, such as a "living faith in God" and non-violence. But it is the younger Sita and Mahmud, respectively a Gandhi follower and a student at Khan's Azad School, who take the story forward.

Largely in monotone, the novel has a kind of simplicity that may not be striking to those who grew up with more crowded works in Manga, or the Marvel and DC comics. But it successfully contrasts Gandhi's small build with Khan's stature — a visual encapsulation of their unique bond. The red shirts of the Khudai Khitmatgars, meanwhile, embody a spirit that can shake empires.

It all begins during the riots, when Mahmud and Sita sneak into the then British-controlled Indian Museum, stealing back what they can find of the Hastnagar Buddha. This is identified as their first step in imagining a shared, *azad* future.

The 1946 Calcutta riots were not simply communal. They were also, as Janam Mukherjee says in *Hungry Bengal*, "a much more specific, localised battle for the control of city blocks, alleyways and neighbourhoods" and the culmination of a "brutalisation of consciousness" during the 1943 Bengal famine.

The famine followed the fall of Burma during World War II, as the British, fearing that the Japanese army would advance on Calcutta after replenishing in coastal Bengal, destroyed boats and confiscated foodgrains. This context makes Sita and Mahmud's act of stealing back from the British more than balancing the scales — it's also about the two coming together in the anti-colonial struggle while retaining their religious identities. They recognised that their struggles were the same and their futures intertwined. This was at the core of much of the Subcontinent's national movement, no matter how fractured it remained along religious and caste lines.

At a time, when that imagination has largely been constricted by majoritarian politics, the friendship between Gandhi and Khan, Mahmud and Sita, recognises what once was made possible by a shared struggle. The book, while examining these past instances of solidarity, seems to be attempting to chart a way forward but its historical focus is also its limitation when it comes to finding the answers.

Partition changed the Hindu-Muslim dynamics that once existed in the Subcontinent. What followed was a narrowing of identities that were allowed to flourish across nation-states, something that can be attributed to a failure to imagine a country where all were equal.

Algerian psychiatrist and political philosopher Frantz Fanon offers a way of thinking about this paralysis: Independence can't be seen as an "exorcism" and for a society to be truly independent, its people must have the "material means" to bring about "the radical transformation of society". Fanon's name comes up in the book's second chapter along with Gandhi's but his philosophy is not expanded upon. That may seem confusing but then, in the end, when Mahmud and Sita challenge their own teachers, in the face of the British administration's negotiations with them, the Gandhi-Fanon reference becomes a little clearer.



WHEN WE ARE STRANGERS
VANZIRA MAZUMDAR AND SARNATH BANERJEE
Penguin
168 pages
₹699



WIKIMEDIA COMMONS

MARCHING AHEAD
A Muslim League rally in 1946

'People are finding their voice, it's a good time for humour'

Nominated for an International Emmy for a third time, Vir Das on his show Fool Volume, *why Gen Z is funny and his next act as a filmmaker*

Alaka Sahani



> The internet has a short memory and life will go on. The news cycle is eight days. So, for eight days, just be quiet. If, on the ninth day, you're on the news, then you're in trouble

FUNNY BONE (Above) Vir Das; in a still from *Happy Patel*

VIR DAS, 47, has secured a nomination for International Emmy Awards in the Comedy category for the third time for his Netflix show, *Fool Volume*. Das, who won an International Emmy in 2023 for *Landing*, is known for blending personal experiences with social and cultural commentary in his stand-up acts. Before he took a deep dive into comedy, he acted in some of the talked-about movies such as *Badmaash Company* (2010), *Delhi Belly* (2011) and *Go Goa Gone* (2013). Earlier this year, his directorial debut, *Happy Patel: Khatarnak Jasoos* released while his memoir *The Outsider: A Memoir for Misfits* (Harper Collins) hit the stands last year. In a conversation, Vir, who grew up in Nigeria and India, talks about his 16-year journey in stand-up, finding one's voice while reflecting on what it takes to stay creatively restless in an industry built around the next big thing. Excerpts:

You have received your third International Emmy nomination for *Vir Das: Fool Volume*, which you started writing after losing your voice for some time.

I wasn't expecting to get nominated this time at all, especially because the special for which I've been nominated is much sillier. So, that's quite a surprise. The procedure of how you get nominated for an International Emmy is a very global one with jurors spread across the globe. So, the bright side is that Indian comedy is globally cutting through.

The core of this special is about losing your voice, silence, and happiness versus silence. No matter where you are, as a human being you have some resonance with finding your voice after a silence.

In a different context, the younger generation in India too has found its voice.

Across the world people are finding their voice. I think social media has a lot to do with it. Age has a lot to do with it as well. What I like is that when the younger generation expresses something, they use humour. Gen Z is funny. The generation below them are also funny. The reels and everything that they create are funny. They're native to the internet. So, I believe, it's a good time for humour.

You were one of the first Indian stand-up comedians to enjoy such wide attention. How do you look at your journey as an artiste?

The average lifespan of an artiste is usually about 10 years. I've been at it for 16 years now. I've been fortunate to have witnessed many waves, such the YouTube wave or the sketch comedy wave. A wave typically crashes against the shore, becomes foam and, then, it's not there anymore. I figured that one has to become deep water by forming deep connections for artistic longevity.

In all these years, how has your audience changed?

My audience is the youngest it has ever been. Seventy-eight per cent of my social media followers are under 30. For a man in his 40s, it is very weird to have that kind of data. I have no idea why but in the last couple of years, many young people have discovered me, and they appreciate what I have spoken about.

Has trying different things helped you expand your horizon?

I don't repeat myself. If you look at my last five comedy specials, they are different from each other thematically. The minute I'm a little comfortable, I try something new. Just for fun, I played a negative character in *Call Me Bae* (2024). Then, I co-directed a movie, *Happy Patel: Khatarnak Jasoos* and I had a great time doing that with Aamir Khan, who produced it. After that, I was offered more commercial and bigger budget movies. Instead, I am directing a pure horror movie, *Baara Number*, produced with Kavi Shastri under Zazu Productions.

Your *Delhi Belly* co-actor Imran Khan was in *Happy Patel*. Have you spoken to Imran after he received a notice asking him to leave India?

Imran's a friend. Any thoughts I have on this matter, I've conveyed to him. He's quite honestly one of the nicest people in the film industry. There isn't a bad bone in that guy's body. He is the most beautiful thing in *Happy Patel*. He is so good-looking, it's annoying. You could put tomato sauce all over him or dip him in tar, and he would still look great.

Is there something you consciously avoid so as not to land in a controversy?

I've learnt whatever you think is going to be the problem, won't give you trouble. The thing you never thought as problematic might become an issue. If you're going to try and predecide what to do, you'll never be able to predict it. You might as well just do it and then deal with it when something happens.

Do you have any advice for comedians who get into trouble?

I have three pieces of advice: Write about it immediately because it's funny; the worse the situation is, the funnier the joke will be. Don't scream back at the internet, it's too large and there's too much machinery. A lot of artistes put out 17 statements. Just shut up. The internet has a short memory and life will go on. The news cycle is eight days. So, for eight days, just be quiet. If, on the ninth day, you're on the news, then you're in trouble.

At what point in your life did you think of pursuing stand-up comedy?

A lot of people don't know this. I trained as a drama actor. I have a bachelor's in theatre. In my final year (at Knox College, Illinois), I tried stand-up after three years of doing serious theatre work based on Shakespeare and Anton Chekhov. I started to enjoy stand-up and found it equally theatrical. Comedy is honest. There's room for fiction but not dishonesty.

Your memoir, *The Outsider: A Memoir for Misfits*, was published last year.

I didn't want to write it at all. I have an American agency and they told me you won an Emmy, now write a memoir. Kevin Hart has written two books. So has Rowan Atkinson. It's part of a comedian's life. I decided to write a memoir about being an outsider, because that's what I still feel like and I'm still figuring out things.

What are you still trying to figure out?

I can't figure out how it's sold. I was at the airport and saw that it's a bestseller. It was kept between Chetan Bhagat and Arundhati Roy. I was like, what a weird sandwich of three different types of writing and ideologies.

After doing a bumbling spy story in *Happy Patel*, are you challenging yourself by directing a horror film?

A section of the audience deeply loved *Happy Patel*. We became this little lighthouse for people who started sending us scripts. We came up with two rules. Number one, the idea has to be incredibly unique. Second, we have to offer actors the kind of roles they don't normally play. For instance, we cast Mona Singh as a villain in *Happy Patel*. We will have theatrical releases. Our next after *Baara Number* is a violent action film.

How do the next five years look like for you?

Two world tours and, hopefully, two movies, which are not my productions but I get to act in them. I really would like to buy a cottage somewhere where I can go and sleep on weekends, and do sustainable farming.



'If you are convinced, you can convince the audience'

Don't go overboard with pop culture references, but be prepared for happy accidents, says filmmaker Sriram Raghavan at the Screen Academy Masterclass

Devansh Sharma

SRIRAM RAGHAVAN has made a career out of crafting thrillers. But there's one piece of advice from his first producer, Ram Gopal Varma, that has stayed with him since his 2004 directorial debut feature *Ek Hasina Thi*. "Sriram, just shoot it convincingly," Varma told him while he was scratching his head over how to pull off the climactic twist and change in the setting of the film.

Sriram shared his experiences at a session of the Screen Academy Masterclass, held at Whistling Woods International in Mumbai, last week.

Screen Academy is an initiative launched by The Indian Express Group to identify, nurture, and showcase the next generation of Indian filmmakers and storytellers.

During the session, Sriram shared anecdotes from his films including *Johnny Gaddaar* (2007), *Agent Vinod* (2012), *Badlapur* (2015) and *Andhadhun* (2018).

"Real-life logic takes over in your early films. 'This is not logical,' you tell yourself," said Sriram. He recalled shooting a scene in *Ek Hasina Thi* where Urmila Matondkar's character takes Saif Ali Khan's charming gangster character at gunpoint to a cave on the outskirts of the city. Sriram was worried that there would be so many check posts on the way. "If you are convinced, you can convince the audience. But convincing yourself is the hardest part," he added.

Talking about Saif's rakish role in the film, Sriram says, "The charm was like that of Charles Sobhraj, he was the reference for the character." Saif was initially hesitant about playing a negative role, having done only heroic/romantic roles, for which he had acquired a formidable fan following. "But luckily we got along, and he's an intelligent guy, and he loved the story."

Likewise, when adapting the French novella for *Merry Christmas* (2024), he explicitly wanted a lead pair that audiences had never seen together before. "I wanted this odd pairing, and so yeah, that was fun," he says, having cast Katrina Kaif alongside Vijay Sethupathi.

Sriram recalled the time, around the early 2000s, when he met veteran filmmaker Kundan Shah, his senior at the Film Institute of India (FTII) Pune. Best known for helming the 1983 seminal satire *Jaane Bhi Do Yaaro* and the 1994 romantic comedy *Kabhi Haan Kabhi Naa*, Shah wasn't an expert at thrillers, but his advice on life, art and their intersections informed Sriram's sophomore directorial, *Johnny Gaddaar*.

Another standout moment in Sriram's filmography is a stylised, single-take action sequence set to the romantic song *Raabta* in his 2012 spy thriller *Agent Vinod*, starring Saif and Kareena Kapoor. "Pritam was doing the music, and he gave me the tune for *Raabta*. I loved the tune, but since we'd already shot 70 per cent of the film, we had no situation to include this beautiful love song," recalled Sriram. It was him getting bored of shooting one relentless action sequence after another for the second half that prompted him to come up with a "mad thought" — "Why don't we shoot this action sequence as a song?"

Inspired by John Woo's 1992 Hong Kong action film *Hard Boiled*, he pulled off the one-take action sequence. "The movie got many good, harsh reviews, but everyone loved that song," said Sriram, grinning.



FOR THE THRILL OF THE CRAFT (Above) Sriram Raghavan at the Screen Masterclass session; with Screen Academy students

Sriram has learned a lot from reviews of his films. "I didn't know there were so many references in *Johnny Gaddaar* until I read a review which said so. Later on, when I was making *Agent Vinod*, I was conscious I was using a lot of these references. So, sometimes, you can go overboard," he confessed.

He had a word of caution for students: Don't use too many pop culture references. "Your love for films would come out on its own. You can't be like, 'Since this is my first film, let me doff my hat to the five people I like. It's an inside joke nobody will understand," added Sriram.



SANKHADEEP BANERJEE

SCREEN academy

After *Agent Vinod*, Sriram released the crime-action film *Badlapur*. The flipping of the antagonist and the protagonist, he says, was by design: "While scripting it, we had to ensure that it doesn't happen suddenly, but it happens over the movie. So midway while watching the movie, you realise, 'I don't like what this guy is,' and you start disliking him."

Having a younger actor, though, he says, was producer Dinesh Vijan's idea. "Coincidentally, Varun Dhawan called him (Dinesh) for a meeting. He told me, 'Narrate (the story) to this guy and let's see how he reacts.' So I narrated it to Varun, and he loved it."

Badlapur was released while Sriram took a break from writing *Andhadhun*. Inspired by an 11-minute French short film made in 2012, which he had decided to make into a longer feature, Sriram, along with his co-writers, was stuck on how to proceed with the writing beyond the first act. The roadblock was so strong that he went and worked on another film (*Badlapur*) first. Eventually, after the release, he returned to *Andhadhun* and finished the script.

But on the morning of the shoot of the final scene, Sriram asked co-writer Pooja Ladha Surti if they had a Hindi line for "Do you think it's so easy to be a monster?" Attempting to translate the line into Hindi sounded terrible, and Sriram decided: "I can't end a Hindi film on an English line; it doesn't make sense."

They dropped the line right then and pivoted to the now-famous walking stick/cane ending. Impromptu changes are a part and parcel of making movies, "We go down a certain path and then try another detour. A lot is in the writing and rewriting," he explained. RK Narayan's "The writer's block is a Western concept' is a line Sriram says all filmmakers should believe.



DOWN IN JUNGLELAND

BY RANJIT LAL

AUTHOR, ENVIRONMENTALIST AND BIRDWATCHER

Beware of *ghaas phoos*

Elephants trample and kill more than tigers do, but don't be fooled by unassuming greens either



RANJIT LAL

US CARNIVORES usually deride what we call the *ghaas phoos* eaters, the vegetarians and vegans. How on earth can you develop enough muscle mass eating leaves and grass and seeds? You need good red meat to give you enough protein and though dals claim to be protein rich – how much of them can you have? Really, it's only lean red meat, with streaks of delicious fat that cut the mustard. Steak and sausages, bacon and ham, spare ribs and 'backstraps', juicy crisp pork belly, especially sizzled on wood or coal-burning barbecues — these put hair on the chest. I still remember the fizzing 'sizzler' I had, served on a slab of teak at Bombelli's in Bombay aeons ago; a man needs his red meat.

There's a serial on TV these days depicting a hunter going out to shoot and kill deer and sheep. He stalks his prey, say a magnificent stag, like a commando and finally (after a few failed attempts) brings it down with an arrow. He skins it and carves it and then cooks it. Done rare and red, it's the ultimate macho meal running with meaty juices. Of course, it is accompanied by a host of 'veggies' but it is the main item on the agenda. And it does make you salivate rather a lot.

What is a bit disquieting is that he admires his kill as a 'magnificent beast' — perhaps not so magnificent now that it lies dead at his feet, its eyes glazed and unseeing. But it has been 'harvested' so that it can make way for others, which in time might suffer the same fate. Whatever.

The mass consumption of meat around the world has caused problems because all the beef and pork depends on bovines and porcines livestock. Tropical forests worldwide have been cleared so that these bovines can get enough *ghaas-phoos* to eat and these have to be cultivated on a massive scale.

There, in the jungles it is the carnivores — tigers, lions and leopards — that sit on top of the food chain, not deer and antelope. They need their red meat; cauliflowers and broccoli won't do. In fact, it's the only thing they can eat! And in doing so, these 'apex predators' keep the jungles and forest ticking over. Keep the tiger in good humour and it will look after the entire forest ecosystem.

So yes, we fear these animals, in case they decide to make us a part of their diet. But go to a sanctuary or national park on a safari and what are we inevitably told? The animals we must fear the most are elephants, who subsist on a diet of 150 kg of green stuff a day. Elephants trample and kill more people every year than tigers do, not because they want to eat them but because they feel threatened and because we have deprived them of their normal fare.

In fact, every large bovine or vegetarian wild animal is to be regarded as extremely dangerous. Rhinos are notoriously short-tempered and can toss your vehicle into a ditch and trample you with a single flick of its fearsome horn. In Africa, hippos kill more people than all other animals combined, and do not eat them. And even lions are wary of the mighty Cape buffalo that can disembowel them with a single swipe of its massive horns and will deliberately seek out and trample their cubs. Here, in India, the wild water buffalo is not to be trusted as it sneeringly regards you and tosses its head, adorned with its three-metre span of horns. And all of these live on *ghaas phoos*!



WIKIMEDIA COMMONS

GRASS IS ALWAYS GREENER
(Top) The leopard is on top of the food chain; Javanese ginseng

Even in the cities, where cows and bulls roam around, one has to watch out in case a bull gets it in its head to take you between its horns. No tiger or leopard will dare to enter a busy location and try something like that. And you don't even need to be a five-ton giant armed with tusks and a trunk, or a two ton rhino to inflict that kind of damage. The other day I was lamenting the lack of *desi palak* in the garden, thanks to the depredations of the monkeys and peacocks when the gardener came up with an option. What he called *angrezi palak*, which was also growing in the garden. The leaves looked green and healthy and fresh and there was a bed full of them. It even tasted identical to normal *desi palak*. Except that it sent me to the loo four times at night, deep cleansing me as if preparing me for an endoscopy. I lost over half a kilo overnight and was good for nothing for the next two days. I discovered that the so-called *angrezi palak* was something called Javanese ginseng, a medicinal herb, also available in capsule form.

It has many beneficial properties but can also cause insomnia and diarrhoea if consumed in excess. I had probably overdosed grossly! The gardener said he had brought it from his village. There, they had no problems with it and made pakoras with it. So plants can be definitely dangerous for your health — when I informed my doctor about it, he dryly commented 'Don't be a guinea pig'. When fish and meat go off, they pong to high heavens. This 'leafy green', masqueraded as Popeye's favourite food and scammed me!

On a Wing and a Search

How a book in Nagaland by a butterfly enthusiast is an essential guide in State schools

Ronnie Kuriakose







GREEN HEALTH KEEPERS
(From top) Himalayan Long-banded Silverline; Himalayan Tabby; Wonchi Murry

BUTTERFLIES WERE everywhere in Wokha, a hillside town in central Nagaland, where a young Wonchi Murry grew up. And why not, when her mother and neighbours tended to their sprawling gardens with a devotion that bordered on religion. However, this abundance also rendered them invisible.

It was only when Murry moved to Delhi for her studies at Lady Hardinge Medical College in 2007 that she realised what she was missing. "There were no butterflies. Certainly not in my immediate vicinity. We made several visits to city gardens specifically to find them, but their numbers were appallingly low. At best, we saw two or three," says Murry, 38, who lived in Delhi for over a decade.

When Murry finally returned to Nagaland after her course, she went looking for the winged beauties. Her younger sisters — Mhayani and Renabeni — joined her. Together, they flitted between flowers, across streams and through verdant valleys. "We shared a collective admiration for butterflies. It was an expression of sisterhood," says Murry, who currently works at the Nagaland Institute of Medical Sciences & Research in Kohima.

What began as a pastime became a passion and eventually, a pursuit. At first, they were only taking photos, and as their collection grew, the sisters began gathering more details. The result was *A Beginner's Guide to the Butterflies of the Himalayan Realm*, published by Kohima-based Penthrill. This was in 2021. In June this year, Nagaland's Department of School Education made the book essential in all its affiliated institutes.

As Nagaland opens up to the world, inviting tourists, efforts such as this, complement those taken at the village level of curated nature trails and village walks.

The geographical framing of the book is also deliberate. "Butterflies don't recognise political boundaries," she says. Some of Murry's favourite winged beauties include the Blue Admiral, the Sapphire butterflies, the White-edged Blue Baron, and Lacewings. She also has a special admiration for the Blue Pansies that has made her mother's garden their home. "They are so territorial. They won't let another butterfly enter our garden, regardless of their size," says Murry.

Her work, which documents nearly 110 butterfly species, is arguably the third-most voluminous record of butterflies in Nagaland after Sir Harry Christopher Tytler's surveys as part of the British Indian Army during 1915 and researcher-photographer Tshetsholo Naro's recent efforts.

"Butterflies," Murry says, "offer a way to understand the health of the environment. From caterpillar stage onwards, they are very fragile, and so any disruptions to their natural setting immediately affect them."

But there's a more personal reason to seek them out. "Butterfly watching offers an opportunity to slow down, pay attention, and find pleasure in the seemingly ordinary," she adds.

ADVERTORIAL



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The Great Indian Train Journey Nobody Takes Anymore

Somewhere in the last fifteen years, without any of us quite noticing, we stopped taking the long train. The eighteen-hour one. The one with the side berth you didn't want, the one where you learned three strangers' entire life stories before Nagpur, the one that turned a journey into an event rather than a gap between two more important things. The one your mother packed food for as if you were leaving for a month, with theplas wrapped in foil, a steel dabba of pickle, and a water bottle refilled at every platform tap along the way.

We fly now. Mumbai to Delhi in about two hours, Bengaluru to Kolkata in under three. It's faster, it's often cheaper if you book early, and there's a lot to be said for that. Nobody misses the waiting-list anxiety, the frantic search for your name on the reservation chart pasted outside the coach, or the overnight delay that swallowed half your holiday. But I think we quietly gave up something in the trade, and most of us haven't stopped to notice what it was.

What Flying Removed

A flight is designed to erase the journey. You board, you're handed a tray, you sleep or scroll or stare at a seatback screen, and a couple of hours later you're somewhere else entirely, having experienced almost nothing of the distance in between. That's the whole point, and a genuine achievement of modern engineering. But it also means that travel, for most of us, has become entirely about two endpoints, the place you left and the place you arrived. Everything in between has been optimised out of existence.

Think about what that in-between used to hold. The plains turning into plateau, the soil changing colour outside the window, the language on station boards shifting from one script to another, the chai changing taste from one state to the next. A train made you feel the size of this country, mile by mile. From thirty-five thousand feet, India is a carpet of clouds, and then a runway.

The long train journey worked the opposite way. The eighteen hours weren't a cost to be minimised. They were the experience. You'd board in the evening, find your berth and negotiate the shared space with your compartment-mates, deciding whose suitcase went under which seat and who would get the window first. By the time dinner was handed through the window at some midnight station, you'd have exchanged names, professions and opinions on the food with people you'd never see again. Someone's grandmother would insist you try her methi puris, and refusing was simply not an option. A pack of cards would appear from somewhere, and a game would begin that nobody quite knew the rules of.

Around 2 a.m., someone would inevitably start a conversation about cricket, politics or the right way to eat a vada pav, and the debate would carry on in whispers long after the lights were switched off. Sleep, when it finally came, came to the rocking of the coach. By morning, when the chai vendors called out at the first station of the day, you'd arrive not just at a destination but having actually lived through the getting there.

I remember journeys like this from years ago with a clarity that most of my flights simply don't have. I can't tell you a single detail about a Mumbai-Delhi flight I took last month, not the seat number, not the meal, not the face of the person beside me. I can tell you exactly who I shared a compartment with on a train to Varanasi more than a decade ago, what he did for a living, and the argument he had with the ticket collector over an upgrade. Memory, it seems, has little interest in efficiency. It holds on to the hours that asked something of us, and lets the convenient ones slip away. Ask anyone over forty about their most memorable journey, and chances are it involves a train, not a plane.

The Trains Built for This

India actually built an entire category of train around this idea, the journey as the destination, and most Indians have never taken one.

The Palace on Wheels, launched in 1982 by Rajasthan Tourism and Indian Railways, was India's first luxury heritage train, its carriages inspired by the private saloons once used by the royal families of Rajputana. The Deccan Odyssey followed in 2004 as Maharashtra's answer, with its coaches named after places in the state, hospitality originally handled by the Taj Group, and itineraries spanning Maharashtra and beyond. Both turn what would otherwise be a transit problem, getting from Jaipur to Jaisalmer to Udaipur, say, into a week-long, slow unfolding of the country, with every overnight leg treated as part of the experience rather than dead time to be slept through. You go to sleep in one landscape and wake up in another, with the desert, the forts and the lakes arriving one after another as if someone were turning the pages of a book.



These trains exist because someone understood that the romance of Indian rail travel, the open windows, the sense of a country revealing itself gradually rather than all at once, was worth preserving deliberately, even if it meant charging handsomely for what an ordinary sleeper ticket once offered for a fraction of the price. There is a quiet irony in that. What our parents took for granted is now sold as a luxury.

The Numbers Tell the Story

Meanwhile, ordinary long-distance train travel has been quietly losing ground to the skies. India's domestic air traffic has crossed 165 million passengers a year, and the government projects it will touch 300 million by 2030. It's easy to understand why. Airfares have become genuinely competitive, flights are faster, and for business travel especially, there's no real argument for the train anymore. A day saved is a day earned, after all, and few of us have days to spare.

But somewhere in that shift, an entire genre of human interaction quietly disappeared. You don't make friends on a flight. You barely make eye contact. Headphones go on before the seatbelt sign goes off, and the only conversation is with the crew about tea or coffee. The person beside you for two hours remains as much a stranger at the end as at the start. The overnight train never allowed that kind of anonymity. Eighteen hours in a shared compartment forces a kind of intimacy that no amount of legroom can replicate. You saw people tired, hungry, half-asleep and unguarded, and they saw you the same way. That is where friendships, however brief, are born.

What I'd Argue For

I'm not suggesting anyone give up flying. It would be absurd for me to argue that, running a travel company that depends on modern transport to move hundreds of thousands of guests every year. Flying is how most travel actually gets done, and there's no romanticising away the value of speed for anyone short of time.

But I'd make a case for something smaller. One long train journey a year, purely for what happens between the stations. Not a work trip you need to rush through, not a family holiday on a tight schedule, but a deliberate, unhurried journey where the eighteen hours are the point. Leave the laptop in the bag. Carry a book you've been meaning to read, and then don't read it, because the window will be more interesting.

Take the Konkan Railway down the western coast, running between the Sahyadris and the Arabian Sea, through tunnel after tunnel and across bridges over rivers that rush to meet the sea. In the monsoon, the hillsides turn an impossible green. Take an overnight train towards the hills of the Northeast, past tea gardens and paddy fields, where the track itself becomes an event. Or simply take the sleeper class train you'd normally avoid, the one your travel agent would automatically upgrade you out of, and let the eighteen hours happen to you the way they used to.

You'll almost certainly talk to a stranger you wouldn't have met any other way. You'll eat something handed through a window at a station you've never heard of and will probably never see again. You'll watch a sunrise you didn't plan for, over fields whose names you'll never know. And when you arrive, tired and slightly grimy in the way only a long train journey can make you, you'll have actually travelled the distance, rather than simply having been transported across it.

That difference, between travelling a distance and being transported across it, is worth remembering. Even if, like me, you'll be back on a flight the very next week.

Know the Unknown

Ever since we launched flight bookings on Veena World, I've been falling down rabbit holes about flights. And this week, after writing about the eighteen-hour train, I found something at the opposite extreme. Two journeys could hardly be more different, and yet each says something about the other.

The world's shortest scheduled commercial flight covers just 2.7 kilometres (1.7 miles), between the islands of Westray and Papa Westray in Scotland's Orkney archipelago. Time in the air is usually around ninety seconds, and the record, set by pilot Stuart Linklater with a favourable wind, is 53 seconds. That's less time than it takes to read this paragraph, and certainly less than it takes most of us to find our seat on a normal flight.

The flight has run since 1967, and it isn't a novelty act. It's a genuine lifeline for the roughly ninety people of Papa Westray, connecting them with the rest of Orkney without a choppy ferry crossing. Loganair flies it every day in a tiny Britten-Norman Islander, with passengers seated so close to the pilot that they can watch every switch being flicked. Tourists fly it purely for the record, and Loganair even offers them a commemorative certificate.

Here's what connects it to everything above. On the eighteen-hour train, the whole point is the hours. On this flight, the journey lasts less time than boarding usually takes. Two ends of the same idea, distance and time, pulled to their extremes. One turns a journey into a relationship. The other turns it into a formality so brief it barely counts as travel.

Tell me via email: eighteen hours on a train, or ninety seconds in the air. Which one would you actually remember?

See you next week…

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