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NEC Secretary stresses integrated approach for Nagaland coffee

Kohima, Oct 03: North Eastern Council (NEC) Secretary Satinder Kumar Bhalla emphasized the imperative for an integrated, multi-sectoral approach to elevate coffee farming into a commercially viable, high-income sector across Nagaland.

Addressing coffee growers, local administration heads, and agricultural experts during a field visit to Tuophema village in Kohima district, Bhalla outlined that enhancing farmers' income requires synchronized efforts spanning infrastructure development, processing technology, and robust market linkages. He asserted that the Coffee Unique Selling Proposition (USP) Project should function as a comprehensive economic development program rather than a standalone agricultural scheme.

During the interaction, Nagaland Principal Secretary and Development Commissioner Y. Kikheto Sema noted that while coffee cultivation in the state originated in 1981, it historically failed to realize its full potential due to limited awareness and weak market channels. To maximize land utility and financial resilience, Sema encouraged farmers to adopt crop diversification by intercropping high-value cash crops like black pepper alongside coffee plantations wherever technically feasible. Addressing field-level challenges raised by village council representatives—including acute labor shortages, high weeding costs, and post-harvest water scarcity—the NEC Secretary assured growers that the Council will examine provisions for farm mechanization, brush cutters, and modern water harvesting infrastructure. He urged local authorities to partner with private investors, industrial houses, and exporters to facilitate automation, processing facilities, and direct market access for Nagaland's premium specialty coffee.

Bhalla also lauded local youth initiatives, highlighting young growers acquiring international certifications to build regional technical expertise. Reaffirming the central government's commitment, the NEC pledged continued institutional support to establish an end-to-end coffee ecosystem encompassing cultivation, processing, quality refinement, and sustainable livelihood generation across the North-Eastern state.

Khandu calls for expanding coffee cultivation in Arunachal

Itanagar, Oct 03: Arunachal Pradesh Chief Minister Pema Khandu has called for concerted, multi-agency efforts to expand coffee cultivation, enhance bean quality, and bolster growers' incomes across the state's diverse agro-climatic zones.

Speaking at the "Hills to Cup" coffee workshop in Itanagar—organized jointly by the Coffee Board of India and the state Department of Agriculture—Khandu highlighted Arunachal Pradesh's immense potential for producing high-grade Arabica and Robusta varieties. The Chief Minister underscored that the state's varied elevations, rich soil, and favorable climate offer optimal conditions for premium plantation crops, positioning coffee as a major transformative driver for rural economic growth. Khandu assured growers and agricultural entrepreneurs that the state administration will examine dedicated policy interventions based on technical recommendations provided by the Coffee Board of India. These policy measures will focus on providing high-yielding seed varieties, expanding processing infrastructure, offering financial subsidies, and establishing end-to-end value chains connecting local producers directly to domestic and international specialty markets. Emphasizing the need for value addition, Khandu urged local Farmer Producer Organizations (FPOs) and youth entrepreneurs to go beyond raw bean harvesting by investing in local roasting, packaging, and branding mechanisms.

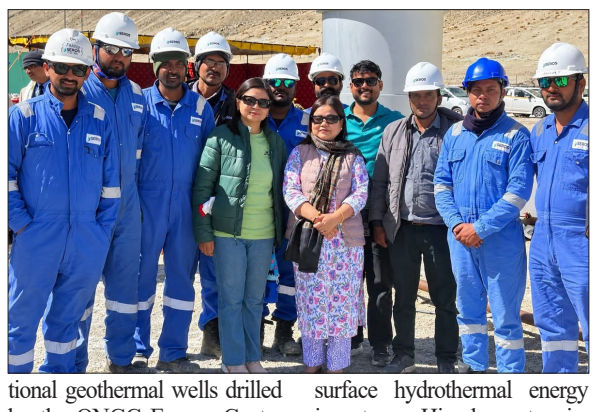
Modi's guidance will be implemented

New Delhi, Oct 03: Haryana Chief Minister Nayab Singh Saini stated on Saturday that administrative instructions and development guidance provided by Prime Minister Narendra Modi will be implemented across all districts of the state to accelerate rural welfare, industrial growth, and public service delivery.

The announcement followed an interactive joint meeting chaired by Prime Minister Modi at his official residence, 7 Lok Kalyan Marg in New Delhi. Chief Minister Saini, alongside 48 Bharatiya Janata Party (BJP) Members of the Legislative Assembly (MLAs) and senior state party leadership, attended the high-level dialogue focused on governance benchmarks and public welfare strategies. Addressing a press conference in the national capital post-meeting, Chief Minister Saini highlighted that the Prime Minister emphasized adopting an outcome-oriented administrative framework. The Chief Minister reaffirmed that state government departments will align their operational goals to ensure that central flagships, agricultural modernizations, and youth empowerment initiatives yield measurable improvements for Haryana's $2.8 citizens. "The guidance provided by Prime Minister Modi serves as our administrative roadmap. Every direction given during this consultation will be translated into actionable programs on the ground," Saini stated.

Dasanglu Pul visits Ladakh's Puga Geothermal Energy Project

Leh, Oct 03: Arunachal Pradesh Minister for Science, Technology, and Women & Child Development Dasanglu Pul conducted an official study tour of the Oil and Natural Gas Corporation (ONGC) Geothermal Project at Puga Valley in Ladakh. The visit aimed to evaluate high-altitude geothermal exploration models and assess the feasibility of tapping clean, round-the-clock geothermal power in Arunachal Pradesh.



Accompanied by Centre for Earth Sciences and Himalayan Studies (CESHS) Director Tana Tage and senior departmental geologists, Pul inspected the twin 1,000-meter-deep operational geothermal wells drilled by the ONGC Energy Centre at an altitude exceeding 14,000 feet. These wells form the core of India's pioneer 1-megawatt (MW) demonstration-scale geothermal power project, designed to tap continuous subsurface hydrothermal energy in extreme Himalayan terrain. During the field visit, technical experts briefed the ministerial delegation on sub-surface drilling methodologies, thermal reservoir evaluation, and high-altitude turbine operations.

Nagaland Speaker recognizes merger of five NPP MLAs with NPF

Kohima, Oct 03: Nagaland Legislative Assembly Speaker Sharingain Longkumer has formally recognized the merger of all five National People's Party (NPP) MLAs into the ruling Naga People's Front (NPF) under Paragraph 4(2) of the Tenth Schedule of the Constitution.

The formal recognition follows a petition and physical appearance before the Speaker by the five legislators—A. Nyamnyei Konyak, Nuklutoshi, C. Kipili Sangtam, Dr. Tseilhoutuo Rhutso, and Benei M. Lamthiu—who submitted documentation confirming their voluntary integration into the NPF fold. The notification issued by the Assembly Secretariat stated that following the merger, the NPP now holds no legislative representation in the 60-member Nagaland Legislative Assembly. The defection and subsequent recognition boost the NPF's legislative strength in the Assembly from 34 to 39 members. The merger took place in Dimapur in the presence of Chief Minister and NPF President Neiphiu Rio and party Secretary General Achumbemo Kikon. Reaffirming their decision, the five legislators cited complete faith in the leadership of Chief Minister Rio and alignment with the regional ideology and policies of the NPF.

Welcoming the move, Chief Minister Rio stated that the decision of the five leaders to join the NPF strengthens the regional political force representing the collective aspirations of the Naga people. With the entire five-member NPP contingent switching sides, the development effectively satisfies the two-thirds constitutional requirement needed to prevent disqualification under anti-defection laws.

Heroin worth five crore seized in Mizoram

Aizawl, Oct 03: In a major anti-narcotics operation along the Indo-Myanmar border, personnel of Assam Rifles recovered on the international market, in Mizoram's Champhai district. Security forces also apprehended two Myanmar nationals in connection with the smuggling attempt.

Acting on specific intelligence inputs regarding the transit of illegal contraband from across the international border, an Assam Rifles operational team launched a targeted surveillance maneuver in the Zote area of Champhai district. During the operation, security personnel intercepted two suspects attempting to transport the concealed narcotics. A detailed search of their possessions led to the recovery of the high-grade heroin consignment, packed into soap cases and hidden inside personal luggage. The apprehended individuals and the seized narcotics consignment were subsequently handed over to the Excise and Narcotics Department in Champhai for further custodial interrogation, formal registration of cases, and legal proceedings under the Narcotics Drugs and Psychotropic Substances (NDPS) Act. Officials confirmed that financial investigation units are currently mapping the supply route to identify local receivers and international trafficking links operating across the porous frontier. The seizure underscores the persistent security challenges posed by drug trafficking along Mizoram's 510-km unfenced international border with Myanmar.

Meghalaya Police event scheduled for Amit Shah cancelled

SHILLONG CEREMONY POSTPONED FOLLOWING DEFERMENT

Shillong, Oct 03: The official President's Colour Presentation Ceremony for the Meghalaya Police, which Union Home Minister Amit Shah was scheduled to attend as the chief guest, has been formally called off due to unavoidable circumstances.

The prestigious ceremony was slated to take place on October 5 at Jawaharlal Nehru Stadium in Polo, Shillong. The state police department issued an official notification on Saturday confirming the cancellation following the deferment of Shah's proposed two-day visit to the state. "It is hereby informed that the President's Colour Presentation Ceremony for Meghalaya Police stands cancelled due to unavoidable circumstances. The new date of the ceremony will be announced in due course," stated the press release issued by the police department. The President's Police Colour represents one of the highest honors bestowed upon a state police force in recognition of distinguished service, operational excellence, and commitment to public safety. The Ministry of Home Affairs had previously approved the award for Meghalaya Police, and the October 5 event was designed as a major ceremonial milestone. District authorities and state law enforcement had put elaborate security, traffic, and administrative arrangements in place across Shillong in anticipation of the Home Minister's arrival, including the deployment of 15 central security companies. Following the postponement, senior officials confirmed that security deployments and traffic advisories associated with the scheduled visit are being reassessed. State government representatives indicated that a revised itinerary for the Home Minister's visit and the presentation ceremony will be communicated once confirmed by the central administration.

Manipur People's Party demands resignation of CEC Gyanesh Kumar

Imphal, Oct 03: Joining a growing national chorus of political discontent, the Manipur People's Party (MPP) has formally backed demands for the immediate resignation of Chief Election Commissioner (CEC) Gyanesh Kumar, alleging that the autonomy and operational independence of the Election Commission of India (ECI) have been severely compromised.

Speaking to media personnel in Imphal, MPP spokesperson Rojesh raised concerns over institutional decision-making within the poll panel. Citing internal dissent reports involving Election Commissioners Sukhbir Singh Sandhu and Vivek Joshi, the regional party alleged that the ECI's neutral arbiter role has been systematically diluted under the current central administration. The party urged the central government to take urgent measures to restore public trust, transparency, and constitutional safeguards surrounding election management.

The MPP highlighted critical grievances regarding the ongoing Special Intensive Revision (SIR) of electoral rolls. MPP leaders questioned the large-scale deletion of voters nationwide while alleging that a significant number of non-Manipuri voters were improperly integrated into local state rolls during the recent revision exercise. The regional outfit demanded an immediate, independent inquiry into the revision software and field-verification procedures deployed across Manipur's electoral constituencies.

Linking state-level institutional challenges to national political developments, the MPP stated that prolonged political unrest and administrative failure in Manipur reflect broader vulnerabilities within democratic institutions under the ruling Bharatiya Janata Party (BJP). Party officials called upon civil society organizations, student groups, and regional political bodies to unite in defending constitutional rights and safeguarding the electoral integrity of the state.

Tripura Chief Minister directs action amid doctor strike threat

Agartala, Oct 03: Tripura Chief Minister and Health Minister Dr. Manik Saha directed senior health and administrative officials on Saturday to immediately resolve a dispute involving resident doctors at Agartala Government Medical College (AGMC) and GB Pant Hospital, after the healthcare workers threatened a state-wide pen-down strike commencing October 5.

The strike notice stems from an incident at the hospital's Outpatient Department (OPD), where defamatory allegations made by a patient against a senior resident doctor were recorded on video and widely circulated across social media platforms. The Resident Doctors' Association (RDA) rejected the allegations, asserting that the content was recorded without consent and republished by digital outlets to misrepresent routine medical examinations. The association submitted a formal memorandum demanding the immediate arrest of individuals who filmed the incident, legal action against platforms broadcasting unverified media, and the swift removal of defamatory online posts.

Addressing media queries, Chief Minister Saha confirmed that he reviewed the document submitted by the doctors and tasked health authorities with engaging all stakeholders. "I have received the document and instructed officials to investigate the dispute and speak to the concerned parties. The doctors have also initiated legal proceedings," Saha stated, emphasizing that the state government remains committed to maintaining law, order, and workplace security for medical personnel.

The doctors' body warned that resident doctors and postgraduate trainees will observe a complete pen-down strike from 9 AM on Monday unless concrete administrative and police action is taken against those responsible. Hospital authorities and police officials are holding preliminary talks with RDA representatives to avert disruptions to essential healthcare services.

NFR undertakes major infrastructure projects at Guwahati station

Guwahati, Oct 03: The Northeast Frontier Railway (NFR) has undertaken a series of major capacity-expansion and infrastructure modernization projects across the Guwahati railway hub to streamline train operations, clear operational bottlenecks, and enhance passenger amenities as daily footfalls cross $50,000$ commuters.

As the primary railway gateway to North-East India, Guwahati railway station and its adjoining yards handle immense passenger and freight traffic daily. To meet growing regional transit demands, NFR is executing critical track-doubling and connectivity projects, including the construction of a third railway line connecting Kamakhya and Guwahati stations, alongside a new rail-and-road bridge adjacent to the historical Saraighat Bridge over the Brahmaputra River.

A major highlight of the infrastructure overhaul is the establishment of a Mega Coaching Complex at New Guwahati, being developed at an estimated cost of $\text{Rs } 227 \text{ crore}$. The facility will feature three dedicated pit lines, four stabling lines, and two high-speed automatic coach-washing plants. The complex aims to increase operational efficiency, expand train maintenance capacity, and drastically reduce turnaround times for long-distance express and passenger trains terminating at or passing through the city. Simultaneously, re-development work is underway at Kamakhya Railway Station to upgrade concourses, waiting areas, and digital passenger information systems. To resolve ecological concerns along the rail alignment, NFR is constructing the Kamakhya-Azara elevated corridor—a 13.25-km elevated viaduct passing near Deepor Beel—designed to enable safe, uninterrupted movement of wildlife, particularly wild elephant herds, while securing high-speed rail transit across the corridor. Railway officials confirmed that the completed infrastructure will significantly augment terminal capacity, facilitate smoothly integrated multimodal logistics via nearby Gati Shakti Cargo Terminals.

Badruddin Ajmal threatens Assam Chief Minister Himanta Biswa Sarma

Dispur, Oct 03 : During an election campaign rally in Borbori, Lahorighat, All India United Democratic Front (AIUDF) chief Badruddin Ajmal stirred major political controversy by launching severe personal attacks against key ruling leaders. Addressing the gathering, Ajmal targeted Assam Chief Minister Himanta Biswa Sarma, state minister Pijush Hazarika, and BJP candidate Debabrata Saikia, making aggressive statements that drew widespread condemnation. In his address, Ajmal declared that he would "gouge out Himanta's eyes" so that the Chief Minister could no longer see or target the Miya community.

Escalating his rhetoric further, the AIUDF leader claimed that both Sarma and Hazarika would ultimately be forced to leave the country and move to Bangladesh. The sharp remarks triggered intense backlash across the state's political landscape, escalating tensions between the AIUDF and the ruling BJP ahead of the polls.

All India United Democratic Front (AIUDF) chief Badruddin Ajmal further intensified his rhetorical assault during his campaign speech in Borbori, Lahorighat, specifically targeting BJP candidate Debashish Sharma. Boldly issuing threats of administrative retaliation, Ajmal declared that he would place Sharma behind bars within four months should his party secure power. In another controversial statement, Ajmal added that Sharma could earn forgiveness if he agreed to recite the Islamic creed, the Kalima. Emphasizing his central political standing in the regional dynamics, Ajmal dismissed other figures, chanting to the crowd: "This doctor, that doctor — Ajmal is the factor".

Turning his focus to internal party backing, Ajmal highlighted his support for Iliyas Ansari, claiming he had personally invested ₹50 lakh into Ansari's education and political grooming. He assured the gathering that Ansari would be officially fielded as the AIUDF candidate in the upcoming election, underscoring the party's readiness to contest key seats. Meanwhile, political friction hit a breaking point in the Nagaon Lok Sabha constituency as election activity ramped up ahead of the bypoll. Tensions flared in Rupahihat when a Congress campaign rally reached Hatipara, triggering widespread local protests. Agitated crowds confronted senior leaders by waving black flags and shouting hostile slogans demanding the exit of top figures, including Gaurav Gogoi, Rakibul Hussain, Ripun Bora, Wajed Ali Choudhury, Nurul Huda, and Shivamoni Bora. The hostile reception highlighted escalating electoral hostility across the region as competing factions intensified their ground campaigns.

Flydubai co-pilot investigated over extremist radicalization after cockpit attack

Guwahati, Oct 03: Investigations into the mid-air attack aboard Flydubai Flight FZ1073 bound for Tel Aviv have revealed details regarding the alleged radicalisation of Omani co-pilot Hamam Alhamami. Alhamami is accused of launching a violent assault on the aircraft's captain, Indian national Captain Smit Machchhar, in what authorities are treating as a potential act of terrorism. Intelligence and security agencies from multiple nations are examining Alhamami's background. Reports indicate that he had undergone indoctrination into al-Qaeda's ideology and met with extremist religious figures prior to the incident. Authorities suspect that his radicalisation began during extended stays outside Oman, particularly in Syria. Concerns over his extremist views previously led Omani authorities and Oman Air to bar him from flying within the country.

The mid-air confrontation caused the Boeing 737 aircraft to enter a steep dive, dropping approximately 16,000 feet in just two minutes while sending out emergency distress signals. Despite suffering severe injuries during the attack, Captain Machchhar successfully unlatched the cockpit door. Off-duty aviators, crew members, and passengers intervened, subduing Alhamami and enabling the flight crew to safely land the plane in Tabuk, Saudi Arabia. Multi-agency investigations remain ongoing to determine how Alhamami cleared security vetting before joining Flydubai.

Two alleged PREPAK members arrested in Bishnupur over extortion

Imphal, Oct 03: Security forces in Manipur arrested two alleged active cadres of the proscribed People's Revolutionary Party of Kangleipak (PREPAK) during separate counter-insurgency operations across Bishnupur district in connection with ongoing extortion demands.

A police commando team (CDO-Bishnupur) arrested 22-year-old Laishram Rohit Meitei—son of L. Amu Meitei—from the Kumbi Sagolpat area. Originally a resident of Tuibong Meitei Leikai in Churachandpur district and currently residing at the Laisoi Relief Camp, Meitei was identified by law enforcement as an active operative belonging to the group. In a parallel operation on the same day, CDO-Bishnupur officers apprehended 27-year-old Sanjenbam Sanju Singh, son of S. Tomba Singh, from Khabi Mayai Leikai. Authorities identified Singh as an active cadre of PREPAK (Pro) who was actively engaging in illegal extortion activities. Investigations into both suspects are currently underway to trace their broader operational networks. Security forces in Manipur arrested two alleged active cadres of the banned insurgent outfit People's Revolutionary Party of Kangleipak (PREPAK) during separate anti-extortion operations in Bishnupur district. In the first operation, personnel from the Bishnupur Commando unit (CDO-Bishnupur) apprehended 22-year-old Laishram Rohit Meitei from the Kumbi Sagolpat area. Police identified him as an active PREPAK cadre originally residing in Tuibong Meitei Leikai within Churachandpur district, who had been staying at the Laisoi Relief Camp. In a targeted anti-extortion operation, personnel from the Bishnupur Commando unit (CDO-Bishnupur) arrested 27-year-old Sanjenbam Sanju Singh, son of S. Tomba Singh, from his native residence in Khabi Mayai Leikai. Authorities confirmed that Singh is an active member of the banned insurgent outfit People's Revolutionary Party of Kangleipak (Pro). Police operations revealed that Singh had been directly involved in executing illegal extortion demands across Bishnupur and neighboring districts. Following his apprehension, law enforcement agencies seized personal belongings, including a mobile phone and official documentation, to trace his communication trails. Security forces have initiated comprehensive follow-up investigations to map out the group's broader operative linkages, identify financial channels, and dismantle the surrounding extortion network in the region.

An 18-year-old was found dead in a Police Bazaar rented room

Shillong, Oct 03: An 18-year-old youth was found dead in his rented room along Thana Road in Khyndai Lad, Police Bazaar, in the early hours of Friday, October 2. The deceased has been identified as Sajan Borman, a native of Bendal/Pyndan Borsora village under the Mawsynram block in East Khasi Hills. Borman was employed locally at the Delhi Tea Stall in Shillong, and his body was discovered inside the premises around 2:00 AM. Authorities are currently treating the incident as a suspected suicide, though the exact circumstances surrounding his death remain under investigation. According to statements from the victim's elder brother, the family was unaware of any personal issues or distress that could account for the sudden tragedy. Following the discovery, personnel from the Sadar Police Station promptly arrived at the scene to initiate preliminary formalities. To assist with the body recovery from the location, the East Khasi Hills District Disaster Management Authority alerted the State Disaster Response Force (SDRF). A search and recovery team from the 1st SDRF Battalion stationed in Mawdiangdiang dispatched a unit at approximately 10:45 AM, arriving at the Thana Road site by 11:20 AM. Upon inspecting the room, SDRF personnel secured the body using specialized ropes, successfully lowered it to ground level, and formally transferred custody to the police. The body was subsequently transported to Civil will be conducted to confirm the official cause of death.

Forest official injured in Kaziranga rhino attack

Guwahati, Oct 03: A forest official was injured in a rhinoceros attack at Kaziranga National Park on the day the UNESCO World Heritage site reopened to visitors following its annual monsoon closure.

The incident occurred in the Bhaichamari Forest Camp area within the Bagori Forest Range while the worker, identified as Pradip Barua, was performing routine duties. Colleagues quickly rescued Barua from the site and transported him to the Kaliabor Sub-Divisional Civil Hospital for medical evaluation and treatment. His exact medical condition remains unconfirmed.

The official reopening of Kaziranga National Park coincided with the resumption of Assam's broader wildlife tourism season across its premier protected reserves. According to the schedule detailed by Assam Environment and Forest Minister Jayanta Malla Baruah, Manas National Park kicked off the state's tourism calendar on October 2, Kaziranga National Park officially opened its gates today, October 3, and Pobitora Wildlife Sanctuary is set to welcome visitors starting October 13. Extending a warm invitation to nature enthusiasts and global travelers, Minister Baruah highlighted that forest department teams across all three major parks have finalized arrangements to handle the anticipated surge in tourist footfall. The phased reopening marks the end of the mandatory annual monsoon closure, paving the way for safari bookings, ecotourism operations, and local hospitality activities throughout the region.

Tripura CPI(M) prepares for municipal polls, targeting civic governance

Agartala, Oct 03: Tripura's primary opposition party, the Communist Party of India (Marxist), has formally initiated organizational ground preparations for the upcoming Urban Local Bodies (ULB) elections across the state, party state secretary and Leader of Opposition Jitendra Chaudhury announced. Addressing reporters, Chaudhury emphasized that the party's campaign platform will focus heavily on civic governance failures, transparency, public accountability, and protecting ordinary citizens' constitutional rights under the ruling administration. Chaudhury noted that the CPI(M) has mobilized its The Communist Party of India (Marxist) in Tripura has stepped up its ground preparations across urban municipalities and rural local bodies, launching targeted outreach campaigns to engage diverse voter bases. In a strategic move to build broader political solidarity, the party has extended its grassroots activities into regions under the Tripura Tribal Areas Autonomous District Council (TTAADC). CPI(M) leadership aims to forge a unified political coalition bridging urban voters and indigenous tribal communities around common developmental concerns. Leader of Opposition Jitendra Chaudhury sharply criticized the state government's urban and rural administrative record, alleging that repeated infrastructure development promises have failed to yield results. He highlighted persistent local grievances, including dilapidated roads, inadequate drainage systems, and irregular civic services, as evidence of official neglect.

Additionally, Chaudhury targeted non-state actors and local extortion syndicates, asserting that unregulated illegal activities continue to hamper small businesses and property owners. The CPI(M) campaign positions the party as a democratic alternative focused on transparent, accountable, and citizen-centric governance. CPI(M) state secretary and Leader of Opposition Jitendra Chaudhury reaffirmed the party's commitment to contesting the upcoming Urban Local Bodies (ULB) elections, emphasizing that the platform will center on restoring accountability, transparency, and public welfare in civic governance. Asserting that the Left Front would mobilize popular support as it had in past struggles, Chaudhury expressed optimism regarding the public's positive response to their campaign initiatives. Critiquing the ruling BJP administration's approach to municipal management, Chaudhury argued that true urban development must extend beyond basic physical infrastructure like roads, drainage systems, power, and water supply. He highlighted the necessity for municipal authorities to address the social and cultural needs of city residents while ensuring transparent public administration. Despite continuous government expenditure and declared developmental targets, Chaudhury pointed out that local residents continue to deal with crumbling roads, unmaintained lanes, and neglected drainage networks. He noted that even in newly developed urban sectors, the administration has consistently fallen short of its stated goals. Furthermore, Chaudhury raised concerns regarding widespread systemic corruption and the rise of local extortion networks. He alleged that ordinary citizens are forced to pay illegal commissions to criminal syndicates for basic activities, including land transactions, home renovations, and purchasing basic construction materials like cement, brick, and steel. Stating that the public is exhausted by these administrative and economic burdens, Chaudhury reiterated that the CPI(M) will present a democratic alternative to unite citizens, eradicate extortion, and establish an accountable municipal administration.

A West Khasi Hills man received life without parole

Shillong, Oct 03: The District and Sessions Court in Nongstoin, West Khasi Hills, has sentenced Banphrangkupar Nongbri to rigorous life imprisonment for the remainder of his natural life without parole following his conviction in a 2021 double murder case. The court also imposed a financial penalty of ₹1 lakh on the convict, citing the brutal and grave nature of the crime. The conviction stems from the August 2021 murders of 79-year-old Phlesis Syiem and her 25-year-old domestic helper, Maitlynti Lyngdoh Marshillong, whose bodies were recovered from their residence in Nongstoin. According to police reports, Nongbri, who was residing in Shillong while awaiting his university degree results, targeted the residence with the intent to commit robbery, knowing Syiem was wealthy and resided only with her domestic helper. Following his arrest, Nongbri confessed to the killings, leading investigators to recover critical physical evidence, including blood-stained footwear and two mobile phones belong-Nongstoin Police Station, culminating in the court's final ruling on September 30.

Manipur civil society groups reject Rijiju's narrative, criticizing central response

Imphal, Oct 03: A coalition representing 14 civil society organisations (CSOs) in Kangleipak, Manipur, has expressed strong opposition to recent remarks made by Union Parliamentary Affairs and Minority Affairs Minister Kiren Rijiju regarding the ongoing security crisis in the state. Addressing a press conference in Imphal, Shanta Nahakpam, the convenor of the 14 CSOs Kangleipak, sharply criticized the Centre's perspective that the crisis should be viewed primarily as a communal conflict among local ethnic groups. Nahakpam argued that the framing overlooks the complex security dimensions and foreign linkages of the armed militancy operating across the region. The coalition strongly questioned the Union government's policy stance regarding militant groups, specifically citing Rijiju's statements advocating for political dialogue rather than direct military or security operations against armed insurgents. Nahakpam alleged that the continuing violence is directly driven by attacks from illegal armed groups on civilian populations, villages, and critical infrastructure. He further pointed out that despite resolutions unanimously passed by the Manipur Legislative Assembly and the State Cabinet seeking the immediate abrogation of the Suspension of Operations (SoO) agreement with Kuki militant groups, the Central government has hesitated to terminate the pact or enforce decisive action against violators. Highlighting growing frustration over the Centre's management of the crisis, the CSOs noted that neglecting security enforcement while thousands of internally displaced persons remain confined to relief camps deepens the public's loss of faith in national institutions. The organization urged the Ministry of Home Affairs to treat the situation as an national security issue involving cross-border influences and territorial integrity, rather than reducing the prolonged conflict to an internal law-and-order dispute between civilian communities. Rijiju, speaking at a conclave in New Delhi on September 27, said lasting peace in Manipur would require dialogue among the Meitei, Kuki and Naga communities. He also said the Centre could not use military force to bring an end to the conflict and stressed the need for communities to engage in talksNahakpam said Rijiju's description of the crisis and his emphasis on dialogue reflected, in the CSOs' view, an inadequate understanding of the security situation. He alleged that the violence involved armed militant groups and attacks on civilians and villages.Drawing a comparison with violence in parts of Arunachal Pradesh along the India-Myanmar border, Nahakpam referred to incidents in Changlang and Tirap involving armed groups and questioned whether such attacks would also be categorised as communal conflicts. The CSO representative also questioned the continuation of the Suspension of Operations (SoO) arrangement with Kuki militant groups despite earlier resolutions and decisions in Manipur.The Manipur Legislative Assembly had unanimously passed a resolution on February 29, 2024, seeking abrogation of the SoO agreement with Kuki-Zo armed groups. The resolution is recorded on the Assembly's official website.The SoO arrangement was subsequently extended in September 2025 between the Centre, the Manipur government, the Kuki National Organisation (KNO) and the United People's Front (UPF), with revised ground rules requiring the groups to abide by the Constitution, Indian laws and the territorial integrity of Manipur.Nahakpam questioned the rationale behind continuing the arrange(NIA) for investigation. dia-Myanmar border. Naga organisations attributed the attack to the Myanmar-based Kuki National Army-Burma (KNA-B), although such attribution has been reported as an allegation and has not been independently verified.

Mumbai police register a FIR against CJP leaders and supporters over the Shivaji Park rally

New Delhi, Oct 03: The Shivaji Park police have filed a case against Cockroach Janta Party (CJP) leaders Abhijeet Dipke, Pranav Ahire, Ashutosh Ranka, Ajinkya Shinde, Saurabh Das, Afreen Nawaz, Saumya Korde, Ankit Bharadwaj, Vijay Malangi, and Yogesh Ingle, as well as over 400 of their supporters, for illegally gathering and sloganeering in Dadar on Friday. "We have registered a case against the organisers of CJP protests on October 2 at Shivaji Park. The case has been registered under sections 189 (unlawful assembly) and 223 (disobedience to a public servant's lawful order) of the Bhartiya Nyaya Sanhita, 2023, and section 37 (power to prohibit certain acts for prevention of disorder) and 135 (disobeying or breaking official orders issued by the police) of the Maharashtra Police Act," said a police officer attached to the Shivaji Park police station. The Mumbai police denied permission to the CJP's representative Ajinkya Shinde to organize the protests at Shivaji Park, claiming that they were not authorized to grant permission for any gathering at the historical site in light of the Bombay High Court's judgment in PIL 116/2009 dated January 4, 2013, and a subsequent order of the Maharashtra government dated January 20, 2016. The applicant was advised to look for alternate venues in Mumbai for the protest and ask for permission, which will be considered appropriately. However, the movement's founder, Abhijeet Dipke had threatened a Jail Bharo Andolan on the occasion of Gandhi Jayanti, said the officer.

The officer stated that Dipke was aware that authorization had been denied. In a post on X, he stated, "Mumbai Police has denied permission for our October 2 protest." Such measures for suppressing citizens' voices are reprehensible.

The CJP organized protests calling for Chief Election Commissioner Gyanesh Kumar's resignation in response to allegations of irregularities in the Special Intensive Revision (SIR) exercise and reports that he either ignored or kept the two election commissioners in the dark about certain commission decisions regarding the SIR.

Delay in entry of new fighter jets hurts the IAF, says Air Chief

Shillong, Oct 03: The Indian Air Force is suffering from the delay in inducting new fighter jets, and the country needs to develop up to 40 aircraft per year to fill capacity gaps and establish long-term combat power, IAF Chief Air Chief Marshal AP Singh said on Saturday.He stated that the IAF is counting on the timely induction of the LCA Mk-1A, new multi-role fighter aircraft (MRFA), and additional Sukhoi-30MKIs to shore up its fighter fleet and keep the number of combat squadrons from falling below 30, while emphasizing the need to deploy fifth-generation aircraft as well. "There is some extra delay this time, and there is no doubt that it is going to hurt us," Singh said at his annual media briefing ahead of the 94th IAF Day on October 8. "We need to induct two fighter squadrons every year. That means anything between 36 and 40 aircraft should be produced and inducted into the IAF for us to stop going down from the current 30 fighter squadrons and start improving towards the target of 42.

Actually, we need even more than that." Singh said the IAF could finalise the MRFA contract by the end of the financial year. It refers to the proposed purchase of 114 Rafale fighter jets from France to sharpen the IAF's combat edge at a cost of roughly ₹3.25 lakh crore. "Hindustan Aeronautics Limited (HAL) plans to produce 20 LCA Mk-1As each year. If the MRFA deal goes through, we will receive approximately 12 aircraft per year. This brings the total to approximately 32. We also have a deal for twelve Su-30 aircraft. Assume six arrive in one year and six arrive in the next year, bringing the total to 35-40 aircraft per year. We are hoping that these things will happen, and that we will be able to meet the growth rate that we have set for ourselves," the IAF head stated. Under the MRFA model being considered, the Rafales will be made in India by French plane maker Dassault Aviation and a local partner. France is expected to supply 20 Rafale jets in fly-away condition while the remaining will be made in India under the government-to-government deal. Following multiple missed deadlines, the LCA Mk-1A is finally on its way to induction. Both the IAF and HAL are certain that induction will begin by the end of the year. It will replace the IAF's workhorses, the MiG-21s, which were decommissioned last year after more than 60 years of service.

The IAF has placed two orders for 180 Mk-1A fighter jets costing ₹1.1 lakh crore. The first deal for 83 aircraft was signed in February 2021, followed by another for 97 fighters in September 2025. The first contract covers delivery, which will most likely begin in December. The first Mk-1A aircraft, purchased in 2021, was scheduled for delivery in March 2024. That deadline was missed due to a number of problems, including US firm GE Aerospace's inability to deliver the F404-IN20 engines on schedule and delays in obtaining essential certification.

Food inspections rise by 46%, yet safety concerns persist ahead of festivals

New Delhi, Oct 03: Tukaram Mundhe, an IAS officer, became Maharashtra's Food Commissioner on May 25. The same day, he initiated a massive enforcement campaign throughout the state, beginning with the milk supply chain. Four months later, the officer's name has become synonymous with a type of food control that India's middle class had almost given up hope for.

As the holiday season comes, Mundhe's crackdown has become the center of a larger debate. India inspects and tests more food than ever before.Is this sufficient to keep the mithai box, the ghee in the puja thali, and the paneer on the festival menu safe? The official data shows rapid expansion.

The Ministry of Health told the Lok Sabha that FSSAI and state authorities conducted 5,20,566 inspections in 2025-26, up from 4,01,391 in 2024-25 and 3,57,072 in 2023-24.

That is a rise of about 46 per cent in two years. Of 2,23,808 samples analysed, 40,023 were found non-conforming, and the ministry described the 2025-26 figures as provisional. That works out to roughly 18%, or nearly one in five samples.

Meghalaya faces 60% monsoon rainfall shortage, raises concerns about water security

Shillong, Oct 03: Meghalaya had only 1,077.1 mm of rainfall during the June-September southwest monsoon this year, compared to a usual 2,695.3 mm, resulting in a 60% rainfall shortfall, according to the India Meteorological Department.

The substantial shortage has also had an impact on some of the state's wettest locations. Despite being among the world's most well-known high-rainfall areas, Sohra had a 36% deficit while Mawsynram had 34% less rainfall than usual. The rainfall deficit has reignited concerns about water availability in Meghalaya, especially during the dry season, when some natural springs that supply drinking water weaken or dry up. According to a senior official in the Public Health Engineering (PHE) Department, the government has prioritized the sustainability of important water sources due to the state's reliance on natural springs.

The Soil and Water Conservation Department has also emphasized Meghalaya's water dilemma, stating that the state receives substantial rainfall during the monsoon yet may face water shortages during the non-monsoon season as springs dry up. The southwest monsoon reached Meghalaya on June 9 this year. Of the 11 districts for which rainfall data were available, seven recorded large deficient rainfall. They were East Garo Hills, East Jaintia Hills, North Garo Hills, South West Garo Hills, West Garo Hills, West Jaintia Hills and West Khasi Hills.

East Khasi Hills, Ri Bhoi and South Garo Hills recorded deficient rainfall, while South West Khasi Hills was the only district to record excess rainfall.

Kerala government may broaden investigation into the 2021 Muttil tree-felling case

New Delhi, Oct 03: Thiruvananthapuram: Alleging that a GO was used for large-scale unlawful tree chopping, Kerala Minister Shibu Baby John said on Saturday that the government will consider broadening the investigation into the 2021 Muttil case in Wayanad.The complaint concerns a government order purportedly issued by then-Revenue Secretary A Jayathilak in October 2020, which allowed farmers to down trees on property given to them under the Kerala property Assignment Rules. The order was allegedly used to cut down several high-value trees in the Muttil area. It was withdrawn around four months later after officials discovered that timber smugglers had used the clause to import high-value trees. Speaking to reporters, the state minister for Forests and Wildlife Protection stated that the plot underlying the occurrence, including the reasons that led to a shift in the official position on tree felling, should be probed. He stated that while the file in question did not immediately fall under the purview of the Forest Department, there had been infractions of forest laws. "A decision would be taken in the coming days after a joint examination by the Revenue, Forest and Law departments," he said. Referring to Jayathilak's role as the then Revenue Secretary, the minister said the official had initially issued an order against cutting trees but later issued another order reversing that position. "What needs to be revealed is the conspiracy behind this.

The causes surrounding such a shift in opinion must be probed," he stated.

However, the minister refused to name any individuals as being involved for the purported conspiracy. He claimed that the issue extends beyond the Muttil incident and involves widespread exploitation of the order.After an order canceling the authorization was granted, it was published 75 days later, and the majority of the trees had been destroyed during that time," he stated.

Gurugram man falls from 41st story of luxury Noida society while in financial distress: Police

New Delhi, Oct 03: On Saturday morning, a 29-year-old man from Gurugram committed himself by jumping from the 41st floor balcony of a high-rise community in Noida, according to police.A preliminary investigation found that the man, a Manesar resident in Gurugram, was sleeping at an Airbnb in Noida sector 94 when he took the drastic move. The man appeared to be distraught over a monetary issue, but police said a thorough investigation is underway.On Saturday morning, a squad from Sector 126 police station raced to the society after learning of the man's suicide. Around 11am, the man reportedly crossed the balcony and started walking on the ledge, an officer said, seeking anonymity.

"When an AC technician working on the opposite balcony noticed him and tried to stop him, the man allegedly informed him he was depressed. By the time the technician and his colleague arrived at the man's flat to rescue him, he had already jumped," the officer stated.

According to investigations, the man was upset about money and left his house about three days ago. Sumnesh Kumar, the Sector 126 station house officer (SHO), said the man checked into the Airbnb about 3 p.m. on Friday."Initial probe revealed the deceased checked in at the Airbnb on Friday around 3 pm," he stated. "He left his home about three days ago and stayed in various hotels before checking in at Supernova in Noida." We discovered a chat between the dead and his father about some monetary issue. According to the discussions, his father insisted that he return home, but he refused," he explained.

Indore RTI Trail: 1.36 lakh voters deleted, but records not maintained

New Delhi, Oct 03: As the controversy over the Special Intensive Revision (SIR) of electoral rolls engulfs Chief Election Commissioner Gyanesh Kumar, an older trail of official correspondence from Indore, Madhya Pradesh, raises a pointed question: Where are the records explaining voter name deletions made through a digital system? An RTI request for more than 1.36 lakh voter deletions cited across Indore district between January 5 and October 15, 2022, elicited the following statement from constituency election offices: "The requested digital records relating to the Garud app and ERO Net had not been maintained."

The applicant's request for information has now reached the Madhya Pradesh High Court, which has asked the State Information Commission to determine his ongoing RTI appeal. The deletions predate the current SIR exercise. However, the correspondence reduces the broader discussion about electoral transparency to a specific issue: the availability of information documenting changes to the voter list.The Madhya Pradesh High Court has directed the State Information Commission to decide a second appeal filed by the same applicant, former Indore councilor Dilip Kaushal. Justice Sandeep N Bhatt's September 17 order requires the authority to decide the appeal on its merits and in accordance with law, "as expeditiously as possible", preferably within 45 days of receiving a certified copy of the order, and communicate the outcome to Kaushal. The appeal had been pending since January 30, 2026.

In his application dated May 23, 2025, Kaushal requested information about entries made on Garud and ERO Net, as well as decisions issued by Electoral Registration Officers. He also wanted contractor agreements, work orders, backups, and other correspondence. On May 27, the district election office transferred the application to constituency authorities. The replies arrived in June. The Depalpur officer confirmed that there are no digital records related to ERO Net or the BLOs' Garud app. Similar responses were received from other officials in Indore-2, Indore-5, Rau, and Sanwer, indicating a lack of maintained records due to no Election Commission instructions at the time. The Indore-4 officer noted that deletions on Garud and ERO Net were routine under Election Commission directives, yet no related digital records were kept.

A significant number of deletions were noted, with 56,482 names from Indore-4 and Indore-5 combined, alongside other substantial figures from various constituencies. Kaushal escalated the issue to higher election authorities, citing concerns over voter-deletion records across all 230 Assembly constituencies. This backdrop is critical, as the BJP secured a landslide victory in the 2023 Assembly election in these areas, winning all nine constituencies in Indore district.

MK Stalin's Comment Invites TVK's Body-Shaming Charges

New Delhi, Oct 03: The ruling party has criticized DMK Chief MK Stalin's remark about TVK's Dharapuram bypoll candidate Sathyabhama, accusing the former Tamil Nadu Chief Minister of body-shaming the female Dalit candidate and demanding an apology. Stalin was campaigning in bypoll-bound Dharapuram, where he criticized the ruling TVK for "horse-trading" and orchestrating a division in the AIADMK. He also targeted Sathyabhama, who had won the Dharapuram constituency as an AIADMK candidate in the recent Assembly election and resigned from the seat weeks later before switching to the ruling TVK. She is now contesting the bypoll as the TVK candidate. Referring to allegations of money being involved in the political switch, Stalin said: "You people now call their candidate who acted against truth as Suitcase-Bhama. There is also another name - Somersault Bhama. I don't know how she did the somersault with that figure." The reference to Sathyabhama's physical appearance triggered a sharp response from TVK. TVK leader and Health Minister Arun Raj accused Stalin of body-shaming Sathyabhama, claiming the remark was an insult to women and the Dalit community. The party has requested an apology from the DMK president. The incident comes in the midst of charges of horse-trading against the ruling TVK. The TVK had come to power promising good governance and a corruption-free administration.

However, the DMK and AIADMK have accused the ruling party of what they describe as "scientific horse-trading" after six sitting AIADMK MLAs, including former ministers, resigned their seats weeks after the Assembly election and subsequently joined the TVK. Only two of the consequent vacancies, Dharapuram and Madurantakam, are currently subject to byelections.

The TVK fielded the same former AIADMK MPs who won those seats in the Assembly election.The TVK has refuted claims of horse-trading and stated that elected MPs can resign and join another party without facing disqualification under the anti-defection law. The issue was also raised during the minority TVK administration's trust vote, when more than 20 dissident AIADMK MLAs voted in support of the incumbent government. The opposition has questioned the circumstances underlying the resignations and subsequent switches, while the TVK insists that the MPs' actions were voluntary and legitimate.

Spending increase leaves M'laya with a Rs 6-crore income excess

Shillong, Oct 03: According to the Comptroller and Auditor General of India's most recent provisional accounts, Meghalaya's revenue surplus has nearly vanished in the first five months of the current fiscal year, falling to just Rs 6.39 crore by the end of August 2026, down from Rs 833.27 crore in the same period last year. Simply said, the state's regular revenue is now almost totally consumed by day-to-day expenses. Revenue receipts remained at Rs 6,647.62 crore by August 2026, somewhat lower than Rs 6,691.30 crore during the same period in 2025-26, but revenue spending rose dramatically to Rs 6,641.23 crore, up from Rs 5,858.03 crore the previous year. This means that, while the state's monthly revenue has stayed relatively stable, the cost of administering the government and satisfying its recurrent obligations has risen significantly. Revenue expenditure increased by nearly 13.4% in a year, leaving only Rs 6.39 crore in excess. The pressure is especially intense because Meghalaya has budgeted for a revenue surplus of Rs 4,771.02 crore in 2026-27.

By the end of August, just around 0.13 percent of the predicted surplus had been realized. During the same period last year, the state met 16.55 percent of its yearly revenue surplus target.

A significant portion of the increase has come from the state's regular contributions. The expenditure on the core revenue account, excluding interest, wages, pensions, and subsidies, rose to Rs 3,146.49 crore from Rs 2,686.74 crore. Spending on salaries and wages rose to Rs 2,127.98 crore, from Rs 1,926.83 crore, while pension expenditure increased to Rs 929.59 crore, from Rs 824.78 crore. Interest payments also increased, from Rs 418.59 crore to Rs 437.17 crore. Put together, these figures show why the state's finances are under pressure: several of the largest components of government spending are recurring commitments that have to be met irrespective of whether revenues grow at the same pace. Meanwhile, Meghalaya has increased its investment in asset creation. By August, capital spending had risen to Rs 1,076.99 crore, up from Rs803.15 crore during the same period last year, representing a 34% increase.

North East Chronicle

Protecting forest ecosystems through strict dredging oversight

The recommendation by the Forest Advisory Committee (FAC) not to treat scientifically planned and time-bound river dredging within forest areas as a "non-forest purpose" if the dredging is undertaken to address problems caused by natural disasters can be precarious for the ecologically fragile northeast region unless backed by a tough monitoring and inspection regime. Treating river dredging as "non-forest purpose" under the provisions of the Van (Sanrakshan Evam Samvardhan) Adhiniyam, 1980, will allow such activities to be carried out without prior forest clearance and will be treated as part of forest management. The process of obtaining forest clearance for removal of forest produce ensures checks and balances against ecological destruction, as it is subjected to intensive scrutiny by forest and ecological experts. Treating it as either commercial or non-commercial can easily distinguish the purpose if the removal of forest produce is for generating revenue or for ecological restoration, protection and management of the forest ecosystem. The draft guidelines recommended by FAC to the Ministry of Environment, Forest and Climate Change emphasises that river dredging within forest areas should aim to remove excessive accumulations of silt, debris, stones and boulders, restore the natural carrying capacity and flow of the river, and, to the extent feasible, facilitate the restoration of its natural course and drainage regime while ensuring that the dredging does not lead to damage to nearby forest areas.

The draft guidelines explain the rationale: during monsoon, particularly in hilly and mountainous regions, intense rainfall and flash floods can significantly alter river dynamics. Such events often cause changes in river courses, erode riverbanks, and deposit large volumes of silt, sediment, debris, stones and boulders within river channels, adversely affecting the hydrological regime, ecological integrity and overall functioning of the affected forest ecosystems. Rampant illegal mechanised sand mining from rivers in Assam continuing unchecked despite repeated complaints speaks volumes about critical monitoring and enforcement gap. This has posed a serious ecological threat to several river ecosystems, drastically bringing down fish and aquatic populations in those and also aggravating riverbank erosion and triggering a water availability crisis for farmlands along the catchments. Such a monitoring and enforcement gap leaves room for speculations that river dredging within forest areas carried out without monitoring and compliance mechanisms will lead to illegal extraction of silt, debris, stones and boulders and deviation from approved scientific plans. Even though proposed non-commercial river dredging is to be undertaken by the state government, it will essentially involve the engagement of private agencies to carry out the dredging operations. Laxity in monitoring will allow unscrupulous contractors engaged in such work to indulge in corrupt means of extracting excessive debris, stones and boulders, causing irreversible ecological damage. Independent and third-party monitoring and inspection of such river dredging activities within forest areas will also keep official monitoring and inspection machinery under check. The guidelines propose that the dredged material originating from forest lands shall be treated as forest produce, and the removal, handling, transportation and disposal of the dredged material shall be carried out in accordance with the applicable State forest laws, rules and codal provisions. The State Government shall designate the State Forest Department, Forest Development Corporation or an entity under the management and control of the State Forest Department as an agency for implementation of the approved dredging plan. The designated agency shall be responsible for laying down the methodology for the removal, handling, transportation and disposal of the dredged material, as well as proper accounting and management of the revenue generated from its disposal, it adds. This highlights the onus placed on the state government to ensure adherence to the approved dredging plan and that the ecological integrity of river dredging activities ultimately hinges on strengthening the monitoring and inspection regime. The guidelines insist that any dredging activity undertaken beyond the period approved by the State Disaster Management Authority or outside the scope of the approved guidelines shall be treated as commercial mining and constitute a violation of these guidelines and the provisions of the Van Adhiniyam. In such cases, the State Nodal Officer shall immediately suspend the dredging activity in the forest area and initiate appropriate legal proceedings against such violations in accordance with the penal provisions of the Adhiniyam. While compliance with this provision can provide a safeguard for ecological protection against any illegal, excess or unscientific removal of boulder, silt, etc. from rivers within forest areas, it will depend on how consistently violations are detected through on-ground inspections and promptly acted upon. Another safeguard, which the state government will be required to ensure, as recommended by the FAC, is ensuring compliance with applicable environmental safeguards prescribed under the National Framework for Sediment Management under the supervision of State Pollution Control Boards. Inherent ecological risks in river dredging demand that the draft guidelines be opened for wider expert consultation prior to their adoption and implementation.

Beneath the diplomatic gloss: why ignoring the subtext of Xi's US visit is a mistake

The prevailing view about Chinese President Xi Jinping's State visit to the US late last month is that it was high on pageantry and low on substance. This misses the broader point: Modest deliverables were expected, and the visit was never about concrete outcomes; but it also consolidated a new stage in the recalibrated great power relationship and showed how US President Donald Trump and Xi are managing the changing equilibrium. The gestures were extraordinary. Trump received Xi on the tarmac at Joint Base Andrews, something no US President had done for a visiting leader (except the Pope) since 1962. This was the two presidents' third meeting in less than a year. Two more are fixed: APEC in Shenzhen in November and the G20 in Miami in December.The recalibration began with China's forceful retaliation against Trump's so-called Liberation Day tariffs of April 2, 2025, with matching tariffs and, more tellingly, leveraging of its near monopoly over rare earth magnets. Alarm in the American markets pushed Washington towards a tactical truce the Busan understanding of October 30, 2025. At the Beijing summit in May this year, the US accepted the Chinese relationship template of "constructive strategic stability".

In Washington, the year-long Busan truce was extended by just two months, to January 10. Tariff relief was agreed on $30 billion of "non- sensitive" goods each way. A China-US AI dialogue and an incident-communication channel were established. Both sides agreed to operationalise a trade board. The two readouts diverge sharply. Beijing led with the relationship formula as its headline outcome; Washington buried the same words deeper in the text. The White House lists a hard purchase commitment, Chinese coal imports, and a rare-earth ask; Beijing confirms none of this. The lone security outcome, a militaries' memorandum on crisis communication, appears only in the Chinese account. Xi pressed Trump to "adhere to the correct position of opposing Taiwan independence"; the US did not contest this, and its own declared position is that it does "not support" independence. Xi amplified the "constructive strategic stability" principle, with cooperation as its mainstay, competition within limits, differences kept under control, and peace within reach.The balance has tilted towards Beijing. In practice, the US now treats China as a peer, able to inflict economic pain the US is not prepared to bear. Four phrases sum up how: recalibration, a K-shaped relationship, a strategic stalemate, and a G2 overlay, not an actual G2 grouping.

Washington's restraint extends to tools it already holds. A Section 301 investigation into China's industrial overcapacity, launched earlier this year, has been repeatedly postponed. The $14-billion arms package for Taiwan, which Trump has called a "bargaining chip", remains on hold. Days before Xi's visit, Trump signed the Sanctioning Russia and Iran Act, authorising tariffs of up to 100% on large buyers of Russian oil and gas. China is, by far, the largest such buyer, ahead of India. Yet the law has so far been waved chiefly at India, not China, which has the capacity to retaliate.All this said, the rivalry though muted remains robust in substance. The relationship is K-shaped: leader-level diplomacy is on the rise, even as competition in trade, technology, and military domains continues underneath. The US has placed curbs on import of Chinese drones and robots and accused Chinese firms of "industrial-scale" distillation of American AI models; Beijing, meanwhile, steers its firms away from Nvidia chips and has delivered only two-thirds of the rare earths promised at Busan. US treasury secretary Scott Bessent summed this up as the Chinese "kicking under the water", and the US being ready to kick back. Washington's ambassador in Beijing, David Perdue, said bluntly on X, in English and Chinese, two days after the visit: China had "weaponised" its rare-earth controls; the US would not "kowtow"; rebuilding independence in rare earths, magnets, pharmaceuticals, and shipbuilding meant "a bumpy road over the next year". Nor has Beijing changed its basic assessment. It sees the US as a declining but dangerous superpower, bent on containing and suppressing China. Its strategic community now speaks of a "strategic stalemate", a term from Mao's 1938 essay "On Protracted War". For Mao, stalemate was the middle and longest stage, when the weaker side builds strength and prepares for "strategic counter-offensive". Seen this way, Busan, Beijing, and Washington represent "campaign buffer periods" to be used, not settlements.China is in no hurry to displace the US outside the western Pacific. Nor is it equipped or inclined to be a security anchor elsewhere. Beijing sees the Trump presidency as a window to consolidate its gains before 2028, when elections in Washington and Taipei will test it.

The resulting equilibrium is unstable, but relatively resilient as it rests on mutual vulnerability. A new Taiwan arms package, which Congress is pressing for, or an abrupt change in Trump's stance could upset it. Both sides are buying time. China faces a property overhang, weak domestic demand, and growing debt. The US is a distracted superpower. If Washington and Beijing coordinate tacitly, their combined weight can shape decisions for others on select issues. Five implications stand out for India:First, a G2 overlay could produce rules that affect India without allowing for its voice, as on AI.Second, a Washington that treats arms sales to Taipei as a bargaining chip with Beijing, fawns over Xi, and holds back its own tools against Beijing, raises questions for the durability of US commitments in Asia.

Third, a China locked in a protracted contest has reason to reduce friction with India while discouraging it from drawing closer to the US. This partly explains the recent thaw, which is tactical and reversible, as Beijing is also aware of India's reduced strategic space vis-à-vis the US.Fourth, India must prepare for periodic, bounded US-China escalation followed by renewed truces, rather than a full rupture.Finally, India should pursue differentiated de-risking towards both, reducing dependence on China for critical inputs without creating new dependencies on the US.The pageantry in Washington masked consolidation of a significant strategic shift. India would be unwise to overlook it.

Golden streak lives on: celebrating India's historic 44-year relay dominance at Asian games

Four women Kiran Pahal, MR Poovamma, Prachi Choudhary and Vithya Ramraj from different parts of the country brought India its first and only track-and-field gold medal of the 2026 Asian Games in Nagoya, Japan. They produced an exceptional run to claim the title on the concluding day of the athletics competition at the Mizuho Park Athletic Stadium. The win matters for more than the medal count, though the count helps. India finished with 24 athletics medals: one gold, nine silver and 14 bronze. The relay also restored a title India had lost at Hangzhou in 2023, when Bahrain beat the defending champions to gold. The gold changed the narrative around India's athletics campaign at Nagoya. Without it, the contingent would have gone home with a pile of silver and bronze and a lot of near-misses. Instead, India left Nagoya with a gold that kept a 44-year athletics tradition alive.

For a week, India's athletes had come close in the Asian Games, only to fumble at the finish line. Medals kept slipping away, and the prospect of ending the Asian Games without a gold in athletics for the first time in 32 years was dawning upon the country. Then Pahal, Poovamma, Choudhary and Ramraj walked onto the track at Mizuho Park Athletic Stadium in Nagoya. Pahal ran the opening leg. Despite a slightly slower start, she managed the high pressure of the opening lap well and executed a steady pass, handing over in third position. Poovamma, the senior-most in the group, drew on all her experience to judge her pace, then pulled India into contention and stayed half a step behind Qatar when Choudhary took the baton. She held India in the top two before passing the anchor.Everything the trio had built now rested on Ramraj's shoulders. Just 24 hours earlier, she had broken PT Usha's 42-year-old national record in the 400m hurdles. When she was just steps behind China's Zuo Siyu, everyone watching in India was on the edge of their seats. Ramraj passed Siyu in the final 200m, then surged clear to cross the line first in 3:29.69. Bahrain, whose team included Olympic medallist Salwa Eid Naser, took silver in 3:30.21, and China won bronze in 3:31.02."I was a bit confused around the 300m mark. Do I overtake her now, or do I wait and keep chasing her? Then I said, 'Let's just go,' and pushed myself," said Ramraj. "They have trusted me as the anchor runner. I had to live up to it, right? Also, my teammates had done such a good job. I wanted to finish well for them."The gold completed a remarkable run for the four women. Ramraj now has three medals from these Games: this gold, a silver in the mixed 4x400m relay and a bronze in the individual 400m hurdles. Choudhary had already won individual bronze in the 400m. For Poovamma, the gold was a fitting end to her third Asian Games. It joins two golds, two silvers and a bronze from earlier editions, making this her sixth Asian Games medal. The win keeps one of Indian athletics' most reliable streaks alive. India's women have now medalled in the Asian Games 4x400m relay at every edition since 1982, and this is India's seventh gold medal in the event. However, the men's 4x400m relay team couldn't match the women. Dharamveer Choudhary, Manu TS, Jay Kumar and Vishal TK clocked 3:01.61 and finished third behind Japan and Qatar, failing to defend the gold India had won at the previous edition.

The unyielding captain: a portrait of leadership that refused to yield under pressure

On the morning of September 30, flydubai flight FZ1073, a Boeing 737 MAX carrying 174 people from Dubai to Tel Aviv, sent an emergency alert shortly after take-off. By evening, every passenger was safe. That outcome owes much to one Indian: Captain Smit Machchhar.Here is what has been reported. Machchhar, 39, a Dubai-based pilot with 13 years of flying experience, was stabbed in the cockpit by his co-pilot, who stands accused of trying to seize the aircraft and crash it. The jet pitched into a dive. Bloodied and on the floor, the captain, according to the Israeli Prime Minister's Office, summoned the last of his strength to release the cockpit door. Passengers and crew rushed in, dragged the attacker from the controls and bound him.

One passenger pulled back on the controls to level the aircraft. Pilots travelling aboard then landed it at Tabuk in Saudi Arabia. An Israeli doctor on board stemmed the captain's bleeding. India's embassy in Riyadh says he is in stable condition in hospital and that it is in touch with his family. Pilots train for engine failures and storms; none trains to be hunted inside his own cockpit. Wounded and helpless, Machchhar's last deliberate act was to open a door and let help in. India should honour him formally.The consequences are already spreading. flydubai has suspended all flights to and from Israel while investigators work. Israel says it will tighten identity and security checks on every pilot flying into the country, foreign carriers included. Its Foreign Ministry has called the episode an attempted terrorist attack on Israelis, the UAE and the Abraham Accords, and the two countries' foreign ministers have pledged to cooperate against extremist elements. The motive is not yet established; Israeli media report no sign so far that the accused acted on anyone's orders. A harder question hangs over aviation itself: how are the people who fly us vetted? The UAE's aviation regulator did not respond to Reuters when asked. India needs no lessons on what a hijacked aircraft means. The seizure of Indian Airlines IC-814 in December 1999, and its flight to Kandahar, remains a national scar. Terror has no flag, faith or cause that can excuse it.Whether it is the work of an organised network or a lone fanatic, it targets the defenceless; here, that included parents travelling with young children. It must be condemned in every form and against every victim, without selectivity and without the quiet qualifiers that dress murder as grievance. Equally, we must refuse collective blame.

The collaborative horizon: how strategic partnerships are reshaping the future of tourism

Tourism has never been, and can never be, the enterprise of government alone. Every journey undertaken by a traveller is sustained by an intricate ecosystem: governments and local authorities, airlines and transport providers, hotels and homestays, tour operators and guides, technology platforms and content creators, artisans and entrepreneurs-and, above all, the communities whose lives, traditions and landscapes give a destination its distinctive character. The task of government, therefore, is not merely to promote destinations. It is to create the conditions in which this entire ecosystem can flourish.

India stands today at an important juncture in its tourism journey. The traveller of the present is increasingly seeking not merely monuments to be seen, but experiences to be remembered. Local food, living traditions, music, crafts, nature, homestays and encounters with communities are becoming as important as conventional sightseeing.This transformation demands a corresponding transformation in the way we conceive tourism.We must move from destinations to experiences, from isolated attractions to integrated ecosystems, and from government-led promotion to partnerships that bring together the capabilities of the public and private sectors and the energies of our people.The experience of recent partnerships in Indian tourism illustrates the possibilities before us. The Ministry of Tourism has increasingly engaged with industry and other stakeholders to bring together capabilities in technology, mobility, hospitality, content and digital outreach. Such partnerships are valuable not merely because they extend the reach of Incredible India, but because they connect inspiration with access, and access with experience. The example of Varanasi is particularly instructive. A destination can be presented not simply as a collection of monuments, but as a living cultural experience — combining the Ganga, classical music, heritage, Banarasi weaving, local communities and traditional hospitality. This is the direction in which tourism must now evolve.

But partnerships alone cannot create a successful tourism economy. They must be underpinned by three essential foundations: political will, public investment and people's participation.The first is political will.Tourism touches almost every dimension of public policy. A visitor's experience of a destination is determined not merely by what he or she has come to see, but by the quality of roads, airports, railways, public transport, sanitation, safety, digital connectivity, urban planning, heritage conservation and local services. Tourism, therefore, cannot remain confined within the administrative boundaries of a tourism department.It requires a whole-of-government approach.Transport, civil aviation, railways, culture, urban development, environment, skill development, commerce and digital technology must converge around a common understanding of what makes a destination successful.Political will, in this context, means recognising tourism not as an ancillary economic activity, but as an instrument of employment, enterprise, cultural preservation, regional development and international engagement.It also means having the courage to look beyond the most celebrated destinations and invest in those lesser-known places whose potential remains largely untapped.The second indispensable element is public investment. Tourism infrastructure is no longer confined to airports, highways and hotels. These remain essential, but the modern traveller also needs clean public spaces, well-maintained heritage precincts, interpretation centres, signage, pedestrian infrastructure, last-mile connectivity, digital information and trained personnel.The quality of the experience begins long before a visitor enters a monument and continues long after he leaves it.

Public investment has another important function: it creates the conditions in which private investment becomes viable.The question, therefore, should not be whether the government or the private sector ought to invest in tourism. The more meaningful question is how public investment can create the foundations upon which private capital, enterprise and innovation can build.A well-connected destination attracts hotels.A well-preserved heritage precinct attracts experiences.A vibrant local economy attracts entrepreneurs.And an ecosystem in which these elements reinforce one another creates sustainable tourism.Yet there is a third element without which neither political will nor public investment can fulfil its promise: people's participation.The true custodians of a destination are its people.A village does not become attractive merely because it possesses a beautiful landscape. Its identity resides in its traditions, its cuisine, its crafts, its stories, its music and the manner in which its people welcome a visitor. If tourism is to be genuinely inclusive, the local community must not merely be an object of tourism; it must become its principal participant and beneficiary.

Homestays, local cuisine, handicrafts, folk performances, community guides and locally managed experiences can transform tourism from an external economic activity into a source of local prosperity.Recent initiatives to strengthen the digital capabilities of homestay hosts, give greater visibility to lesser-known destinations and connect unexplored villages with bookable homestays demonstrate the possibilities of this approach.The objective must be to ensure that when a destination enters the imagination of the traveller, the economic opportunity created by that attention reaches the people who give the destination its identity. A young person in a village should be able to become a guide, entrepreneur, photographer or hospitality professional.A woman-led enterprise should be able to take local food or handicrafts to a national and international market.An artisan should be able to derive a dignified livelihood from the knowledge inherited from generations before him.That is when tourism becomes an instrument of inclusive development.

Payment firms seek bigger UPI MDR share

New Delhi: Payment aggregators (PA) are negotiating with their sponsor banks for a larger share of the acquiring bank's cut of the new merchant discount rate (MDR) on UPI transactions, with discussions centred on retaining 50-80% of the bank's share, people aware of the matter said.The negotiations are expected to be completed before the new MDR takes effect on October 15. Under the framework notified by the government and the National Payments Corporation of India (NPCI), merchants will pay an MDR of 0.4% on UPI transactions above Rs 2,000. Of this, 0.12% accrues to the acquiring bank, while the PA's share has to be carved out of the bank's portion.

This means a Rs 10,000 UPI transaction would generate Rs 40 in MDR, of which the acquiring bank would receive Rs 12. At the rates being negotiated, the PA could retain Rs 6-9.60 of this amount. The framework does not provide for a separate, direct share of the MDR for payment aggregators, prompting them to negotiate individually with banks.The outcome of these negotiations is likely to depend on the business PAs bring to banks. Aggregators with large transaction volumes, sizeable merchant floats and deeper technology relationships with banks are expected to have greater bargaining power, a senior executive at a payment aggregator said. PAs that also provide payment-processing technology to their sponsor banks could command the upper end of the 50-80% range, people aware of the discussions said. The size and profile of a PA's merchant base will also determine how much it can earn. Large e-commerce merchants selling higher-value products generate more transactions above the Rs 2,000 threshold and therefore more MDR income, the executive said. At the same time, categories such as railways, telecom, insurance and fuel, where the charge is a flat Rs 5 per transaction, can provide aggregators with a more predictable stream of fee income. The new revenue arrangement is therefore likely to intensify competition among large PAs such as Razorpay, Cashfree, PayU and Pine Labs, while smaller players could have less room to negotiate with banks. PAs already follow a similar model for card payments, where larger players are able to secure better commercial terms from acquiring banks because of the volumes they bring."The larger aggregators have always had that advantage, even in credit cards," said an executive at another large payment aggregator.

However, the negotiations could eventually lead to a larger structural change in the UPI ecosystem. Some payment aggregators are considering approaching NPCI to seek direct membership as acquirers, which would potentially allow them to retain the entire 0.12% acquiring-bank share rather than splitting it with a sponsor bank, an executive at a payment aggregator said

Payment service providers are pursuing an increased allocation of the Unified Payments Interface merchant discount rate

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Smartphone Export Surge Encounters a Significant Apple-Related Challenge

New Delhi: Five years of the government's production-linked incentive (PLI) scheme have certainly transformed the country into a major smartphone export base, but almost 87% of the increase in smartphone exports during the period has come from Apple.Smartphone exports surged from $5.5 billion in FY22 to $29.36 billion in FY26, but the non-Apple portion rose only 74%, from about $4.2 billion to $7.4 billion. Apple's iPhone exports, in contrast, jumped nearly 17-fold from about $1.25 billion to around $22 billion, making the company the overwhelming driver of the export surge.That Apple-led expansion has, in turn, transformed the broader electronics export basket, although at a different pace. Electronics exports rose from $23.55 billion in FY23 to $29.12 billion in FY24 and $38.6 billion in FY25, before reaching about $48 billion in FY26, more than doubling in three years. Smartphones have accounted for an increasingly large share of this basket, rising from about 47% of electronics exports in FY23 to 61% in FY26. The contrast is significant: while Apple has driven a spectacular expansion in one product category, the wider electronics ecosystem has been growing at a slower, more incremental pace. The scale of Apple's rise becomes clearer when the five-year PLI period is viewed as a whole. India added nearly $24 billion to its annual smartphone exports between FY22 and FY26. Apple alone added about $20.75 billion, while all other manufacturers together contributed roughly $3.1 billion. As a result, Apple's share of smartphone exports has risen sharply during the period, from about 23% in FY22 to more than 75% in FY26. The shift reflects the rapid expansion of Apple's contract manufacturing base in India and the country's growing role as an export hub for iPhones. The wider electronics industry, meanwhile, has been building out around that growth. Telecom equipment, electronic components, printed circuit boards, chargers, photovoltaic cells and other products have contributed to the expansion of the export basket. But the pace has been markedly different from smartphones. While the value of electronics exports more than doubled between FY23 and FY26, the smartphone segment alone increased more than fivefold between FY22 and FY26. The result is that the headline growth in electronics exports increasingly reflects the rise of mobile phones, even as a broader manufacturing ecosystem begins to take shape. The Apple effect has become even more pronounced after the PLI scheme ended in March. In the first five months of FY27, smartphone exports rose 36% year-on-year to $15.96 billion, while Apple's exports jumped 47% to $13.2 billion. Apple therefore accounted

for about 82% of smartphone exports during April-August, leaving roughly $2.8 billion for all other manufacturers. More strikingly, 98% of the incremental increase in smartphone exports during the period came from Apple. Electronics exports rose 34% to $26.66 billion in the same period, with Apple's iPhone shipments accounting for about half of the total. The numbers point to two different outcomes from the electronics push. The PLI scheme has clearly created scale in mobile-phone manufacturing, attracted global companies and established smartphones as a major export engine. But the extraordinary increase in smartphone exports has been concentrated overwhelmingly in one company, while the expansion of the wider electronics base has been more gradual. For turning the manufacturing scale into a deeper export ecosystem, the next phase will have to move beyond final assembly and into components and sub-assemblies.The government has already begun that shift with the Mobile Phone Manufacturing Scheme (MPMS), introduced after the PLI programme, with a greater focus on strengthening the domestic value chain. Alongside it, the Electronics Component Manufacturing Scheme (ECMS) is aimed at building capacity in displays, camera modules, printed circuit boards, passive components and other critical parts.

ICICI Life appoints Mishra as MD & CEO

New Delhi: ICICI Life Insurance has once again turned to its parent group to fill its top job, naming Siddhartha Mishra, a group veteran who currently heads digital channels at ICICI Bank, as its next managing director and chief executive.

In an exchange filing, the insurer said its board had approved Anup Bagchi's resignation as MD & CEO with effect from October 13. Mishra will take over from October 14, or the date of receipt of approval from the Insurance Regulatory and Development Authority of India (Irdai), whichever is later, for a five-year term. The board has also approved Mishra's appointment as chief operating officer from October 6, paving the way for a smooth leadership transition. A career ICICI banker, Mishra currently heads digital channels and partnerships, voice channel, customer service, NRI and IFIG groups at ICICI Bank. His elevation continues a succession pattern that has seen the life insurer's top job pass among senior executives with deep roots in the banking group. From Shikha Sharma and Sandeep Bakshi to NS Kannan and Bagchi, ICICI Life has consistently looked within the group for leadership. Mishra's appointment is in keeping with this established model. However, the timing makes the transition particularly consequential, with the insurance industry bracing for the impact of Irdai's proposed reforms, which seek to reshape commission structures and distribution economics, potentially forcing insurers to reassess established product strategies and distribution models. Irdai last week proposed reintroducing hard caps on commissions based on the segment, line of business, distribution channel, product complexity and the effort involved in selling and servicing policies. The consultation paper proposes more than 30 product- and channel-specific commission caps, including a reduction in commissions on term insurance and savings plans. For ICICI Life, which derives nearly a third of its business from the bancassurance channel, the proposed changes could accelerate the need to diversify its distribution mix further. The draft appears to favour agency-led distribution over bancassurance, brokers and web aggregators in certain product categories. The proposed commission range for life insurance agents is 6.25-25% of first-year premiums, compared with 5-20% for other channels, including brokers, bancassurance and web aggregators. Renewal commissions have also been recalibrated in favour of agency channels.

ICICI Life's agency channel, however, accounted for a lower share of business in FY26 than in the previous year, with its contribution falling to 25.3% from 28.9% in FY25. Direct business also declined to 13.4% from 14.4% during the period. Mishra's experience in digital channels, therefore, could be relevant as the insurer looks to broaden its distribution base Mishra will also need to sustain growth amid intensifying competition. Under Bagchi's leadership, ICICI Life crossed ₹10,000 crore in annualised premium equivalent (APE) for the first time in FY25, with APE growing 15% year-on-year to ₹10,407 crore and profit after tax rising nearly 40% to ₹1,189 crore. In FY26, ICICI Life's total premium income, including new business and renewals, grew 9% to ₹53,120 crore , slower than HDFC LIfe Insurance's 12% growth and 14.6% at SBI Life Insurance.

Adani's Rs 2.6-lakh-crore investments underway

Siliguri: Adani Group has completed or is executing investments worth about Rs 2.6 lakh crore in Maharashtra, or 43% of the more than Rs 6 lakh crore it has committed to the state, Pranav Adani, director, Adani Enterprises, said on Friday. The group's investment commitments, made at the World Economic Forum in Davos and through partnerships with the state government, span sectors across critical and upcoming sectors like energy, aviation and aero-districts, urban regeneration, data centres and coal gasification. "Our recent commitments reflect a quantum leap in nature, scale and conviction – at a time when the state aims to be a one-trillion-dollar economy by 2030, with the Mumbai Metropolitan Region playing a central role," Adani said at the launch of the Invest Maharashtra event in Mumbai. Among the group's key projects is Navi Mumbai International Airport, which Adani said is being developed

as a major infrastructure asset for the Mumbai Metropolitan Region and will eventually be capable of handling more than 90 million passengers annually. The group also operates Mumbai's Chhatrapati Shivaji Maharaj International Airport and is developing integrated business and hospitality districts around the two aviation gateways.

Through Adani Electricity Mumbai, the group supplies power to more than 3 million homes and establishments across Mumbai, with more than 60% of its power supply sourced from renewable energy, Adani said.

he group is also undertaking the Dharavi Redevelopment Project, which Adani described as one of the most ambitious urban transformation initiatives in modern history.Describing Maharashtra as a key driver of India's economic growth, Adani said, "If India is the rocket, Maharashtra is the launchpad. And if Maharashtra is the launchpad, then Mumbai – Aamchi Mumbai – is its financial fuel. It is where the money moves."

RBI names Sudhakar Malli Executive Director to oversee Department of Supervision

Mumbai: Malli was serving as Chief General Manager-in-Charge of the RBI's Department of Supervision before taking up the new role. As Executive Director, he will oversee the Department of Supervision (Supervisory Assessment).

Malli has around three decades of experience as a career central banker, with extensive exposure to the supervision of banks, non-banking financial companies (NBFCs) and co-operative banks. His supervisory experience in these areas spans more than two and a half decades. He has also worked in overseas jurisdictions, where he has around five years of supervisory experience. Alongside his supervisory responsibilities, Malli has worked in the area of Currency Management, the RBI said.His appointment places

him in charge of the supervisory assessment function within the Department of Supervision, building on his long experience in financial-sector oversight.New role in RBI's Department of SupervisionThe RBI's Department of Supervision handles supervisory functions relating to regulated entities. Malli's new assignment will specifically cover the supervisory assessment function, according to the central bank.Malli holds a B.Tech degree in Mechanical Engineering and is a Certified Associate of the Indian Institute of Bankers (CAIIB). His appointment is part of the RBI's senior leadership structure, following his tenure as Chief General Manager-in-Charge of the Department of Supervision.

The central bank did not provide further details about specific responsibilities or priorities for Malli in his new position beyond stating that he will look after the Department of Supervision (Supervisory Assessment).

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Half of UK wants to rejoin EU and backing it could drive up Labour vote, megapoll finds

UK: Andy Burnham's personal preference to rejoin the European Union after the next election is supported by almost half of all voters, a new megapoll has found, although cabinet ministers concerned about reopening Brexit divides are privately urging him to proceed with caution.

The poll by the Messina Group (TMG) found that renegotiating the UK's relationship with the EU could boost Labour's vote share by as much as seven points, if the prime minister offered a fresh referendum in which he campaigned to re-enter the bloc.

Almost a third of voters said an in-out referendum would be needed first, while more than one in six felt that a general election mandate would be sufficient, and the same proportion thought parliament could make the decision.

The overall findings will bolster the case of those inside Downing Street who want to promise at the next election that Labour would at least negotiate over re-entry, which the prime minister has said he wants to see "in his lifetime".

Burnham used his first Labour conference speech as leader on Tuesday to announce a review of the options for Britain's future relationship with Europe, and subsequently added that these should include rejoining entirely.

However, there are nerves among some Labour MPs, especially those with constituencies that voted for Brexit, that even testing out public support for the move would be fraught with political risk and a potential boost to Reform.

Two-thirds of cabinet ministers, including Burnham himself, his first secretary, Louise Haigh, chancellor, John Healey, and foreign secretary, Ed Miliband, represent seats that backed Brexit, and previously said they would respect the 2016 vote. However, public opinion has shifted.

Before Burnham's speech, several ministers had publicly cautioned against the move. Lucy Powell, Labour's deputy leader, said while the defence and security relationship could be better, going beyond EU reset plans inherited from Keir Starmer was "not possible nor desirable".

The trade secretary, Jonathan Reynolds, said "constitutional questions" around Britain's EU relationship were causing uncertainty for business. The home secretary, Shabana Mahmood, said rejoining was "not a simple, straightforward thing" and the costs might be unacceptable.

Downing Street's strategy appears to be to put the focus on those who made big promises on Brexit but then failed to deliver, rather than accusing those who voted to leave the EU of making the wrong decision. But the government's shift in position has caused some anxiety among Burnham's team.

One cabinet minister told the Guardian: "Brexit clearly hasn't worked and the promises made haven't been kept so Andy is right to open up the question of what the future relationship looks like. But he definitely needs to proceed with caution because we don't want to restoke division".

A second said: "Andy is right to say we need some clarity around our long-term relationship. Security and trade cooperation are higher up the agenda than they were 10 years ago. But whether that adds up to a real desire for big change in the population I don't know. My constituents will be cautious."

A third added: "There are obviously different views across cabinet about it, but the Made in Europe agenda means we do need to talk to the EU about what relationship they want with us long term, as what they are currently proposing is very challenging."

Another cabinet source said: "There's an awareness among a number of cabinet ministers with leave voting seats that opinions are going to differ and the arguments about the future will have to be carefully made about the national interest."

Cyclospora found at Mexican farm linked to lettuce outbreak, FDA says

America: The Food and Drug Administration said on Friday its inspectors had detected cyclospora at the Mexican farm blamed for the largest foodborne illness outbreak of the parasite in US history.

FDA inspectors said Friday they found cyclospora in two places: a wastewater tank and a drainage ditch used for lettuce cultivation. They said it was unclear how the lettuce became infected.

The agency's announcement comes less than a month after the US Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) declared an end to the multi-state outbreak, which infected nearly 13,000 people across 21 states and led to 570 hospitalizations and two deaths.

It also follows an announcement from regulators at Mexico's own food safety authority, which conducted its own investigation and said

cyclospora was not detected in the lettuce or water at the facility. That conclusion came days after the FDA was forced to retract a faulty test result that had incorrectly identified cyclospora in a sample of lettuce from Taylor Farms collected at the border.

The FDA announcement comes more than six weeks after the agency sent its investigators to the farm in Guanajuato. The visit was the agency's first time there in more than seven years following a steep drop in international food safety inspections after the Covid pandemic.

While it's unclear how the contamination took place, the FDA claimed the samples provide "strong epidemiological data" linking the outbreak to the Taylor Farms site.

In a separate statement, Taylor Farms attributed the contamination cited by FDA to an independent grower "who is no longer part of our supplier program".

"Our facility remains closed in central Mexico as we work with our research team to implement enhanced safety protocols from the field to the facility," the company said.

Cyclospora is a microscopic parasite that commonly causes watery diarrhea "with frequent and sometimes explosive bowel movements", according to the CDC. Other symptoms included loss of appetite and weight, stomach cramps, bloating and increased digestive gas.

The illness, called cyclosporiasis, is less common than foodborne illnesses caused by other germs, including salmonella and E coli.

Kanye West's sold-out Russia concerts cancelled, organisers confirm

Kanya: Two sold-out shows that Kanye West was due to play in Russia have been cancelled after weeks of confusion, organisers have confirmed.

The US rapper, who now goes by the name Ye, had been due to perform at the Gazprom Arena in St Petersburg on 10 and 11 October.

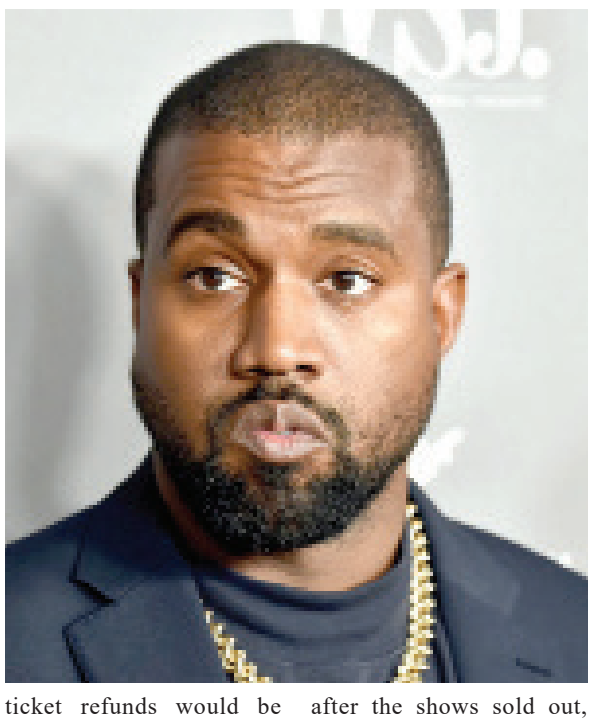
In a post shared on the messaging app Telegram on Thursday, the organiser Say Agency said the shows would no longer go ahead.

"Friends, it is with sincere regret that we inform you that the Ye concerts in St Petersburg on the scheduled dates will not be able to take place," the Moscow-based agency wrote.

"In the near future, we will reach out to you with an official statement regarding the status of the project and future plans.

"Say Agency is very grateful to everyone who has been by our side these past month and a half: supporting us, worrying, and, like us, waiting for these concerts with all their hearts. We remain in touch and continue to work."

The agency added that



ticket refunds would be available from Monday 12 October, with details "about the rules and conditions for refunds" to follow.

There have been weeks of confusion over the status of the shows. Gazprom Arena initially posted enthusiastically about the concerts on social media, calling Ye "the most influential musical artist of our time". Then in August, after the shows sold out, it said it had not signed an agreement to lease the stadium to the concert promoters, so the gig could not take place on its site.

The arena stressed that it "was not and is not" responsible for the booking and acknowledged that it had received complaints about the shows.

The Russian foreign ministry spokesperson, Maria Zakharova, previously called the planned shows unacceptable due to Ye's "glorification" of Hitler.

A politician, Nikolay Novichkov, called for the musician to be investigated for praising Hitler and said the concerts should be cancelled unless he publicly declared "moral support for Russia and the special military operation", the approved term for the war in Ukraine.

Last year Ye started selling swastika T-shirts and released a song called Heil Hitler.

In January, he took out a full-page advert in the Wall Street Journal to apologise, titled: "To Those I've Hurt."

He wrote: "I am not a Nazi or an antisemite. I love Jewish people."

The rapper said his bipolar disorder led him to fall into "a four-month-long, manic episode of psychotic, paranoid and impulsive behaviour that destroyed my life".

Ye's plan to play in Russia – following in the footsteps of Paul Oakenfold, DaBaby, Jason Derulo and Akon – flouts sweeping sanctions and calls for culture boycotts after the country invaded Ukraine in 2022.

In April, Ye's show in France was postponed after he was denied a UK visa, which led to the cancellation of his headline appearances at London's Wireless festival, amid the backlash after his antisemitic remarks.

Ye had been due to perform at the Pulse of Gaia festival at the RCF Arena in Reggio Emilia in July but the city's prefect, Salvatore Angieri, stopped the gigs after "concerns" were raised by the local Jewish community.

Despite the controversy, fans have been undeterred from seeing Ye live when concerts have been allowed to proceed.

His first major concert in the US for more than five years was held in Los Angeles in April. He has also performed to vast audiences in Turkey, the Netherlands, Georgia, Albania, Portugal and Kazakhstan, with more dates planned for the US and Indonesia. The shows come in support of his 12th solo album, Bully, released in March

South African leader urges men to speak up on gender-based violence after series of killings

South Africa: South Africa's president has called on men to take more responsibility for violence against women as he announced measures to tackle the problem, amid anger at authorities over a recent wave of murders.

Cyril Ramaphosa acknowledged that not enough had been done to protect women. He said police would be reviewing unsolved murders, attempted murders and serious sexual offences against women and children, as well as producing a funded plan to reduce the forensic backlog for such cases, both within 60 days.

In a televised speech on Tuesday night, the president said local governments would have five months to address issues that compromised women's safety, from broken streetlights to overgrown public spaces and abandoned buildings. He added that he had tasked five ministers to come up with a plan within 60 days to reduce alcohol-fuelled violence. "Alcohol does not cause gender-based violence and it can never excuse it. Responsibility always lies with the perpetrator," Ramaphosa said. "But harmful alcohol use is a significant aggravating factor in interpersonal violence and it must be addressed as part of our wider prevention effort.

"Women should not have to live in fear because government has failed to repair a light, clear a public space, process evidence or enforce a law."

South Africa has been gripped by grief and fury after the discovery of 11 women's bodies dumped across Ekurhuleni, the municipality adjoining Johannesburg to the east, since 15 July. Eight of the women were found in the last three weeks, including Elizabeth "Tsontso" Moselakgomo, who was discovered on 12 September after she went missing when she went for a run after work.

Ramaphosa said suspects had been arrested in connection with three of the killings and that the other cases would not be left to go cold. He added that police had not found evidence that a serial killer was responsible for all 11 killings, but that all possibilities were still being investigated.

He directly addressed South African men, urging them to challenge relatives, friends and colleagues who harassed, humiliated or abused women. "It is time for good men to stop being silent men," he said.

"For too long, gender-based violence has been treated as a woman's problem to solve. Women march, the women of our country organise, they speak out, they protest, they confront and they comfort survivors," Ramaphosa said.

"Women change their routes home. Avoid going out at night and warn one another about dangerous places and dangerous men. We have placed the burden of male violence on women. That must change."

Activists expressed their frustration that solid policy actions had not been taken years ago and scepticism that the measures Ramaphosa had announced would work. Shenilla Mohamed, the executive director of Amnesty International South Africa, said: "These are not new issues and as a country we have been talking about ways to tackle the high numbers of [gender-based violence and femicide], especially since 2019 when women took to the streets to protest, and yet here we are again in the face of continued attacks against women. "Amnesty International South Africa also notes the timelines put in place by the president, but this will only mean something if it results in action, and if there are consequences for inaction."

Mpiwa Mangwiro-Tsanga and Bafana Khumalo, of Sonke Gender Justice, an NGO, said: "Our concern … is that the response remains heavily weighted towards what happens after violence has already occurred."

They added: "Investigating unresolved cases, processing forensic evidence and repairing unsafe public spaces are necessary, but they do not constitute a comprehensive prevention strategy. It is concerning that the president is asking municipalities to do what is actually their mandate and yet they do not deliver on these."

MLB rescinds idea to host baseball game in national park after backlash

Washington: Major League Baseball (MLB) leadership is no longer considering holding a game inside a national park, according to a letter commissioner Robert Manfred sent to officials in Teton county, Wyoming, on Thursday in what could be the league's biggest swing-and-a-miss off the diamond.

On 26 September, the Washington Post reported that MLB had reached out to the White House about staging a one-day game at Grand Teton national park in Wyoming. Teton county describes itself as a "a year-round resort community" and sits within the Jackson Hole valley. It's also a habitat for grizzly bears, osprey, bison and more.

News of MLB's outreach to the federal government quickly sparked concern about the impact that erecting a field and the infrastructure to hold spectators could have on the natural landscape and habitat of scores of wildlife that call the 310,000-acre (125,500-hectare) park home.

In the letter, Manfred noted that MLB had held games at places like the Fort Bragg military base in North Carolina and the nation's oldest Negro Leagues stadium in Birmingham, Alabama. He added that MLB staff had been doing their due diligence to see whether a game at Grand Teton was possible and to evaluate the potential environmental impact.

"Since the story was reported, it has become clear that the local community does not want us to continue Grand Teton national park as a potential site," Manfred wrote.

The outrage over the possible MLB game comes as national parks across the US struggle under funding cuts, staffing shortages and consistent overcrowding.

Six face masks to wear before a gathering for new

Celebratory occasions fundamentally revolve around donning formal attire, assembling with loved ones and acquaintances, and presenting oneself in an optimal manner, yet achieving that coveted natural glow requires more than just outward preparation. Although maintaining a consistent, daily skincare regimen proves essential yearround to protect the skin barrier, thoughtfully incorporating a targeted facial mask can serve as an exceptionally beneficial supplementary treatment precisely when the skin requires additional attention, hydration, or revitalization prior to a significant occasion. Regardless of whether the primary concern involves persistent dehydration, a lackluster or dull appearance, sebum overproduction, or a noticeably fatigued complexion brought on by stress and busy schedules, an appropriately selected facial mask possesses the extraordinary capacity to instantly enhance skin luminosity, smooth uneven texture, and impart a deeply rejuvenated aesthetic that radiates confidence.

Face masks are particularly useful before festive occasions because many formulas are designed to deliver concentrated skincare benefits in a short amount of time. Hydrating masks can help replenish moisture, while brightening formulas can make dull skin look more radiant. Clay-based masks, meanwhile, can help absorb excess oil and leave the skin feeling cleaner and refreshed. However, a pre-event mask should not be an experiment with a completely new or potentially irritating product. Skin can react differently to active ingredients, and redness or irritation is the last thing anyone wants before an important celebration. It is better to choose a formula suited to the skin type and use it well before the event to understand how the skin responds. Hydrating face masks for dry, tired-looking skin

Festive preparations, changing weather, air conditioning and makeup can sometimes leave the skin feeling dry or tight. A hydrating face mask can be useful when the complexion needs an instant moisture boost.

Look for ingredients such as hyaluronic acid, glycerin, aloe vera, ceramides and nourishing plant oils. These ingredients can help support the skin's moisture barrier and make the complexion appear smoother and more supple.

A hydrating mask is also a good option before makeup because well-moisturised skin can provide a smoother base for foundation, skin tints and concealer. Brightening masks for a dull complexion

Long days filled with endless tasks, chronic lack of sleep, and constant exposure to harsh environmental stressors—such as urban pollution, fluctuating temperatures, and indoor heating—can dramatically take a toll on your complexion, making the skin appear chronically tired, uneven in tone, and utterly lackluster. To counteract these cumulative effects and instantly restore a vibrant, healthy-looking vitality before a major festive occasion, incorporating a targeted brightening face mask into your regimen can work wonders to help revive the appearance of dull skin by gently exfoliating dead surface cells, fading signs of fatigue, and infusing the complexion with a luminous, radiant energy. Ingredients such as vitamin C derivatives, niacinamide, liquorice extract and certain gentle exfoliating acids are commonly found in brightening skincare. These can help improve the appearance of uneven tone and give the complexion a more refreshed look with regular use. For a pre-event routine, avoid using a strong exfoliating or peeling mask for the first time immediately before stepping out. Gentle formulas are a safer choice when the goal is a fresh-looking complexion without unnecessary irritation.

Clay masks for oily and combination skin

For oily and combination skin, a clay mask can be particularly useful before an occasion. Ingredients such as kaolin and bentonite are known for their ability to absorb excess oil from the skin. A clay mask can leave the complexion feeling clean and less greasy, which can be helpful when makeup needs to stay comfortable for several hours. However, leaving a clay mask on for longer than recommended does not necessarily make it more effective. Overuse can leave the skin feeling dry or tight. Those with combination skin can also consider applying the mask only to oilier areas such as the forehead, nose and chin instead of covering the entire face. Exfoliating masks for smoother-looking skin

If rough texture is the concern, a gentle exfoliating mask can help remove dead skin cells from the surface and leave the complexion looking smoother.

Ingredients such as lactic acid, mandelic acid and fruit enzymes are often used in exfoliating products. When used correctly, they can help improve the appearance of uneven texture and dullness.

These masks need a little more caution before an event. Strong exfoliation can sometimes cause dryness, sensitivity or redness, particularly on sensitive skin. It is therefore better to use a familiar, gentle formula rather than trying a powerful peel just before a celebration. Sheet masks for a quick hydration boost

Sheet masks are among the easiest options when there is little time for an elaborate skincare routine. They are available in formulas designed for hydration, soothing, brightening and other skincare concerns.

A sheet mask containing hyaluronic acid, aloe vera, glycerin or other hydrating ingredients can give the skin a temporarily plumper and fresher appearance. They can be particularly convenient before makeup, provided the remaining serum is allowed to absorb and does not leave the skin excessively sticky. Overnight masks for long-lasting hydration

For those individuals with demanding schedules who prefer to streamline their preparation routine by treating their skin the night before a big event, incorporating a specialized overnight mask into their evening regimen can serve as an exceptionally convenient and effective option. These innovative leave-on formulas are expertly designed and scientifically formulated to provide continuous, prolonged hydration and intensive nourishment while the body rests through the night, allowing active ingredients to penetrate deeply without the hassle of rinsing. By working in tandem with the skin's natural nocturnal regeneration cycle—when cell turnover and repair processes are operating at their peak—these rich treatments lock in essential moisture, repair environmental damage accumulated throughout the day, and wake you up to a remarkably supple, plump, and glowing complexion that significantly reduces the time and effort needed for morning touch-ups.

An overnight mask can be particularly helpful for dry skin. Apply it as the final step of the evening skincare routine, unless the product instructions recommend a different method.

How to use a face mask before a festive event

The key to unlocking the full potential and getting the most transformative results from a face mask lies in intentionally choosing a formula that specifically aligns with your unique skin's current needs rather than simply grabbing the most intensive or trendy product on the shelf. To maximize efficacy and protect your delicate skin barrier, you should always begin by thoroughly cleansing the skin to remove impurities and unclog pores, then evenly apply the mask strictly according to the product manufacturer's instructions while carefully avoiding leaving it on longer than recommended to prevent irritation. Once the treatment time has elapsed and the product has been gently rinsed or removed, it is vital to follow up immediately with a nourishing moisturizer to lock in active ingredients and help maintain long-lasting hydration. Finally, if the mask session is being incorporated into your daytime routine, applying a broad-spectrum sunscreen should always remain an essential and non-negotiable concluding step of your regimen to shield your newly refreshed skin from harmful UV rays and premature aging.

Most importantly, avoid introducing multiple new active skincare products immediately before an event. A simple routine with a familiar face mask, moisturiser and sunscreen can be enough to help the skin look fresh and comfortable.

As the festive season rapidly approaches and social calendars fill up with vibrant gatherings, celebrations, and reunions, ensuring that your skin looks its absolute best becomes a priority, making a well-chosen face mask an exceptionally easy yet transformative addition to your regular skincare routine. Whether the primary goal is intense hydration to combat dry winter air, restoring a natural brightness to dull winter complexions, managing excess oil control for a balanced T-zone, or achieving a smoother-looking skin texture for seamless makeup application, choosing the right formula tailored to your specific skin type can help create an impeccably fresh, velvety canvas for festive makeup without overwhelming or irritating the skin barrier. Furthermore, dedicating even just ten to fifteen minutes to this restorative self-care ritual not only delivers a concentrated infusion of active ingredients—ranging from hyaluronic acid and Vitamin C to soothing botanical extracts and gentle clays—but also provides a much-needed moment of relaxation amidst the bustling holiday rush, ultimately empowering you to step out with confidence and radiate an effortless, healthy glow all season long.

If you want your garden to bloom by January, plant these flowers in October

Do not postpone your vital garden preparation until the cold and unforgiving winter season officially commences and locks the soil in frost; instead, seize the optimal window of opportunity available right now by taking proactive action during the autumn months to ensure your outdoor space remains vibrant and full of life. To help you achieve a stunning and resilient landscape, the following eight carefully selected flowers—ranging from hardy perennials to charming cool-weather annuals—may be successfully cultivated through strategic October sowing, allowing them to establish strong root systems in the cooling ground so they can reward your early dedication with breathtaking blooms that will miraculously brighten and transform your winter garden into an enchanting oasis of color when everything else appears dormant.

October marks an exceptionally opportune time to get your vibrant winter garden started across many diverse regions of India as the oppressive summer heat finally breaks, allowing temperatures to become comfortably crisp and welcoming for a wide array of botanical life. As the climate transitions into a milder phase, several hardy cool-season flowers—ranging from cheerful marigolds and delicate pansies to brilliant snapdragons and petunias—can be successfully sown directly into beds or containers and grown to perfection through the cooler winter months ahead. By ensuring your green spaces receive the right balance of gentle sunlight, well-draining nutrient-rich soil, and consistent, measured watering practices, some of these resilient varieties can remarkably start bursting into colorful blooms within just a few short weeks, while others may take a little longer to establish robust root systems before putting on a spectacular, long-lasting floral display that will animate your garden all season long. Calendula

Calendula stands out as one of the most popular and reliable winter flowers for Indian gardens, beloved for its exceptional resilience and cheerful, daisy-like blossoms that effortlessly add vibrant shades of sunny yellow, rich orange, and creamy

white to both decorative patio pots and traditional garden beds alike. To help these hardy beauties thrive and put on a continuous, eye-catching display throughout the cooler months, the plant generally prefers receiving plenty of direct sunlight each day paired with loose, fertile, and exceptionally well-draining soil to prevent waterlogging and encourage robust, healthy growth from root to tip.

Petunia

Petunias remain an absolute favorite choice for winter gardens across India, especially for urban spaces like sunny balconies, expansive terraces, and charming window boxes where their cascading growth habit can be displayed to maximum aesthetic advantage. Their stunning, trumpet-shaped flowers come in an astonishing array of vibrant colors—ranging from deep purples and rich pinks to striking bi-colors and pristine whites—that instantly elevate any outdoor container arrangement. Starting these versatile plants in October proves to be an ideal gardening strategy, as it provides the seedlings with ample time to establish robust root systems and sturdy foliage before the arrival of peak winter conditions, ensuring a profusion of continuous blooms that will defy the cold and bring cheerful life to your home throughout the cooler months.

Snapdragon

Snapdragons, scientifically known as Antirrhinum majus, are widely celebrated and instantly recognizable in horticulture for their magnificent, architectural tall flower spikes and an exceptionally vibrant palette of rich colors that span everything from soft pastel pinks and sunny yellows to dramatic crimson reds and deep burgundies. Because they naturally thrive and flourish in crisp, cooler temperatures rather than the scorching heat of the Indian plains during summer, they make a genuinely striking, vertical addition to any winter flower bed or decorative container arrangement, providing wonderful structural contrast alongside mounding and cascading companion plants. To cultivate these botanical stunners successfully and encourage an abundant, long-lasting floral display, you should carefully select a bright, sunny location where they can absorb at least six hours of direct sunlight daily, while simultaneously exercising caution with your irrigation schedule to ensure you avoid keeping the soil constantly soggy, as their sensitive root systems demand well-draining, fertile earth to prevent fungal issues and promote vigorous, healthy growth throughout the entire winter season. Sweet Pea

Sweet peas are a good choice if you want flowers along a trellis, railing or support. They are cool-season plants and can produce fragrant blooms in suitable conditions. Since they are climbers, provide support as the plants grow. Dianthus

Dianthus can bring plenty of colour to a winter garden. The flowers are available in shades such as pink, red and white, and many varieties have a pleasant fragrance. They do well in sunlight and prefer soil that drains easily. Alyssum

If you want a low-growing flowering plant, consider alyssum. Its tiny flowers can form a carpet-like display and are also useful for filling gaps between larger plants. Some varieties are pleasantly fragrant. Phlox

Phlox is another colourful option for the cool season. Its small flowers can create a bright display when planted in groups. It generally performs well with good sunlight and regular but controlled watering. Marigold

Marigolds are among the most familiar flowering plants in Indian homes. They are relatively easy to grow and can brighten up balconies, terraces and garden beds. Depending on the variety and local conditions, October-sown plants can provide flowers during the winter season.

Which Pressure Cooker Is Safer for Regular Cooking: Aluminum or Stainless Steel

The decision between an aluminium and stainless steel pressure cooker extends beyond mere cost and aesthetic considerations. When selecting a pressure cooker suitable for regular Indian culinary applications, one must evaluate material longevity, cooking practices, upkeep requirements, food interaction properties, and anticipated durability. Aluminium cookers provide the advantages of reduced weight, rapid heat distribution, and economical pricing, whereas stainless steel variants deliver superior structural integrity and enhanced protection against oxidation and discoloration. For daily cooking, stainless steel is generally the better choice for users who prioritise durability, easier maintenance and long-term use. Aluminium pressure cookers remain a practical option for buyers looking for a lightweight and economical cooker that heats quickly. Choose an aluminium pressure cooker if: You want a lightweight pressure cooker. You are shopping on a tighter budget. You want quick heat distribution. You prefer an easy-to-handle cooker. You mainly cook everyday staples such as rice, dal and vegetables.

Choose a stainless steel pressure cooker if: You want better durability. You plan to use the cooker every day for several years. You want better resistance to corrosion and staining. You cook acidic foods regularly. You prefer a premium, easier-to-maintain finish. A stainless steel pressure cooker is generally the better long-term choice for daily cooking because of its durability, corrosion resistance and versatility. An aluminium pressure cooker can still be a good option for buyers who prioritise affordability, lighter weight and fast heating.

How does an aluminium pressure cooker work?

Aluminium pressure cookers use a lightweight metal body that conducts heat efficiently. Once the lid is locked and pressure builds inside the cooker, food cooks at a higher temperature than it would in an open pot, reducing cooking time. One of the biggest advantages of aluminium is its low weight. This makes the cooker easier to move, wash and handle, particularly when it is filled with food and water. Aluminium pressure cookers are also generally more affordable than stainless steel alternatives, making them popular for basic everyday cooking.

Stainless steel pressure cookers use a steel body designed to withstand repeated heating, pressure cycles and everyday kitchen use. Stainless steel is heavier than aluminium but generally provides greater resistance to corrosion, staining and physical wear.

Many stainless steel pressure cookers also feature a thicker or multi-layered base designed to improve heat distribution. This can help reduce hot spots while cooking and make the cooker suitable for a wider range of foods.

The combination of durability and resistance to corrosion makes stainless steel particularly attractive for households that use a pressure cooker every day.

Which is safer for daily cooking?

Both aluminium and stainless steel pressure cookers can be used safely for daily cooking when they are manufactured to applicable safety standards and

used correctly. The material itself is only one part of pressure-cooker safety. The quality of the lid, pressure-release mechanism, gasket, safety valve and overall construction also matters. Users should follow the manufacturer's instructions and replace worn components when required.

For daily cooking, stainless steel has an advantage in terms of durability and resistance to corrosion and surface wear. This makes it a preferred choice for users who want a cooker that can withstand frequent use over a long period. Safety comparison

Aluminium: Safe for everyday use when properly manufactured and maintained Stainless steel: Safe for everyday use, with greater durability and corrosion resistance Therefore, the better material should not be judged on the assumption that aluminium pressure cookers are inherently unsafe. Proper construction, maintenance and usage are more important.

Which heats faster?

Aluminium has an advantage when it comes to heat conduction. An aluminium pressure cooker generally heats up quickly and distributes heat efficiently, which can help bring water and food up to cooking temperature faster. Stainless steel itself is not as thermally conductive as aluminium. However, many stainless steel pressure cookers use a layered or encapsulated base that combines stainless steel with a more conductive metal to improve heat distribution. Heating comparison

Aluminium pressure cooker: Faster heat transfer Stainless steel pressure cooker: Good heat distribution with a suitable multi-layered base

For users who want rapid heating, aluminium can be attractive. For daily cooking, however, the difference may be less important than the cooker's overall construction.

Which is more durable?

Stainless steel generally wins in durability. It is more resistant to dents, corrosion and surface deterioration and can maintain its appearance better with regular care. This makes stainless steel pressure cookers particularly suitable for households where the cooker is used frequently. Aluminium is lighter but comparatively softer. It can develop dents or scratches more easily, especially if handled roughly or cleaned with abrasive materials. If you plan to use the same pressure cooker every day for many years, stainless steel is generally the better investment.

Tulsi, Parvati & Prerna: the Ekta Kapoor shows that changed Indian TV forever

Mumbai : For years, Indian television was dominated by women who lived inside sprawling joint families but were rarely just passive members of them. Tulsi Virani, Parvati Agarwal, Kkusum, Prerna and a host of other female protagonists became familiar faces in Indian homes as television soaps became extremely popular in the early 2000s.

Many of the most recognisable characters of that period came from Ekta Kapoor's Balaji Telefilms. Shows such as Kyunki Saas Bhi Kabhi Bahu Thi, Kahaani Ghar Ghar Kii and Kkusum were built around family relationships, marriage, motherhood and domestic conflict. Their women were often placed firmly within traditional family structures. However, at the same time, they were also shown taking decisions, confronting other members and at times, determining the direction of the family. A widely cited research paper offers some intriguing evidence that television exposure can be associated with changes in women's attitudes and behaviour. We are talking about 'The Power of TV: Cable Television and Women's Status in India' by economists Robert Jensen and Emily Oster.

The research first appeared as an NBER working paper in August 2007 and was subsequently published in the Quarterly Journal of Economics in 2009. The paper examined what happened when cable television entered rural Indian communities and whether access to the new medium was associated with changes in attitudes towards women.

Nick Jonas gives fans a sweet peak into life lately with Priyanka Chopra

Agency : Pop icon Nick Jonas shared an Instagram photo dump captioned "Lately." The caption features family moments that he spent on tour with his wife, Priyanka Chopra, and their daughter, Malti Marie. The Instagram carousel shows candid backstage and on-stage shots from the Jonas Brothers tour. Pictures feature Nick posing with Priyanka and their four-and-a-half-year-old daughter Malti Marie backstage.

The series of pictures gives fans a glimpse into his life both on and off stage. In one of the photos, Nick is seen posing with Priyanka and Malti, with the little one standing between her parents.

Nick always keeps fans updated when it comes to funny incidents regarding the family. He recently shared a funny BTS story about Priyanka and Malti during one of his Jonas Brothers shows. He recalled how Malti unexpectedly came into the green room behind a curtained backstage area before a show. It was the time when he and his brothers Joe and Kevin were getting ready for the performance. Apparently, the backstage area doesn't have a proper door., and is only protected with a curtain, Malti straightaway entered the green room. And that's when Malti said, "Oh, you are in summer clothes." Nick described the entire episode as 'hilarious.'One of the photos that caught everyone's attention was the one that shows Priyanka and Nick in a cosy pose covering Malti's face with a heart emoji to protect her privacy.

Nick Jonas recently celebrated his 34th birthday in September 2026 with a relaxing golfing getaway organized by his wife, Priyanka Chopra. The celebration punctuated amusement game days and family moments with their four-year-old daughter, Malti.Work-wise, while Nick has been on a tour, Priyanka had recently completed shooting for SS Rajamouli's Varanasi, starring Mahesh Babu. She also has exciting projects lined up for release in Hollywood.

Govinda's alleged partner stuns industry

Mumbai : Govinda's rumoured girlfriend and co-star Komal Rani Swarnkar has claimed that the actresses questioning her dynamic with Govinda have previously supported those involved in multiple extramarital affairs and have fantasised about having "one-night stands with three-three men in their old age". Komal took to Instagram to pen a strong note in her defence.Komal Rani wrote that the people questioning her and Govinda have previously stayed quiet even when another actor has had "multiple marriages". Without taking any names, she mentioned that the actresses commenting on her are the ones who don't have enough work coming their way and are trying to attach themselves to the controversy to stay relevant. "Some actresses in the film industry, whose careers have gone cold, whose films are no longer working at the box office, seem to have nothing left except their washed-out brand tags. They are trying to stay relevant by sticking their noses into other people's ongoing controversies and trying desperately to keep themselves in the limelight," Komal w She mentioned that their judgment is not consequential to her, as their "own marriages are falling apart" and they "cannot even uphold the sanctity of their own marital relationships".

Drishyam 3 director Abhishek Pathak on balancing high expectations and fan theories

Mumbai : Vijay Salgaonkar has played his last move, and the nation was not ready for what he had in store. A Chauthi Fail has kept the law on its toes for 11 years, and Drishyam The Conclusion brings this iconic story to its much-awaited final chapter with a climax that has audiences talking. The film is largely getting positive reviews from all and is inching close to Rs 100 crore mark in just two days.

With audiences showering the final chapter with praise, director Abhishek Pathak opened up about the massive responsibility of bringing Drishyam The Conclusion to its much-awaited conclusion. He recently shared, "Making Drishyam The Conclusion was a huge responsibility because the audience has lived with this world for so many years. Everyone had their own theories, expectations and ideas about how this story should end. The biggest challenge for me was to respect that journey but also give them an experience they wouldn't necessarily see coming." He further shared about the sense of satisfaction he feels seeing the audience's overwhelming response to the film, saying, "Now, seeing audiences experience the film, discuss the ending and debate what Vijay has done, is genuinely satisfying. For me, Drishyam has always been about how people perceive the truth, and the fact that audiences are still discussing and interpreting the film after watching it is what makes this franchise so special."

Abhishek also expressed his surprise at how deeply the nation continues to be invested in the world of Drishyam. He shared, "What has really surprised me is how emotionally invested people are, not just in Vijay, but in the entire world of drishyam. You realise that after all these years, these characters have become a part of people's lives. And as a filmmaker, there's nothing more fulfilling than seeing an ending stay with the audience even after they've left the theatre."Directed by Abhishek Pathak, Drishyam The Conclusion stars Ajay Devgn, Tabu, Shriya Saran, Rajat Kapoor, Jaideep Ahlawat and Prakash Raj, Kamlesh Sawant, Ishita Dutta and Mrunal Jadhav among others bringing together a powerhouse ensemble for the ultimate chapter of the celebrated franchise.

Vijay Deverakonda to play historical warrior-inspired role in upcoming film 'Ranabaali'

Chennai : Ranabaali, starring Vijay Deverakonda and Rashmika Mandanna, is hogging the limelight for its BTS stories. The film's director Rahul Sankrityan reveals interesting details about what went into designing the lead characters. As part of the documentary series titled Ranabaali – Never Forget The Truth, the third episode, 'The Men We Forgot', commenced streaming on YouTube.

Rahul Sankrityan reveals that the character of Ranabaali (played by Vijay Deverakonda) was inspired by several legendary historical warriors from Rayalaseema who fought for the motherland. "Rayalaseema is a land that has given birth to many brave warriors. The heroic stories of Seema Palegars such as Budda Vengal Reddy, Uyyalawada Narasimha Reddy and Gadekal Bobbili Nagireddy continue to be narrated through traditional ballads even today."The director added that the people from the region take pride when they recall the sacrifices and courage of the legendary warriors. "The idea of Ranabaali story began taking shape when I first heard about Gadekal Bobbili Nagireddy. He was known for riding horses and was even believed to communicate with the gods. Nagireddy was assassinated as a result of conspiracies," shared the director.

Ranabaali is inspired by the devastating Great Madras Famine of 1876–1878 under British colonial rule. During the director's research regarding the period of the great famine, he came across the story of warrior Budda Vengal Reddy. "He sold all his assets and established gruelling centres, and saved the lives of scores of people. Similarly, Uyyalawada Narasimha Reddy fought against the British and became a formidable force," the director shares, describing them as inspiring stories from the region.He concluded, "I also hail from the Rayalaseema region. During my childhood, I witnessed many people displaying extraordinary courage and determination for the society's good. These warriors were known for their bravery and fearlessness. I drew inspiration from them while designing the character of Ranabaali."

Nushrratt Bharuccha returns home after injury

Mumbai : Actress Nushrratt Bharuccha, who was visiting Bali for some work, met with in an accident in which she suffered a spinal injury. The actress was later airlifted from Bali and reached Mumbai in an air ambulance for further surgery and procedures. The visuals of the actress are making their way onto social media, leaving her fans concerned.

In the videos emerging on social media, Nushrratt Bharuccha is seen lying on a stretcher, leaving her fans concerned about her health. A while ago, Nushrratt Bharuccha's team released an official statement sharing an update about her health. The news of her accident in Bali surfaced on social media on October 1. Now, the team has revealed that the actress will be treated in Mumbai. The statement read, "Nushrratt Bharuccha, who was in Bali for a work-cum-holiday trip, met with an unfortunate accident and suffered a fracture in her spine. She is currently hospitalised in Bali and remains under medical observation. Following further evaluation by the doctors, Nushrratt will be undergoing spine surgery."

Hombale films sets October 9 Telugu release date for 'Hanuman Ansh'

New Delhi : Instead of director Trivikram Srinivas, Bangalore based Hombale Films is going to release Neem Karoli Baba biopic for Telugu audiences on October 9. Some films find their audience instantly. Others grow with every passing day, carried by word of mouth and a connection that goes beyond the screen. Hanuman Ansh belongs to the latter.

The Hindi film, inspired by the life and teachings of revered spiritual master Neem Karoli Baba, popularly known as Maharaj-ji, has emerged as one of the year's most successful surprise performers. What began as a modestly mounted film went on to find a strong audience across India, with its story of faith, devotion and transformation striking a chord across generations. Written and directed by Dr. Vishal Chaturvedi, Hanuman Ansh brings the extraordinary spiritual journey of Neem Karoli Baba to the screen. The film features Shobinaw Satyaa in the lead role as Neem Karoli Baba, along with Chandan Anand and Purnima Tiwari among the principal cast. The film's music is composed by Shreyas Dharmadhikari, with Rishi Pathak also credited as music director, complementing the film's spiritual and deeply rooted narrative.

Following its successful theatrical journey in Hindi, the film is now set to reach Telugu-speaking audiences. Hombale Films, which previously took Hanuman Ansh to international audiences through its overseas distribution arm, has now acquired the theatrical rights for the South Indian languages. The Telugu version will release theatrically on October 9, marking the next chapter in the film's journey.

For Hombale Films, the association with Hanuman Ansh has evolved from taking the film beyond Indian shores to bringing its story to audiences across the South. Known for taking Indian stories to audiences across languages and geographies, Hombale Films is now extending the film's theatrical footprint across Telugu, Tamil, Kannada and Malayalam markets. At the heart of Hanuman Ansh is a story that transcends language. Neem Karoli Baba's teachings and philosophy have found followers across the world, and the film attempts to capture that universal spiritual connection through an intimate cinematic journey.

With the film already creating a strong impact in Hindi, Hanuman Ansh now arrives in Telugu with the hope of finding an entirely new audience and carrying Maharaj-ji's story to even more people.

Jr NTR cracks down on morphed videos, warns of strict legal consequences

Chennai : Noted Tollywood star Jr NTR on Friday said that he would take every possible legal action against those who had created a morphed video of the song 'Chuttamalle' from his film 'Devara' and those who were spreading it.

Taking to his X timeline to react to the morphed video that was doing the rounds on social media, the actor wrote, "Disgusting, Sick and Shameless. In a land that worships women as mothers and goddesses, where "Matrudevo Bhava" is not just a phrase but a part of our culture, some people have fallen so low that they are using AI to disrespect a woman in the most degrading way possible. Using AI to create something this vile is shameful beyond words."

The actor went on to directly address the miscreants who had circulated the morphed video. He wrote, "To the scumbags behind this morphed Chuttamalle video, I will not spare any of you. I will take every possible legal action against those who created it and those who are spreading it." Jr NTR also made an earnest plea to other netizens, urging them not to watch, share or engage with such content. He wrote, "Please do not watch, share or engage with such content. Today it is someone else. Tomorrow, it could be your mother, sister, wife or daughter."

He concluded the note saying, "This is a serious issue, and I urge all the state governments and the Government of India to act strongly and bring in strict regulations against the misuse of AI." Jahnavi Kapoor had also issued a statement on X stating that it was disturbing to see AI-generated fake videos being circulated. She requested that such videos and content should not be created, shared, or promoted. This is a clear misuse of AI, she stated, and that legal action will definitely be taken against those involved.

Mouni Roy applauds fellow actor Kanika Mann's impressive Bigg Boss voyage

Mumbai : Renowned television actress Mouni Roy has publicly extended her love and support to Kanika Mann. Kanika is currently competing as a contestant in the Bigg Boss 20 house.

She has been gaining strong backing from several industry celebrities throughout her journey. Mouni recently shared a heartfelt message for Kanika on social media. She commended the way Kanika navigates the challenges inside the reality show house. Mouni stated that Kanika plays the game with grace and dignity. She added that she loves watching Kanika perform on the show. Finally, Mouni sent her best wishes for the remainder of the competition.

Kanika continues to make her presence felt on the show. She actively participates in tasks and speaks her mind firmly. Recently, she took a strong stand against housemate Qazi Touqeer. She confronted him over an uncomfortable joke and set clear personal boundaries. Mouni appreciated Kanika for handling such situations maturely. With growing celebrity support, Kanika remains one of the most talked-about players in the house.

"Chalo Delhi" CJP Announces Protest On October 10 Against Poll Board Chief

New Delhi, Oct 03: Following a successful rally at Shivaji Park in Mumbai, Cockroach Janta Party leader Abhijeet Dipke vowed a new protest in Delhi's Jantar Mantar if Chief Election Commissioner Gyanesh Kumar does not resign.If Gyanesh Kumar does not resign, cockroaches from all over India will march to Delhi and protest at Jantar Mantar on October 10," he said in a post on X, adding that it will be a nonviolent movement in which any citizen who supports free and fair elections is encouraged to participate. Dipke had previously warned of "Jantar Mantar 2.0" if Kumar did not resign at a rally at Shivaji Park, a site of historic political protests.Despite the afternoon heat and barriers, large crowds of young men and women gathered in downtown Mumbai for the demonstration, despite police refusal to grant permission. "Gyanesh Kumar must resign and face criminal proceedings," demanded CJP leader Ajinkya Shinde. He also demanded freezing of voter lists of 2025 and abolition of the 2023 law laying down the procedure for the appointment of Election Commissioners.After "deletion of voters", the BJP won states which it had not won even when the Narendra Modi wave was at its peak, Dipke said, addressing the crowd at Shivaji Park."If Gyanesh Kumar does not resign, the Gen Z of the entire nation will go to Delhi. There will be Jantar Mantar 2.0," he said as he gave a call for "Chalo Delhi"."The government is so incompetent that we have to protest again in two months (after the Jantar Mantar protest over the NEET paper leak)," the CJP founder said.Referring to the proposal for simultaneous elections, he claimed that the real objective of the ruling Bharatiya Janata Party was "One Nation, One Election, One Party".The CJP chose Maharashtra to start its protest against CEC Kumar because the alleged irregularities started from the state, Dipke said. He claimed that 13 crore voters have been deleted in two years. In 2024, there were 97 crore registered voters and the gap between the victory between the NDA and INDIA grouping was just 2 per cent in the Lok Sabha polls, he said. Kumar was appointed 15 days before the polls to increase the gap, Dipke alleged.Also in 2024, the BJP "stole" the Maharashtra assembly elections as 40 lakh voters were added to the electoral rolls, he claimed.In Delhi, 40,000 voters were deleted in AAP leader Arvind Kejriwal's assembly constituency and he lost by 4,000 votes, Dipke said. According to the CJP leader, approximately one lakh voters were removed from former Chief Minister M K Stalin's electorate in Tamil Nadu, and he lost by 10,000 votes. Mamata Banerjee also lost in West Bengal after voters in her area were removed.BJP supporters say that the opposition won in Telangana, Karnataka, and Jharkhand (and thus the polls are fair), but "when the match is fixed, not all balls are no-balls and not all catches are dropped," Dipke stated. He also accused the BJP of trying to finish off regional parties, starting with the Shiv Sena and NCP in Maharashtra, and dubbed the Eknath Shinde-led Shiv Sena a "shell company".Veteran actors Naseeruddin Shah and Shabana Azmi, filmmakers Vishal Bhardwaj and Hansal Mehta, singer-music director Vishal Dadlani, and Tushar Gandhi, great-grandson of Mahatma Gandhi, were present at the protest.Despite opposition by a section of residents of Shivaji Park and heavy security deployment extending up to Dadar station, protesters filled the locality with slogans, Gandhian quotes, and signs calling for Kumar's immediate resignation.Waving tricolours and displaying posters with messages such as "Gyanu, Tujha Democracy Var Bharosa Nay Kay?", "Gyanesh BRO, JUST RESIGN" and "Gaddaar Gyaanu Must Go", activists from groups such as Student Federation of India (SFI) and youngsters thronged the area.Demonstrators also brought unconventional props. Manish Mandal, a student, sported jewelry fashioned from 'Melody' chocolate wrappers while holding a banner with "Fraud detergent powder" written in Devanagari script. Groups affiliated with AISF from Pune added rhythm to the demonstration by playing musical instruments.Coinciding with Mahatma Gandhi's birth anniversary, the protest stage featured quotations on non-violence and simplicity alongside tributes to Babasaheb Ambedkar. The title song from the film "Rang De Basanti", and A R Rehman's "Vande Mataram" were also played.The Shiv Sena (UBT) had extended support to the CJP's agitation. Its local MLA Mahesh Sawant said party leader Aaditya Thackeray did not remain present as he was unwell.CJP leader Saurav Das targeted Delhi Police over detention of protestors at Jantar Mantar. "Delhi Police has again resorted to brutality. We warn Delhi Police to improve or we will improve you," Das said.Shailesh Kamble, a communist activist, said that several organisations associated with Left parties participated in the Shivaji Park protest.Aayan Patel, a law student carrying a placard that read "Gyanu Tuza Democracy Var Bharosa Nay Kay" (Don't you trust democracy Gyanesh), said many students from his college had joined the protest."Voting is everyone's right. If that right is not protected, the future of the next generation will be difficult," he said.Anuja, a teenage girl who spoke from the stage, said Prime Minister Narendra Modi should have done something for his "bhaktas".The government was so baffled by the agitations that it could not figure out how it should respond, she said.

Sujeet Kalkal wins the Asian Games gold medal after being down 2-9. Celebrates with Style - Watch

Aichi-Nagoya: Sujeet Kalkal demonstrated his rising dominance in the men's 65kg category by winning the Asian Games gold here on Friday, upsetting an Olympic winner and overcoming a large 2-9 lead in the final to add another championship to his account in a phenomenal year of dominance. Stronger Iranian and Japanese opponents were anticipated to make things difficult for Sujeet in a tight draw, but Tajikistan's Abdulmazhid Kudiev challenged the Indian the most, rushing to a 9-2 lead. Sujeet used his incredible speed and technical ability to pull off a spectacular comeback and win 10-9, scoring eight points in a row and holding off his opponent.Kudiev did not allow Sujeet to assault by using arm holds in the opening session. Sujeet did not allow his opponent to make any aggressive moves after determining his style.

While Kudiev matched the Indian's strength, Sujeet outpaced him with quickness, regularly going behind Tajikistan to execute take-down techniques. One after another successful moves reduced the deficit to 8-9 and with about 20 seconds left in the bout, Sujeet found a decisive take down and defended his one-point lead to emerge winner.Before that thrilling final, Sujeet outclassed Afghanistan's Sayed Omar Zazai by technical superiority (13-3) to begin his campaign and produced a clinical performance against Iran's Abbas Ebrahimzadehsavadkouhi in the quarterfinal, winning by technical superiority without losing a point. He then prevailed 3-3 on criteria against Japanese Olympic champion Kotaro Kiyooka in the semifinal. It was a near perfect show of strength, tactical acumen, and endurance.It is Sujeet's first Asian Games gold and the 23-year-old Indian has now swept the U23 World Championships, Asian Championships, Zagreb Open, Tirana title in the last 12 months, winning virtually everything that has come his way.

His only setback came at the Mongolian Open in June, where a knee injury forced him to withdraw, but otherwise Sujeet has been unbeaten in his pursuit of the biggest titles on offer.Sujeet was a worthy candidate for the Hangzhou Games also but he was not allowed to challenge Bajrang Punia in trials by the ad-hoc committee, which awarded a direct entry to Bajrang.Sujeet had even challenged the ad-hoc committee's decision in the court but could not get relief. Incidentally, Bajrang was first Indian men's freestyle wrestler to win a gold at Asian Games in 2018 Jakarta edition. Sujeet has only got stronger by the day and will be a worthy Olympic medal contender in 2028.

In his bout against Olympic champion Kiyooka, Sujeet trailed 0-2 at the end of the first period but scored three points in the second period in a tight semifinal while the Japanese added one more.The two wrestlers were tied 3-3 at the end but Sujeet was declared a winner on criteria, having scored a bigger scoring move.In his first bout, Zazai found a two-pointer and then pushed the Indian out to take a 3-0 lead. The Indian, however, quickly turned the bout around with a push-out (PO) and a shoulder throw to move ahead 5-3.He then added four more points with another throw and a roll to complete victory and progress to the quarterfinals.Against Abbas, Sujeet made his intentions clear within the opening 20 seconds, executing a shoulder throw from a standing position. He was initially awarded four points but the move was revised to two as Abbas did not land in a danger position. Sujeet soon came close to securing a fall, but Abbas managed to escape, with the Indian adding two more points.When the Iranian attempted a leg attack, Sujeet countered effectively to move 6-0 ahead. Abbas struggled to mount any sustained attack as the Indian repeatedly thwarted his attempts with headlocks. Sujeet converted another right-leg attack into points to take an imposing 8-0 lead at the end of the first period.The Indian needed little time in the second period, executing another takedown to complete a 10-0 technical superiority win and book his place in the semi-finals. Young Indian wrestler Dipanshi Phogat, who is still coming through the junior ranks, suffered a technical superiority (0-10) defeat against one of the most accomplished women wrestlers in Japanese Yui Susaki, in the women's 50kg pre-quarterfinal.But since Susaki made the final, Dipanshi bounced back in medal contention.Competing in only her second senior international tournament, Dipanshi won the repechage round 10-0 against Cambodia's Samnang Ditand but went down fighting against Kazakhstan's Zeinip Bayanova in the bronze play-off in which she was pinned.Despite the defeat, the 18-year-old showed promise with her fighting spirit against a very experienced opponent. Rajat was eliminated from the men's 125kg sport after losing 3-8 in the pre-quarterfinals to Kazakhstan's Yedige Kassimbekin.Priya was also eliminated, falling 1-6 against Kyrgyzstan's Aiperi Medet Kyzy in the women's 76kg pre-quarterfinals.On Saturday, Olympic bronze medalists Aman Sehrawat (57kg), Deepak Punia (97kg), Antim Panghal (53kg), and Manisha Bhanwala (65kg) will participate.

Pilgrims Caught In Hour-Long Traffic Jams On Their Way To Badrinath Dham

New Delhi, Oct 03: The second phase of the Char Dham Yatra has seen a significant increase in pilgrims visiting Badrinath Dham following the rainy season. However, the increased number of pilgrims is generating traffic congestion at various locations along the Badrinath National Highway, making it tough for devotees. Thousands of devotees have arrived in Badrinath to worship at the temple of Lord Badri Vishal. Long lines of cars have been observed in various locations along the highway between Karnaprayag and Badrinath. Traffic is also impacted in locations ranging from the Gopeshwar route near Chamoli to Joshimath and Marwar. Pilgrims are taking longer to reach their destinations due to road congestion.The administration stated that plans for the second part of the Char Dham Yatra had been expedited, but the ground reality calls such statements into question. The absence of proper road expansion, particularly between Joshimath and Marwari, has made it difficult for the police and administration to keep traffic flowing smoothly. At the same time, Pitru Paksha is ongoing. A significant number of devotees are gathering in Badrinath, also known as Moksh Dham, to conduct Pitru Tarpan and other holy ceremonies. The inflow of pilgrims during the Yatra, along with Pitru Paksha, has created traffic congestion on roadways.

Kumkum Mohod, 17, makes history with individual recurve archery gold

Aichi-Nagoya Indian youth archer Kumkum Mohod made history at the Asian Games 2026 on Saturday, capturing India's first solo women's recurve gold medal after edging South Korea's Oh Yejin in a thrilling shoot-out.The 17-year-old won 6-5 after a five-set tie in the final. With the gold medal determined by a single arrow, Oh shot an 8 before Kumkum kept her composure to score a perfect 10 and secure the win, according to ESPN. Kumkum became the first Indian woman to earn a medal in the Asian Games' solo recurve event, and she went on to win gold. The final began with Oh taking the opening set 29-27 to move 2-0 ahead. The second set was tied 29-29, leaving the Korean with a 3-1 advantage.Kumkum responded brilliantly in the third set, producing three successive 10s for a perfect 30 as Oh managed 29. The Indian levelled the contest at 3-3 before Oh regained the lead by taking the fourth set 28-27.

Facing elimination heading into the fifth set, Kumkum delivered under pressure. She shot three 10s to finish with 30 while Oh scored 28, forcing a shoot-off at 5-5.Kumkum then produced the decisive arrow, hitting the 10-ring after Oh had managed only an 8.The gold capped a remarkable campaign for Kumkum, who had already won the women's recurve team gold and mixed team silver on Friday.She had teamed up with Ankita Bhakat and Kirti Sharma to defeat South Korea 5-3 in the women's recurve team final, securing India's first-ever Asian Games medal in the event. Later, she partnered Dhiraj Bommadevara to win silver in the mixed recurve team event after India lost 3-5 to China. Kumkum's solo campaign included a 6-4 quarterfinal victory against South Korea's world and Olympic champion Kang Chaeyoung, followed by a 6-2 semifinal win over China's world championship silver medalist Zhu Jingyi. Her gold medal adds to India's sole prior individual recurve medal at the Asian Games, Tarundeep Rai's silver in the 2010 Guangzhou Games, and is the country's first women's individual recurve medal at the continental tournament.India's medal count now stands at 77, including 17 gold, 25 silver, and 35 bronze medals.

From Badals to Captain: How Pargat Singh's Dissent May Have Served Him Well

Punjab, Oct 3: The promotion of hockey star Pargat Singh to the presidency of the Punjab Congress highlights a distinguishing element of his political career: his willingness to question powerful politicians, including those in his own party.His political career has been characterized by frequent clashes with the leadership of the parties he represented. From criticizing the Badal family when in the Shiromani Akali Dal to confronting Captain Amarinder Singh after joining the Congress, Pargat Singh's outspoken manner has frequently landed him on the wrong side of the establishment. That attribute may now have emerged as one of the Olympian's greatest qualities within the Congress. Pargat Singh's most notable disagreement with the Akali leadership occurred in 2016. After being suspended from the Shiromani Akali Dal in July 2016, he sent a sharply written letter to then-Chief Minister Parkash Singh Badal on August 5-6, 2016, explicitly criticizing SAD president Sukhbir Singh Badal's actions. Singh questioned the party's direction, alleged that the Akali Dal's core ideology was being sidelined and said that raising the voice of the people should not be treated as anti-party activity. He also referred to corruption in the Jalandhar Municipal Corporation and raised concerns about the functioning of the government. His differences with the Badals had also sharpened over the proposed solid-waste treatment plant near Jalandhar. He eventually resigned from the SAD on September 12, 2016, before joining the Congress.

In Gujarat, 24 National Unity Day Parade personnel tested positive for dengue

New Delhi, Oct 03: A dengue outbreak has affected visiting security and cultural contingents in Gujarat, hospitalizing at least 24 troops preparing for the impending National Unity Day celebrations in Gandhinagar. Senior medical personnel revealed that dozens more people are still being monitored after presenting with fever, joint pain, and muscular pains in the previous 48 hours.The health danger was revealed on Thursday when 34 staff were brought to Gandhinagar Civil Hospital, resulting in 23 confirmed dengue infections. Five additional people were hospitalized by Friday afternoon, adding another confirmed case to the four suspected illnesses. Medical authorities reported that about 10 patients have already recovered and been discharged, emphasising that all remaining hospitalised personnel are in stable condition with no critical complications reported so far.The affected individuals, predominantly young adults between the ages of 25 and 30, have traveled from across India, including contingents from Uttar Pradesh, Maharashtra, Kerala, Bihar, and Chhattisgarh. They are among thousands who have assembled in the state to prepare for the grand Rashtriya Ekta Diwas parade at Ekta Nagar on October 31. Hospital officials noted that many of the visiting personnel were sharing accommodation at a large hostel complex in Gandhinagar, though experts have yet to formally pin the source of transmission on the quarters. Given the sudden influx of cases from a single group, hospital administration alerted district and state public health units to launch a formal investigation. Dedicated epidemiological teams have been tasked with surveying the accommodation sites, conducting vector-control operations, and running further diagnostic tests to curb any further spread of the mosquito-borne virus. Health authorities reassured the public that emergency rooms across the capital have not observed a wider spike in indoor admissions outside of the parade personnel.

The incident follows a recent statewide review of vector-borne illnesses, which revealed that health facilities had processed over 135,000 diagnostic samples, recording nearly 2,100 dengue cases across Gujarat so far this season. The annual 'Rashtriya Ekta Diwas' events are scheduled to take place on October 30 and 31, anchored by a flagship parade on the final day. The celebrations at Ekta Nagar are set to feature around 10,000 participants from various police and paramilitary forces, alongside air force flypasts, live cultural performances, and a keynote address by Prime Minister Narendra Modi.Allegations by AAP The Aam Aadmi Party has slammed the Gujarat administration over administrative apathy and poor sanitation after security personnel deployed in Gandhinagar fell victim to the dengue outbreak. Gauri Desai, an AAP leader, said that the jawans had traveled from various states across the country to participate in the upcoming national Ekta Parade celebrations. Following a hospital visit by party leadership to check on their well-being, the opposition accused the state government of remaining silent on the city's rising health crisis despite making grand claims about cleanliness. The party also chastised the local civil hospital for significant deficiencies in patient treatment, claiming that hospitalized staff were only given biscuit packages for breakfast rather than full, nutritional meals.

Ex-France international urges Indian football to widen its talent pool

Kolkata: The yellow and green have already arrived in Kolkata. Brazil are here, Carlo Ancelotti is here, and by Saturday evening Salt Lake Stadium will be waiting for one of the biggest football nights India has hosted. Vikash Dhorasoo will be there too. But as the city gets ready for Vinicius Junior, Endrick and Brazil, the former France international is looking beyond the glamour of one evening. For him, India vs Brazil should also be a reminder of what Indian football could become if it starts thinking bigger. Dhorasoo, who has Indian roots and played for France at the 2006 World Cup, believes India needs to widen its talent pool, give more players the chance to experience football abroad and, most importantly, settle on a long-term plan.

"Each game has its own importance and helps you to progress," Dhorasoo said. "Of course, it's a great help to play the best team in the world, but local football must be as important as the special game you might have."There is already a timely example in India's own squad. Ryan Williams was born in Australia before completing his switch to represent India at senior level. He scored on his India debut and then found the net again in the 1-1 draw against Panama last week, making him one of the most important attacking names in the squad heading into Brazil. FIFA approved his change of association before he made his India debut. It is only two goals, and there is no need to rush comparisons with Sunil Chhetri. But since Chhetri's retirement, India have been searching for a forward who can offer a dependable goal threat. Williams has quickly begun to fill that space, scoring against Panama when India needed an attacking spark. His story also gives some weight to Dhorasoo's argument that India should look more closely at its diaspora. "I could have been playing for India if there was this possibility back then," Dhorasoo said. "And I hope there will be room for the integration of this kind of player in the future."

Brazil squad relies on their own chefs, feasting on Kolkata fish before India friendly

Kolkata: The Brazil national football team is maintaining its strict dietary discipline in Kolkata, with meals being prepared exclusively by their own chefs and nutritionists who have travelled with the squad, sources in the team camp said. Although the state government has arranged Indian, Bengali and other cuisines for the official state dinner, the Brazilian players are learnt to be preferring food cooked by their own culinary team to stay on their defined nutrition plan. The footballers are being served meals nearly five times a day, with every dish prepared under the supervision of team chefs and nutritionists. Oil usage is strictly controlled, with olive oil being the primary choice. Lunch and dinner menus include rice, spaghetti, baked beans, fish, chicken, meat, green salad and moderate portions of dessert. Special emphasis is being laid on fish. Known fish lovers, the Brazilian stars are enjoying a variety of fresh fish in Kolkata, often described as a hub of fish. Team sources said the chefs are preparing the seafood themselves. Meals are rounded off with moderate portions of rice, various lentils and beans, potatoes, vegetables and salad. Breakfast, also prepared by their own chefs on Friday morning in Kolkata, includes bread, boiled eggs, fruits and green vegetable salads. The players are following a specific regimen for beverages as well.

Fresh fruits and dry fruits are also part of the team's diet. Even the team's drinking water is being sourced from outside, sources said. Alongside the diet, the players are also doing light gym sessions in the morning. In short, Brazil's routine in Kolkata ahead of the FIFA friendly is being run entirely on their own terms, with their own chefs, own nutritionists and a strictly defined diet. The Brazil national football team in Kolkata is strictly following a controlled diet prepared exclusively by their own chefs and nutritionists to maintain nutrition discipline ahead of a FIFA friendly. Despite local cuisine being available, players prefer meals five times daily, focusing on fish, rice, vegetables, moderate desserts, and controlled oil use, mainly olive oil. Their regimen includes specific beverages, fruits, and external drinking water.

Alongside diet control, players engage in light morning gym sessions, ensuring routine adherence to their fitness and nutrition plan. When the five-time World Cup champions touch down anywhere on the globe, they carry with them the weight of footballing royalty. But as the Seleção landed in Kolkata for a historic, unprecedented friendly match against India, the drama off the pitch proved just as compelling as the tactics on it. Long known as the cultural and sporting heartland of Indian football, Kolkata rolled out a lavish red carpet for the South American giants. Yet, while local hospitality offered an elaborate array of traditional Bengali delicacies and grand official spreads, the Brazilian delegation made one thing abundantly clear from the moment they checked into their luxury team hotel: when it comes to performance nutrition, nothing is left to chance.

Lovlina Borgohain gives herself the perfect birthday gift with maiden Asian Games gold

Lovlina wins historic Asian Games boxing gold

New Delhi: Lovlina Borgohain has given herself the perfect gift on her 29th birthday as she won the boxing gold in the women's 75 kg category with a resounding performance at the Asian Games. Lovlina defeated China's Ziyi Bao via unanimous decision to win the match. With the victory, Lovlina became the first women's boxer since Mary Kom in 2014 to secure a gold medal at the Asian Games. The 29-year-old had come into the gold medal match having created history as the first Indian woman to reach back-to-back Asian Games finals. After having won silver at the Asian Games in Hangzhou last time around, the Indian star was determined to change the colour of the medal and was off the blocks from the get-go. Lovlina had the height and reach advantage over Bao and it was the Indian who started the fight in the positive manner. She got a few hits on the face before going for the clinch. Bao was coming into the contest with a perfect amateur boxing record and on a 14-fight winning run and she slowly made her way back into the contest with a few heavy blows to the body. She then was able to get more closer to Lovlina and started landing more punches, forcing the Indian star into the defensive. It seemed like she had done enough as three out of the five judges went in favour of the Indian as she won the first round 3-2. Bao started the second round more aggressively as she continued to weave in the punches. Lovlina was using the jabs and hooks more than the uppercut, allowing Bao to come forward more. The Chinese boxer was able to land a jab that had Lovlina on the ropes and she decided to go for the clinch once again. Lovlina was able to get a few punches in towards the end and that impressed the judges. They scored the round 4-1 in favour of Lovlina. The final round was all about control from Lovlina as she was happy to defend. This made Bao become more desperate and go in for stronger strikes. This meant that the Indian boxer needed to just remain on the defensive throughout the three minutes. The result seemed like a mere formality when it was being read out as the Indian contingent cheered in ecstasy as Lovlina celebrated with her corner. Lovlina was coming into the Asian Games with a point to prove. As the Indian contingent delivered multiple gold medals, Lovlina was forced to settle for a silver medal after her loss to Australia's Emma-Sue Greentree. Instead of going into a shell, the Indian boxer decided to go back to board and learn what she needed to do inorder to avoid the small mistakes. "I have taken the positives from Glasgow, studied what I could have done better and now I want to work on those areas in training. The Asian Games will be another big challenge, and my focus is on being more complete and consistent in the ring," Lovlina told India Today ahead of the Asian Games.

Asian Games silver: How a milkman's son never gave up wrestling

New Delhi: At 15, Nitesh Siwach was far removed from the Asian Games spotlight. A knee operation had forced him away from wrestling, and instead of spending his days on the mat, he was helping his father sell milk in Panipat, Haryana. For two years, from 2017 to 2019, Nitesh woke up at 5am and returned home at 5pm. His village, Jagsi, is around 40km from Panipat, and the teenager had little time for anything beyond the demanding routine. Yet wrestling remained unfinished business. Five years after returning to the sport, the 23-year-old became an Asian Games silver medallist in the men's 97kg Greco-Roman category. Nitesh lost 0-4 to Japan's Yuri Nakazato in the final on Thursday. The gold escaped him, but the silver marked India's first Greco-Roman silver at the Asian Games since 1962. Nitesh's life as a milk seller began after his knee operation. With him alone at home, his father asked him to come along to Panipat and help with the family business. "My father is a milkman. When I was 15, I had a knee operation. I started working as a milkman with my father. I used to sell milk every day," Nitesh said. The routine was demanding. He left home at 5am, travelled to Panipat and returned at 5pm. There was no regular day off, and he continued the work for two years. "My village is 40 km from Panipat. I used to wake up at 5 a.m. and come back home at 5 p.m. I sold milk for two years. I didn't have a day off," he said. Eventually, Nitesh asked his family for six months to restart wrestling. "I thought of requesting my family. I asked for six months, and then I started wrestling again," he said. That decision changed the direction of his career. Nitesh resumed training at Pratap School in Kharkhoda, where teachers Om Prakash Dahiya and Sandeep encouraged him to pursue wrestling seriously. "My teachers Om Prakash Dahiya and Sandeep gave me a lot of attention. They motivated me to become a world champion one day," he said. His progress since then has been steady. Nitesh won bronze at the 2022 U23 World Championships and another bronze at the 2025 Asian Championships before reaching the Asian Games final.

India's 2027 ODI World Cup schedule: Full match fixtures, venues, and details

New Delhi: India will begin their campaign at the ICC Men's Cricket World Cup 2027 against defending champions Australia at Newlands in Cape Town on October 7, the International Cricket Council announced on Thursday. Shubman Gill's side have been placed in Group A alongside Australia, Pakistan, Afghanistan, Zimbabwe and Qualifier A. The blockbuster clash against arch-rivals Pakistan will follow three days later at the Wanderers Stadium in Johannesburg on October 10. India will then face Afghanistan at the Centurion in Tshwane on October 14, before taking on Qualifier A in Bloemfontein on October 17. Their final group-stage fixture will be against co-hosts Zimbabwe at the newly constructed Victoria Falls Stadium on October 24. India have been pre-seeded A1 for the Super 7 stage. If they progress from the group phase, they are scheduled to face Australia in Victoria Falls on October 28, South Africa in Johannesburg on October 31, New Zealand in Paarl on November 4, Pakistan in Cape Town on November 7, England in Gqeberha on November 11 and Sri Lanka in Durban on November 14. These fixtures are based on the pre-seeded positions and are subject to the teams qualifying for the Super 7 stage. The 2027 World Cup, jointly hosted by South Africa, Zimbabwe and Namibia, will get underway on October 2. The group stage will be followed by the Super 7 phase, with the leading teams advancing to the knockout rounds. The first semi-final is scheduled to be played in Cape Town on November 17, while the second semi-final will take place at the Centurion on November 18. The tournament will conclude with the final at the Wanderers Stadium in Johannesburg on November 21. For India, the tournament begins with two high-profile fixtures against Australia and Pakistan before they face Afghanistan, Qualifier A and Zimbabwe in the remainder of the group stage. Gill's side will need to navigate the opening phase successfully before turning their attention to the Super 7 round and the knockout stages. India's ICC Men's Cricket World Cup 2027 campaign begins October 7 against Australia at Newlands, Cape Town.

Lionel Messi completes CD Eldense takeover to buy second Spanish club

New Delhi, : Lionel Messi has completed the acquisition of Spanish second-tier club Eldense, subject to regulatory approval, adding another Spanish team to his growing portfolio of football investments. The 39-year-old Argentina and Barcelona great agreed last month to buy all the shares held by a Colombian investment group, which was Eldense's previous majority shareholder. The club confirmed the takeover on Thursday.

"Club Deportivo Eldense officially announces the acquisition of the club by Leo Messi, marking the start of a new and exciting chapter in the club's history, which spans more than a hundred years," Eldense said in a statement. Messi, who currently plays for Inter Miami, has now become the majority owner of a second Spanish club this year after purchasing fifth-tier side UE Cornella in April. Founded in 1921, Eldense see Messi's arrival as the beginning of a long-term project aimed at strengthening the club on and off the pitch. The club said the focus will be on its sporting, institutional, and social development while preserving its roots and blue-and-maroon identity. Eldense are currently fighting to stay in Spain's second tier.

Craig Fulton relieved as India survive Pakistan scare, but warns of final test

New Delhi, : India head coach Craig Fulton was relieved rather than satisfied after the defending champions survived a stunning Pakistan fightback to win 4-3 and reach the Asian Games hockey final on Thursday. India appeared in control after taking a 3-0 lead, but Pakistan fought back to level the semi-final and put the defending champions under intense pressure. India eventually found a late winner, but Fulton admitted his side had made the contest far more difficult than it needed to be. "I'm relieved. You can't be happy with being 3-0 up, then going 3-3 and then winning 4-3. I'm happy, but that wasn't ideal," Fulton said. Fulton felt India lost their structure during a crucial phase of the match, allowing Pakistan to capitalise on mistakes. "We lost a little bit of our shape in the third quarter and at the start of the fourth. But if you make mistakes against a team like this, they can score.

For any queries or clarifications, please reach out at the contact details:
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