

OPEN SEARCH

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'No double standards on terrorism':

Rajnath Singh at SCO meet in presence of Pakistan's Ishaq Dar

NEW DELHI : (AGENCY)

Defence Minister Rajnath Singh on Tuesday urged member states of the Shanghai Cooperation Organisation (SCO) to make concerted efforts to dismantle the entire ecosystem of terrorism, calling it one of the gravest threats to peace and development. Addressing the 25th meeting of the SCO Council of Heads of Government (CHG) in Dushanbe, Tajikistan, Singh said terrorism not just claimed innocent lives, it disrupted investment and commerce, radicalised societies and denied young people the opportunities they deserved. "There can be no justification for terrorism, no double standards in addressing it, and no place for those who finance, support or provide safe havens to terrorists," he said.

Pakistan's Deputy Prime Minister Ishaq Dar was also present when Singh was making these remarks at the gathering. Recalling the SCO Summit held in Bishkek in August-September, Singh said PM Narendra Modi had underlined the need for



concrete steps on security, connectivity and opportunity. He stressed that economic engagement must be inclusive and mutually beneficial.

Singh asked the SCO grouping that it must stay efficient and adhere to the principles of sovereign equality, consensus and mutual respect. The Defence Minister called on the SCO to turn consensus into action amid an uncertain global economic climate marked by geopolitical tensions, trade and supply chain disruptions, energy and food security concerns, and widening technological

divides. Singh backed the adoption of an 'Action Plan for the Multilateral Trade and Economic Cooperation Programme for 2026-2030.' Singh welcomed the decision taken in Bishkek to make the Universal Centre in Tashkent and the Anti-Drug Centre in Dushanbe as permanent bodies of the organisation. On connectivity, Singh said India supported initiatives linking markets and facilitating trade, and cited the International North-South Transport Corridor and the Chabahar Port as routes that could connect Central Asia with wider markets. However, he

said such projects must be founded on consultation and respect for the sovereignty and territorial integrity of all countries.

"Projects not founded on these principles will not be sustainable," he added. The Minister also called for moving beyond the creation of physical infrastructure. Singh added that there was a need to simplify customs procedures, digital documentation, improved logistics to bring down the cost of doing business in the region. Presenting India's experience as an example, Singh pointed to the country's Digital Public

"Projects not founded on these principles will not be sustainable," he added. The Minister also called for moving beyond the creation of physical infrastructure. Singh added that there was a need to simplify customs procedures.

Infrastructure, which he said had transformed service delivery and financial inclusion, and to its large start-up ecosystem. "Our success should be measured by the opportunities we create for youth, new markets we open for our entrepreneurs, technologies we make available to our farmers and small-scale business owners, and the connections we foster among societies," Rajnath told the congregation. Meanwhile, the meeting reviewed progress in multi-lateral economic and trade cooperation, and discussed ways to strengthen collaboration in transport finance, the digital economy and social development. Heads of the delegation adopted the joint communiqué, including,

Expansion of rail connectivity in Chhattisgarh gains momentum, train reaches Raoghat for the first time

RAIPUR. OPEN SEARCH

Under the leadership of Prime Minister Narendra Modi, rail development in Chhattisgarh has gained unprecedented momentum: Chief Minister Shri Sai Under the leadership of Prime Minister Shri Narendra Modi, rail development in Chhattisgarh has gained unprecedented momentum: Chief Minister Shri Sai Today marked a new and historic chapter in the expansion of rail connectivity in Chhattisgarh. Union Railway Minister Shri Ashwini Vaishnaw and Chief Minister Shri Vishnu Dev Sai flagged off the new Raoghat-Raipur and Raipur-Kurud passenger train services from the capital Raipur Railway Station. On the same occasion, the Tadoki-Raighat and Abhanpur-Kurud rail sections were dedicated, and the foundation stone for a modern electric rail engine maintenance facility was laid in Raipur. Under the leadership of Prime Minister Narendra Modi, rail development in Chhattisgarh has



Expansion of rail network will open doors to development, employment and new possibilities in remote and tribal areas: Chief Minister

gained unprecedented momentum: Chief Minister Sai With the completion of the rail line from Tadoki to Rowghat, Rowghat has been connected to the rail network for the first time since independence. This achievement is particularly significant for the remote and tribal regions of Bastar and southern Chhattisgarh. The new rail services will improve connectivity between these areas and other major centers of the state, including the capital Raipur, and will provide a new impetus to trade, industry, education, health,

employment, and the local economy. Under the leadership of Prime Minister Shri Narendra Modi, rail development in Chhattisgarh has gained unprecedented momentum: Chief Minister Shri Sai Chief Minister Shri Vishnu Dev Sai, congratulating the people of the state on this historic occasion, said that under the leadership of respected Prime Minister Shri Narendra Modi, Chhattisgarh is undergoing an unprecedented expansion of rail infrastructure. The double-engine government of the central and state is striving to ensure that the benefits of modern rail facilities are not limited to major cities, but also reach remote and tribal areas of the state, including Bastar and Surguja. Under the leadership of Prime Minister Narendra Modi.

CBI team to reach Mansa on Wednesday to probe anti-drug activist's murder : Shah

CHANDIGARH. (AGENCY)

Union Home Minister Amit Shah on Tuesday said a Central Bureau of Investigation (CBI) team would reach Punjab's Mansa district by noon on Wednesday to investigate the murder of anti-drug activist Parvinder Singh Jhota, as he met bereaved families in the state and accused the ruling Aam Aadmi Party (AAP) government of failing to curb drug trafficking. Shah gave the assurance during a meeting with Jhota's father, Bhim Singh, and other family members in Mansa. Former Punjab BJP president Sunil Jakhar said the CBI team would record statements of the victim's relatives and examine information about individuals suspected of involvement in the killing. "A CBI team will reach Mansa by 12 noon on Wednesday, record statements of the family members and begin investigating the case," Jakhar said, citing Shah's assurance to the family. The announcement came shortly after Punjab Chief Minister Bhagwant



Mann ordered a CBI investigation into Jhota's murder, which has triggered widespread protests by farmer unions, anti-drug campaigners and civil society organisations. Earlier, Shah visited Gurdaspur and met the family of Vikramjit Singh, who was allegedly murdered for opposing drug trafficking. During the approximately 15-minute meeting, Shah touched the feet of the victim's mother, Surjit Kaur, and assured the family of justice.

In a post on X, Shah launched a sharp attack on the Mann government, alleging that drug traffickers had become increasingly emboldened under AAP rule. "Under the AAP government, Punjab's youth are falling victim to drugs, while

those raising their voices against the menace are not safe," Shah said. He reaffirmed the Centre's commitment to eliminating drug trafficking and protecting young people from substance abuse. Shah also visited Sangrur district, where he met the family of Gulzar Singh, who allegedly died by suicide after facing harassment following his questioning of AAP minister Harpal Singh Cheema.

Family members said Shah listened to their grievances for nearly 20 minutes and assured them that justice would be delivered within two to three months. "He assured us that action would be taken against those responsible. We have no faith in the Punjab government and want a CBI

Earlier, Shah visited Gurdaspur and met the family of Vikramjit Singh, who was allegedly murdered for opposing drug trafficking. During the approximately 15-minute meeting

investigation," Gulzar's son said. The family alleged that Gulzar had named Cheema among those responsible for his harassment. The allegation has not been independently established. Relatives said they had postponed Gulzar's final religious rites and would not immerse his ashes until justice was delivered. According to the family, Shah assured them that he would attend the bhog ceremony after justice was secured. Union Minister Ravneet Singh Bittu, in a post on X, said Shah had personally conveyed his condolences to Jhota's father and assured the family of the Centre's full support. "The central government will ensure that the family gets justice," Bittu said, referring,

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SC asks Centre's response on PIL seeking guidelines to govern all forms of 'talaq'

NEW DELHI : (AGENCY)

The Supreme Court has asked the Centre and others to respond to a PIL seeking a direction to frame and implement uniform procedural safeguards and guidelines governing all forms of 'talaq' under the Muslim Personal Law. A bench led by Chief Justice of India (CJI) Surya Kant on October 16 also asked the Centre and others to spell out their respective stand on the petitioner's challenge to the validity of 'Talaq-e-Hasan'. "Talaq-e-Hasan" is a form of divorce among Muslims where a man can dissolve a marriage by pronouncing



the word 'talaq' once every month over a three-month period. Under 'Talaq-e-Hasan', a divorce gets formalised after the third utterance of the word 'talaq' in the third month if cohabitation has not resumed during this period. However, if cohabitation resumes after the first or second utterance of talaq, the parties are assumed to

have reconciled. In 2017, the top court declared instant triple 'talaq' — talaq-e-biddat — prevalent among the Muslim community, as unconstitutional, terming it arbitrary and violative of the fundamental rights of women. The bench clubbed the petition with another petition filed by a Muslim woman against the validity of 'Talaq-e-Hasan' given by her husband, which is pending before the top court. The fresh petition sought a direction to the authorities to declare 'Talaq-e-Hasan' and other forms of unilateral extra-judicial 'talaq' an evil that needed to be banned.

Calcutta HC allows state to appoint retired judge to probe Chorbagan stampede

KOLKATA : (AGENCY)

The Calcutta High Court has allowed the West Bengal government to appoint a retired judge of its choice to head a special commission of inquiry into the Chorbagan stampede, which claimed several lives. The Chief Justice said a sitting judge could not be assigned to the commission in view of specific Supreme Court guidelines and the acute shortage of judges. The decision modifies the state government's initial request for an inquiry commission headed by a sitting judge.

Maharaja Shoorsaini Was a Great Warrior, Able Administrator and Just Ruler : CM Nayab Singh Saini

VIJAY KUMAR.OPEN SEARCH

CHANDIGARH : Haryana Chief Minister Sh. Nayab Singh Saini said that Maharaja Shoorsaini Ji was a great warrior, an able administrator and a just ruler. During his reign, he undertook numerous initiatives for the welfare of his subjects and set an example of good governance. His life inspires us to uphold the values of truth, justice, valour and public service. The state government is continuously working to preserve the legacy of great personalities and saints and pass it on to future generations. Statues, memorials and buildings dedicated to these eminent personalities are being constructed across the state.

On Tuesday, Haryana Chief Minister Sh. Nayab Singh Saini formally inaugurated the magnificent statue of Maharaja



Shoorsaini Ji, the pride of the Saini community and a great emperor, installed along the Kurukshetra-Yamunanagar road in Ladwa town. The statue has been constructed by the Haryana Urban Local Bodies Department at a cost

of approximately Rs. 98 lakh.

Sh. Nayab Singh Saini said that the statue of Maharaja Shoorsaini Ji had given Ladwa a new identity as a place of historical and cultural significance. The statue site has been devel-



oped into an attractive park, complete with decorative lighting and beautification works, and is set to become one of the town's major attractions. The statue of Maharaja Shoorsaini Ji installed in Ladwa will inspire the youth to follow

his ideals.

He said that the Saini community had always played a significant role in the development of the country and the state. Members of the community are hardworking, honest and patriotic. The state gov-

ernment is committed to the welfare of every section of society, guided by the principle of Sabka Saath, Sabka Vikas, Sabka Vishwas (Together with All, Development for All, Trust of All).

The Chief Minister said

Chief Minister Inaugurates Magnificent Statue of Maharaja Shoorsaini Ji

Statue Constructed by the Urban Local Bodies Department at a Cost of Rs. 98 Lakh

that no stone would be left unturned in ensuring the development of the Ladwa region. The government is implementing development schemes worth crores of rupees in Ladwa. Continuous improvements are being made in roads, sanitation, drinking water supply, education and healthcare.

The construction of the statue has not only enhanced the beauty of the town but will also promote tourism in the area.

He said that the statue, built at a cost of Rs. 98 lakh, was not merely a sculpture but a symbol of the state's culture, history and pride. He congratulated the officials of Ladwa Municipal Committee and the Urban

Local Bodies Department for completing the work in an attractive and timely manner.

He further said that Maharaja Shoorsaini Chowk had been developed by the Municipal Committee as a model intersection. Special attention has been paid to safety, beautification, lighting and traffic management at the site.

Deputy Commissioner Vishram Kumar Meena, Chairman Gurnam Saini, Ladwa Municipal Committee Chairperson Sakshi Khurana, Chairman Dr. Ganesh Dutt, councillors, representatives of social organisations and a large number of prominent citizens were present on the occasion.

Surajkund Diwali Mela to Begin on October 23; Chief Minister Nayab Singh Saini to Inaugurate Third Edition

CHANDIGARH : OPEN SEARCH

The Surajkund Mela Grounds in Faridabad are all set to come alive with festive colours once again, showcasing Haryana's rich cultural heritage, folk traditions and traditional handicrafts. The third Surajkund Diwali Mela will be held from October 23 to 26 and will be inaugurated by Haryana Chief Minister Sh. Nayab Singh Saini. State Heritage and Tourism Minister Dr. Arvind Sharma will be specially present on the occasion, while Union Minister Sh. Manohar Lal will attend the closing ceremony on October 26 as the Chief Guest. The four-day fair will offer an attractive



Union Minister Sh. Manohar Lal to grace the closing ceremony on October 26; Sufi singer Kanwar Grewal to be a major attraction

blend of Diwali festivities, Indian art and culture, handicrafts, folk music, traditional cuisine and family entertainment. Around 300 stalls will showcase the talent of artisans and craftsmen from across the country, while providing visitors with a special festive shopping experience. The

Haryana Tourism Department is putting the final touches to the preparations for the event.

Heritage and Tourism Minister Dr. Arvind Sharma said that the Surajkund Diwali Fair is not merely an event for shopping and entertainment; it is also an important platform to cele-

brate India's cultural diversity, traditional arts and craft traditions passed down through generations. The event will provide local artisans and craftsmen with an opportunity to showcase their skills, sell their products directly to customers and connect with new markets. He said that under the leadership of Prime Minister Sh. Narendra Modi, efforts to give the country's cultural heritage global recognition are being taken for-

ward by the Haryana Government under the leadership of Chief Minister Sh. Nayab Singh Saini. The state government is committed to preserving historical heritage, promoting folk culture and expanding tourism activities. Events such as the Surajkund Diwali Fair translate this vision into action while further strengthening Haryana's cultural identity. Dr. Sharma said that the Surajkund Mela Grounds have long served as an important centre for promoting Haryana's art and handicrafts at the national and international levels. Through the Diwali Fair, the government is working to carry this tradition forward and connect.

Department ready to appeal against parallel electricity licence in APTEL : Energy Minister Anil Vij

CHANDIGARH : OPEN SEARCH

Regarding the licence granted for electricity distribution in Gurugram and Nuh, Haryana Energy Minister Sh. Anil Vij said that "This decision has come from an autonomous body, and we will appeal against it. We had strongly opposed privatisation there as well, but since the decision has been made, the department has been instructed to prepare to file an appeal in APTEL (the Appellate Tribunal for Electricity)." Sh. Vij was speaking to media persons today. Responding to the burning of a CJP effigy in



Delhi on Dussehra, Sh. Vij said that Dussehra is Vijayadashami, the day on which good triumphs over evil, and Ravana's effigy is burnt as a symbol of evil. "In the same way, new parties have emerged. People may consider them evil, which is why they are burning their effigies." On the RSS Foundation Day, Energy Minister Anil Vij extends best wishes to volunteers. On the

occasion of the Rashtriya Swayamsevak Sangh's Foundation Day, Energy Minister Anil Vij said that "Today is the Foundation Day of the (RSS). The RSS has worked to preserve patriotism, service, culture, and values among crores of volunteers across India. I extend my heartfelt best wishes to all of them." The people of Punjab will remove the Man government's every ambition in the upcoming election: Anil Vij On the rising drug problem in Punjab, Energy Minister Anil Vij said that the Bhagwant Mann-led Aam Aadmi Party government is responsible.

INTERNATIONAL

US advises Americans in Saudi Arabia to follow Civil Defence alerts amid Houthi attacks

RIYADH : (AGENCY)

The United States has advised its citizens in Saudi Arabia to follow Civil Defence alerts and exercise extreme caution amid heightened security concerns following reported missile and unmanned aerial vehicle (UAV) attacks on airports in the Kingdom. In a security alert issued on October 19, the US Embassy in Saudi Arabia urged American citizens to remain vigilant and follow safety instructions issued by Saudi Arabia's Civil Defence through cellular broadcasts.

"U.S. citizens are reminded to follow the guidance of national alerts released by Saudi Arabia's Civil Defence via cellular broadcast," the embassy stated. The advisory warned of potential further attacks on airports, airspace closures, flight cancellations and travel disruptions, urg-



ing Americans to exercise extreme caution while using airports in the Kingdom.

The alert comes amid heightened regional tensions, with Houthi military spokesperson Brigadier General Yahya Saree claiming that Saudi forces carried out 110 airstrikes and missile attacks across several Yemeni governorates over a 24-hour period, resulting in more than 30 casualties, mostly women and children. The claims have not been independently verified in the supplied information. According to

the US Embassy, operations at King Khalid International Airport in Riyadh remained suspended, while King Abdulaziz International Airport in Jeddah and King Fahd International Airport in Dammam continued operating amid some delays and cancellations. The embassy advised travellers to verify flight departure information directly with airlines and airports, adding that private cars, trains and buses could serve as alternatives to air travel.

All land border crossings, including the King

Fahd Causeway connecting Saudi Arabia and Bahrain, remained operational. Highways and roads in and around Riyadh, Jeddah and Dhahran were also operational, the advisory stated.

The US mission said American government employees working in Saudi Arabia require special authorisation from the Chief of Mission to use any airport in the Kingdom following the recent missile and UAV attacks.

It also highlighted restrictions on US government employees travelling within 20 miles of the Yemen border and requirements for special authorisation to visit the provinces of Jizan, Asir and Najran, as well as the cities of Qatif, Yanbu and Taif. The embassy further warned American citizens against photographing or sharing information related to missile interceptions, drone activity and impact sites.

Bonfires of electric bikes burn in Paris riots

PARIS. (AGENCY)

As protests rock France, the sight of electric bikes burning has become commonplace in the unrest. In Paris, black smoke and flames rose over piles of the e-bikes at the weekend. Elsewhere in the city, a protester threw an e-bike onto a burning car.

Shared-mobility operator Dott said in a statement on Monday that about 300 of its electric bikes were destroyed and 120 severely damaged in Paris during the nationwide protests on Saturday, which turned violent in several cities. It has 6,000 bikes in the city.

The company also said 80 vehicles, including bikes and scooters, were destroyed in Bordeaux and 30 to 40 scooters in Lyon. It estimated the damage at around €400,000 (\$450,000). Lime said some of its shared bicycles and scooters in Paris were destroyed or damaged dur-



ing the protests, with the company losing about 6% of its Paris fleet. Ahead of the demonstrations, Lime said it worked with police to remove vehicles from designated protest routes and restricted parking and riding in several high-risk areas, adjusting those measures over the weekend as the situation evolved. Smovengo, operator of the Vélib' Métropole bike-sharing system in Paris, said some 300 bikes from its fleet of around 20,000 were damaged or stolen during the weekend unrest. Its bikes are docked rather than parked on pavements. E-bikes often use lithium-ion batteries, which can ignite and produce.

Energy and trade on table at meeting with Jaishankar today

US : (AGENCY)

US Secretary of State Marco Rubio is set to arrive in Mumbai on Tuesday for an official visit to India, carrying momentum from fresh diplomatic discussions in Central Asia and signalling that a long-awaited US-India trade agreement is on the verge of finalisation. During his visit, which includes a bilateral meeting with Foreign Minister S Jaishankar and a trip to Gujarat's energy hub in Jamnagar, Rubio will address key aspects of the strategic partnership, regional stability, and energy security. According to the official schedule released by the Ministry of External Affairs (MEA), Secretary Rubio will arrive at Chhatrapati Shivaji Maharaj

International Airport in Mumbai on the afternoon of Tuesday at 14:15 hrs.

Shortly after his arrival, Secretary Rubio will pay tribute to victims of terror during a solemn wreath-laying ceremony at the Taj Memorial inside the historic Hotel Taj Mahal Palace at 15:40 hrs. Following the ceremony, the US Secretary of State will hold crucial bilateral discussions with EAM Jaishankar at the same venue starting at 15:50 hrs. The dialogue is expected to cover key aspects of the India-US strategic partnership, economic cooperation, and regional stability.

Later in the evening, Secretary Rubio is scheduled to attend the "Freedom 250 Reception" at the Jio World Convention Centre at 18:35 hrs, celebrating key



milestones in US history and bilateral diplomatic ties. Media access for the reception is being facilitated through the US Embassy and Consulate. On Wednesday, October 21, Secretary Rubio will complete the Mumbai leg of his visit and emplane for Jamnagar, Gujarat, departing from Chhatrapati Shivaji Maharaj International

Airport at 10:30 hrs to continue his engagements. The Ministry of External Affairs confirmed that official media coverage and photo opportunities will be regulated per standard diplomatic protocol across the various venues. Earlier on Monday, Rubio indicated that the US-India trade deal is close to finalisation. Rubio, who is in Uzbekistan,

will be in Mumbai on Tuesday, where he will meet External Affairs Minister S Jaishankar. Rubio will also travel to Jamnagar, home to one of the world's largest refineries, later in the week. Speaking to reporters in Samarkand, Rubio said "We're trying to finalise a trade deal with India right now. We're very close to doing that." "We've had to waive sanctions over the past few months because of the impact on global supplies and prices...We have to manage all of these things. We're trying to finalise a trade deal with India right now. We're very close to doing that. That's one of the things we take into consideration when the President makes a decision about national security waivers.

and things of that nature. Every country has a complex set of factors that it has to take into account. Geography is real. For some countries, it's very difficult to acquire energy from alternative sources. That's not an excuse, but all of that has to be balanced when making foreign policy," he added. Earlier, a day after US President Donald Trump waived several sanctions related to Russian fuel sales that were to take effect under the Lindsey O. Graham Sanctioning Russia and Iran Act, Rubio described India as an important ally whose energy needs must be considered before putting any tariffs or sanctions in place. The law, now paused, would have imposed tariffs of up to 100%.

Briefs News

Lawyers boycott courts across Khyber-Pakhtunkhwa over governor's rule

PESHAWAR : (AGENCY) Lawyers across Pakistan's Khyber-Pakhtunkhwa province boycotted court proceedings on Monday following a call by the K-P Bar Council to protest the imposition of governor's rule and an emergency in the province, The Express Tribune reported. The province-wide boycott disrupted routine judicial proceedings, with lawyers staying away from courts in several districts, affecting hearings and the disposal of cases. The protest was organised to register the legal community's opposition to the federal government's decision. According to The Express Tribune, the K-P Bar Council termed the imposition of governor's rule and the emergency unconstitutional and illegal, urging the federal government to withdraw the decision immediately. The legal body maintained that the measures raised serious concerns regarding their compliance with constitutional provisions and legal procedures. It called on the federal government to reconsider its decision and reverse the measures to address questions surrounding their validity. The boycott followed the Bar Council's appeal to lawyers across the province to suspend court appearances in opposition to the federal government's move.

Former Canadian Spy Chief warns Chinese EVs could enable Beijing to collect Canadians' personal data

BEIJING : (AGENCY) Canada's former intelligence chief David Vigneault has warned that Chinese-made electric vehicles (EVs) could enable Beijing to collect extensive personal information on Canadians, raising concerns over surveillance and national security as Ottawa prepares to allow more Chinese vehicles into the country, according to a report by The Epoch Times (TET). Vigneault, who headed the Canadian Security Intelligence Service (CSIS) from June 2017 to July 2024, made the remarks during an appearance on the BBC podcast The Interview, which aired on September 16. "There is the reality that all of your data, what you say, where you go, with whom you are, who you associate with, everything you do around your car, will be acquired by China," Vigneault said, as cited by TET. Now serving as chief intelligence officer at US-based Strider Technologies, Vigneault said he had no doubt that Beijing could use Chinese-made EVs for espionage. He warned that China sought to acquire vast amounts of data that could potentially be weaponised. According to TET, other Canadian intelligence officials and China experts have also raised concerns about the vehicles' surveillance capabilities and potential access to critical infrastructure. In April, former CSIS officer Neil Bisson told a House of Commons committee that Chinese-manufactured EVs could serve as "potential eyes and ears" for Beijing and create risks for Canada's electric grid. China expert Margaret McCuaig-Johnston separately warned that integrated software could collect camera.

Dipke distances himself from ‘regime change’ narrative for second time as Das

NEW DELHI : (AGENCY)

Cockroach Janata Party (CJP) founder Abhijeet Dipke has for the second time distanced himself from the contentious “regime change” narrative surrounding recent protests, seeking to draw a clear line between the group’s campaign and political upheavals in Nepal, Bangladesh and elsewhere. In a video statement posted on X on October 20, Dipke rejected attempts to equate protests in India with violent unrest and regime changes abroad, while defending jailed CJP activists Sourav Das and Ashutosh Ranka as proponents of a non-violent protest.

The renewed distancing is significant because it comes after Dipke had already moved to dissociate himself from remarks by Prashant Bhushan on regime change. The



Tribune had first reported that Dipke, soon after Bhushan’s remarks, called an urgent press conference late at night to distance himself from the suggestion. His latest statement marks a second public effort to establish that distinction. Dipke said Das and Ranka’s conduct in custody demonstrated what he described

as a “Gandhian Satyagraha” rather than an attempt to violently overthrow the government. “People talk about Nepal or Bangladesh, but look at our comrades, they went to jail smiling, without being provoked,” he said, arguing that the activists’ imprisonment was intended to awaken public conscience rather than

His latest statement marks a second public effort to establish that distinction. Dipke said Das and Ranka’s conduct in custody demonstrated what he described as a “Gandhian Satyagraha” rather than an attempt to violently overthrow the government.

foment violence. He also rejected comparisons with unrest in France and elsewhere, saying: “Look at what is happening right here in India. In India, Sourav Das and Ashutosh went to jail with smiles on their faces.” The statement comes against the backdrop of an increasingly political debate over opposition protests and allegations by the BJP that “anti-India gangs” were attempting to orchestrate a regime change in India along the

lines of recent unrest abroad. The Congress has rejected the comparison, maintaining that its protests against the Election Commission’s Special Intensive Revision exercise are peaceful and constitutional. Meanwhile, the immediate legal position of Das and Ranka remains unchanged. Their judicial custody was extended by two days on October 20, after their initial five-day custody ended. Their lawyers said they were taken back into custody after their surety was rejected over a document mismatch. The Special Executive Magistrate Court at Mandir Marg extended their custody. until October 21. Dipke said imprisonment would not weaken the two activists and claimed they would continue their campaign through “peace and non-violence” after release.

Deepthi Jeevanji on Gold and Manish Narwal on Silver at Asian Para Games 2026

AJEET KUMAR.OPEN SEARCH

NEW DELHI. Hon’ble Social Welfare Minister, Government of Delhi, Shri Ravinder Indraj Singh, expressed happiness over the remarkable achievements of Indian para-athletes Deepthi Jeevanji and Manish Narwal at the Asian Para Games 2026, extending his heartfelt congratulations and best wishes to both athletes.

Ravinder Indraj Singh said that Deepthi Jeevanji’s gold medal in the women’s 400m T20 event and Manish Narwal’s silver medal in the men’s 10m Air Pistol SH1 event were a matter of immense pride for the nation. Through their outstanding performances, both athletes have demonstrated that great achievements can be attained through strong willpower,



consistent hard work and self-confidence.

The Social Welfare Minister stated that the achievements of athletes with disabilities go beyond the realm of sports, strengthening the values of equal opportunities, self-reliance and an inclusive society.

Their struggles and accomplishments serve as an inspiration to millions of persons with disabilities, young people and aspiring sportspersons. Their suc-

cess also reinforces the importance of recognising the talent of persons with disabilities, respecting their achievements and encouraging them to pursue their aspirations. Shri Ravinder Indraj Singh further said that the empowerment of persons with disabilities is an important component of the broader objectives of social welfare. The achievements of such talented athletes strengthen the belief that, with appropriate opportunities, self-confidence and determination, persons with disabilities can establish their identity and excel in every field. The Hon’ble Minister wished both athletes a bright future and expressed hope that they would continue to bring glory to the country through their outstanding performances in the years ahead.

Delhi Cops file chargesheet against 7 persons

NEW DELHI. (AGENCY)

The Delhi Police have filed a chargesheet against seven persons in connection with the alleged mob lynching of 54-year-old Manipuri musician and music teacher Chongtham Vikram Singh in southeast Delhi’s Kilokari village in September. Singh was allegedly beaten to death by a group of men, including a juvenile, on September 6 after he objected to noise and commotion outside his house. The chargesheet invokes provisions related to criminal conspiracy, murder by a group of five or more persons, murder and house-trespass, officials said. Those named in the chargesheet are Bharat Kumar (19), Pramod (26), Ramzan Khan (22), Deepanshu (21), Mohan Vishwakarma (32), Vijay (36) and Mannu (26). A juvenile was also apprehended in connection with the case. According to the police, Singh had stepped out of his apartment to dispose of waste when he



noticed a group of men making noise at an eatery opposite his house. After he objected, the accused allegedly chased him from the ground floor to the third floor of the building and assaulted him in front of his 20-year-old son. Singh was taken to Holy Family Hospital around 12.25 am on September 6 in an unconscious and unresponsive state. He died at around 6.30 am. The postmortem examination attributed his death. to haemorrhagic shock caused by blunt-force injuries to the chest and abdomen. The report documented multiple abrasions on his head, face, neck, limbs, chest, abdomen and back, fractures of several ribs on both sides, and a laceration of the spleen. It also recorded around 2 litres of blood and 160 gm.

National Museum May Become Staging Hub for Yuge Yugeen Bharat Displays

NEW DELHI : (AGENCY)

The National Museum in New Delhi is being considered as a staging area for assembling and preparing displays curated for the proposed Yuge Yugeen Bharat National Museum, people familiar with the matter said. The government is also looking to hire a seasoned museologist to head the National Museum as Director General (DG) as part of a planned overhaul of the institution, an official said. The post of DG has been vacant for nearly a year since Professor BR Mani completed his term, according to people familiar with the matter. Joint Secretary Gurmeet Singh Chawla currently holds additional charge as DG. The proposed appointment comes as the government considers changes to the National Museum’s functioning and its role in the development of the new museum. Established in 1949, the National Museum



moved to its permanent premises on Janpath in 1960. It has 29 permanent galleries and collections spanning several millennia of Indian history. Its departments cover archaeology, anthropology, arms and armour, decorative arts, manuscripts, numismatics and epigraphy, paintings, jewellery, Central Asian antiquities, and pre-Columbian and Western art. Its holdings include objects from the Harappan civilisation, sculptures, bronzes, miniature paintings, coins, manuscripts, jewellery, textiles and archaeological artefacts documenting

India’s artistic and cultural history. The museum also houses arms and armour, decorative objects and antiquities from Central Asia. Around two million objects have been assessed as part of preparations for the Yuge Yugeen Bharat National Museum, of which nearly 20-30 per cent are expected to be accommodated in the new institution, people familiar with the matter said. The assessment is expected to help determine which objects will be selected for the new museum. The proposed use of the National Museum as a staging area would involve

assembling and preparing displays for the new institution. Details of the arrangement, including the facilities to be used and the number of objects that may be handled at the National Museum, are under consideration for various curated exhibitions. The Yuge Yugeen Bharat National Museum is being developed in the historic North and South Block buildings in New Delhi. Envisioned as a museum tracing India’s civilisational history, it is expected to have around 30 galleries covering literature, languages, scripts, spiritual traditions, science, mathematics, medicine, architecture, crafts and the performing arts. Earlier reported that the museum’s narrative would include the Vedas, Smritis, the Ramayana and the Mahabharata, alongside the evolution of Buddhism, Jainism, Sikhism and other traditions. The project is expected to draw objects from museums.

CJP's Dipke thanks Delhi Ramlila organisers for 'free publicity' over cockroach effigy

NEW DELHI : (AGENCY)

Cockroach Janata Party (CJP) founder Abhijeet Dipke on Tuesday thanked the organisers of a Ramlila event in Delhi for what he called ‘free publicity’ after they announced plans to burn a 30-foot cockroach effigy alongside those of Ravan, Meghnad and Kumbhakaran. “Thank you for the free publicity,” Dipke said in reaction to the development. CJP legal head Ratna Singh also reacted to the controversy, describing it as a “tamasha” (drama). The Shree Keshav Ram Leela Committee, which organises the annual event in Pitampura, has said the cockroach effigy is intended to symbolise filth and dirt and promote cleanliness under the Swachh Bharat and

Swachh Delhi campaigns. Committee president and BJP MLA Ashok Goel has maintained that the decision was not politically motivated and was intended to convey the message of the victory of good over evil while highlighting the importance of cleanliness. The development comes amid protests by the CJP in the national capital. The group initially protested against former Union education minister Dharmendra Pradhan and later joined demonstrations demanding the resignation of Chief EC Gyanesh Kumar. The proposed effigy has triggered questions on social media, with some users questioning its propriety at a religious celebration and alleging that contemporary political developments.

Rakesh Kumar Sharma Honoured by Shri Ram Mitra Mandal, Noida

NOIDA. OPEN SEARCH

In a remarkable coincidence, Shri Rakesh Kumar Sharma, former Station Manager of New Delhi Railway Station (NDLS), has been honoured for his dedication to helping railway passengers recover their lost belongings. Having joined Indian Railways in 1990, Sharma has contributed to the recovery and return of passengers’ belongings in 1,990 cases.

Shri Ram Mitra Mandal, Noida (Regd.), felicitated him with a memento at the historic Rameela Manch in Sector 62, Noida, recognising his honesty, compassion and continued commitment to public service.

Sharma retired from Indian Railways on January



31, 2026, but his mission to help passengers continues. During his years at NDLS, he developed a resourceful approach to tracing owners of lost belongings, using available journey records, PNR-related information and social media platforms,

including Facebook and WhatsApp.

His efforts have helped passengers recover a wide range of belongings, including laptops, wallets, jewellery, passports and important documents. His work has also attracted media

attention, including coverage on Australia’s SBS Punjabi channel.

His recognitions include the GM Award (2006), Ati Vishisht Rail Seva Puraskar (2023), NBT Prernadeep, and recognition in the India Book of Records and Asia Book of Records, where he received Grand Master recognition. The felicitation by Shri Ram Mitra Mandal, Noida (Regd.), celebrates not merely a professional achievement but a lasting commitment to honesty, empathy and selfless service. His journey from joining the Railways in 1990 to reaching 1,990 Lost & Found cases is a powerful reminder that retirement may end a career, but it need not end the spirit of service.

Focus on dust, with 854 smaller roads brought under mechanised sweeping

NEW DELHI : (AGENCY)

Delhi’s winter pollution strategy this year is placing a sharper focus on an often less visible source of pollution, dust from the city’s roads and construction activity, with the government expanding mechanised sweeping to 854 roads across 250 wards and tightening surveillance of construction sites. The move is part of the Delhi Government’s Winter Action Plan, to be implemented from November 1 to February 28, as the capital prepares for the annual deterioration in air quality during winter. The Cabinet has approved mechanised sweeping on about 609 km of roads with a right of way of less than 10 metres. The

expansion is significant because it takes the dust control effort beyond major arterial roads and into smaller roads spread across neighbourhoods. The government has also approved a five-year partnership with IIT Delhi to continuously analyse the sources of PM2.5 and PM10. The system will assess the daily contribution of factors, including vehicular emissions, road dust and biomass burning, potentially giving agencies a more detailed basis for deciding where pollution-control efforts need to be concentrated. The plan comes alongside tighter enforcement measures. The government will enforce the ‘No PUC, No Fuel’ rule, under which vehicles with-



out valid Pollution Under Control certificates will not be allowed to purchase petrol, diesel, CNG or LPG. Vehicles registered outside Delhi that do not meet BS-VI emission standards will also be barred from entering the city. Construction and demo-

lition activity, as well as the transportation of construction material, will face restrictions, while construction sites will be monitored through AI-enabled cameras linked to the government’s command and control centre. The Delhi

The move is part of the Delhi Government’s Winter Action Plan, to be implemented from November 1 to February 28, as the capital prepares for the annual deterioration in air quality during winter.

Pollution Control Committee has already stepped up inspections of construction sites and issued show-cause notices to agencies accused of violating pollution-control norms. Ahead of the winter season, MCD and GNCTD Urban Development Secretary Vivek Pandey jointly inspected pollution hotspots and construction

sites in South Zone on October 11 to assess existing mitigation measures.

The plan also proposes encouraging a 50 per cent work-from-home arrangement and greater use of electric buses, Metro and last-mile connectivity. The wider significance lies in whether the expanded road-cleaning network and source-tracking system can translate a broad winter pollution response into targeted action against specific local sources. For residents, particularly in areas dominated by smaller roads and construction activity, the effectiveness of these measures could determine whether the government’s anti-pollution effort is visible beyond the city’s major roads.

25-yr-old UPSC aspirant dies by suicide in Old Rajinder Nagar

NEW DELHI : (AGENCY) A 25-year-old Union Public Service Commission (UPSC) aspirant from Andhra Pradesh allegedly died by suicide inside his rented flat in Delhi’s Old Rajinder Nagar on Monday, with a note recovered from the spot referring to study-related depression, investigators familiar with the case details said. A senior police officer said that a police control room (PCR) call was received at 2.38pm regarding a suspected suicide by hanging at a house in Old Rajinder Nagar. “A police team reached the spot and found the aspirant hanging inside the locked flat,” the officer said. Preliminary investigation has not revealed any foul play, police said. The body was taken for medico-legal formalities, and further investigation is underway. The deceased was identified as a student preparing for the UPSC entrance examination. According to police, he had been living in the flat with a roommate from Lucknow, who left for his hometown on October 11. “The roommate told us that the deceased was an introvert and had been preparing for the civil services examination for the last two years,” the officers said. The aspirant had attended coaching classes at a centre in Delhi until July, after which he switched to self-study, according to preliminary information shared by police.

Open Search

EDITORIAL

The prospects and challenges of nuclear energy

The present age is an age of science and technology. Today, energy has become one of the most essential needs of human life. Energy is widely used in industries, agriculture, transportation, medicine, and household activities. Due to the growing population and industrialization, the demand for energy is continuously increasing. In such a situation, nuclear energy has emerged as an important alternative.

Nuclear energy is a significant achievement of modern science. It can generate a large amount of electricity using a very small quantity of fuel. It helps reduce dependence on conventional fuels such as coal and petroleum. Nuclear power plants produce very low direct carbon emissions during electricity generation. Therefore, nuclear energy can also help address the problem of climate change. For a developing country like India, nuclear energy holds special importance in terms of economic development and energy security.

However, along with its numerous benefits, nuclear energy is also associated with some serious risks. Accidents at nuclear power plants can cause enormous damage to human life, the environment, and wildlife. Moreover, the safe disposal of nuclear waste is a major challenge because radioactive substances can remain hazardous for a long time. Nuclear technology can also be misused to develop destructive weapons. Therefore, its use requires extreme caution and responsibility.

Considering India's growing energy requirements, the development of nuclear energy is important. However, renewable sources such as solar, wind, and hydropower should also be promoted. Strict safety standards must be followed at nuclear power plants, scientific research should be encouraged, and the proper management of radioactive waste must be ensured. The government should give the highest priority to public welfare and environmental protection.

In conclusion, nuclear energy can be both a boon and a curse for humanity. Its impact entirely depends on the purpose and manner in which it is used. If nuclear energy is utilized with a scientific approach, safe technology, and responsible policies, it can make a significant contribution to the nation's progress, economic development, and energy self-reliance.

Past revised

RENU KOHLI

The new national accounts, rebased from 2011-12 to 2022-23, have stirred more controversy than any statistical exercise in recent memory. Estimates for this year's April-June quarter which were released alongside fuelled more debate: a robust growth of 7.8% upon a base that was revised successively lower over 10 months. There's universal agreement that the new methodology adopted for this revision is superior and that India's large informal economy is now measured more realistically. However, doubts have arisen over the smaller size of the economy and critical metrics used to filter price effects and obtain the true economic growth. There are other puzzles. The back series, which will apply the new methods and information bases back to 2011-12, is expected only by the year end. This may shine a light but what do the new numbers tell us in the meantime? The answer is mixed. Measurement has improved unequivocally. But the revision also changes three things we knew about the Indian economy — its size, structure, and recent growth path and, by extension, the ground lost in the pandemic.

Size has been the most contentious. In shifting the base year for GDP computation, the prices of the chosen year are used as weights to convert other years' output into volumes so that growth can be compared without the noise of price changes (from one year to another). In this sense, rebasing is about real GDP, commonly known as constant-price GDP. Therefore, switching the base year should leave the output value of each year in its own prices (termed as nominal GDP) largely as it was; only real growth and the implied deflator (the nominal/real GDP ratio) should change. That's why past nominal GDP adjustments in moving to another year (for example, from 2004-05 to 2011-12) have been small and mostly upward. This time though, the nominal size of the economy reduced a little over 3%, close to Rs10 trillion each year. This is more than a rounding error.

The likeliest explanation is the scale of the overhaul. Two changes particularly stand out, both superior to past practice. One is the use of separate prices for inputs and outputs — conceptually correct, internationally harmonised, and which uses finer price data across industries. The second is the use of direct surveys of the labour force and unincorporated enterprises to capture the informal sector instead of proxy indicators. In this context, earlier survey rounds had recorded fewer unregistered/informal manufacturing units and workers compared to a decade ago, so a downward revision was not unanticipated. Without a comparable series — neither a parallel older series (base 2011-12) nor the new one recast backwards — a precise attribution of what drives the reduction is difficult.

There's a structural surprise. Agriculture now accounts for one-fifth of the Indian economy against roughly 15% under the old base for the same year. Manufacturing and the trade, hotels, transport and communication cluster of services are correspondingly smaller. This reverses the earlier picture in which both comfortably outweighed agriculture. The long-term decline of the farm sector's share does continue in the new series. Manufacturing inches up after 2022-23 (the new base year) but it still trails agriculture. One takeaway is that Indian manufacturing must now pace faster merely to regain the share we understood it already had.

The implications go beyond accounting. An economy more agrarian than what was believed earlier is one where structural transformation — the movement of workers and production from farms to factories and modern services — has been slower than assumed. Is this what's reflected in the visible increase in the number of workers in agriculture captured in periodic labour force surveys in recent years? Another inference is that agriculture has done more of the heavy lifting in recent growth, contributing several times over what the old series credited it with. Economic growth that leans on agriculture yields smaller productivity gains than growth driven by industry.

SURJIT S BHALLA

Through the worst of it, 1983 to 1992, Punjab's per capita income grew about as fast as the rest of big-state India, and it came out of that decade at the top of the table.

Don't cry for me, Punjab

I am a proud Sikh, a proud Punjabi. I write this in anger and in shame. Anger at what successive governments, in Chandigarh and in Delhi, have done to the most enterprising people in India. Shame that Punjab let them do it, election after election.

In 1993, Punjab was the richest big state in India. Its per capita income was 172 per cent of the big-state average. Today, it is ninth of 20, at 129 per cent. Haryana, carved out of Punjab in 1966 and long treated as the poor cousin, is at 169 per cent. Himachal Pradesh, whose hill districts Punjab used to look down upon, is at 149 per cent. Few states anywhere have fallen this far, this fast, in peacetime. With Assembly elections due early next year, every Punjabi should be asking: how did we get here?

The easy answer is the militancy. Wrong. Through the worst of it, 1983 to 1992, Punjab's per capita income grew about as fast as the rest of big-state India, and it came out of that decade at the top of the table. The militancy was a horror, and it scared away investment. But the slide began after peace returned.

From 1997 to 2016, under the Akalis and under the Congress, Punjab grew slower than the other big states in every single term, by only as much as 1.8 percentage points a year. Assam, with its own long insurgency, shows what peace can do: it has boomed since the violence ebbed. Punjab got peace, then the decline.

The militancy was made in Delhi. In the late 1970s, the Congress went looking for a preacher to outflank the Akalis, and they found Jarnail Singh Bhindranwale. Indira Gandhi's Congress used him in 1980, protected him when it was convenient, and then sent the Army into the Golden Temple when the creature turned on its creators. Operation Bluestar, an assassination, the 1984 pogrom against



Sikhs, a decade of blood. The tragedy of Punjab began with a Central government playing communal and criminal politics for partisan gain.

After the guns fell silent, the damage was done by policy, and both capitals share the blame. The Centre's procurement machine, minimum support prices and assured purchase by the government turned Punjab into India's rice bowl.

A semi-arid state of wheat-eaters now grows paddy on 3.2 million hectares, close to 40 per cent of its cropped area. Punjab pumps out roughly 160 per cent of the ground-water that is recharged each year. Every expert committee since 1986 has said the same thing: Get out of paddy.

Nobody listens, because the bargain suits everyone in control. Delhi needs Punjab's rice for its grana-

ries. Punjab has given farmers free electricity since 1997, so pumping water costs them nothing. The farmer, facing an assured price, assured purchase and free power, rationally grows paddy.

The big farmers get the rent, the water gets mined, the young get nothing. Except drugs, to silence them, rather than education and jobs. Destruction of not just individuals, but families, the very fabric of society.

I have written before about West Bengal, a state that was close to 90 per cent of the big-state average in 1970 and is at 72 per cent today. Its politics learnt that you could win elections without delivering growth.

Punjab's politics is the mirror image, with the same result. Bengal kept re-electing the same people for 30 years; Punjab throws out almost every government. But every party offers

Punjab's voters the same menu: more subsidies, more procurement, no industry.

It could not get any worse, but it did. In 2022, Punjab did what angry voters do — throw out the rascals. They threw out everyone. The Akalis were reduced to three seats, the Congress to 18. The Aam Aadmi Party (AAP) won 92 of 117 seats and 42 per cent of the vote on a promise of change. It was change all right. Only it was change for the worse, much worse.

Look at the record. Under the previous Congress government, Punjab at least kept pace with the other big states. Under AAP, it has fallen behind again, by more than a percentage point a year. Its youth unemployment rate is 17 per cent, against 10 per cent in the rest of big-state India: the widest gap under any Punjab government ever. Barely one in

three Punjabi women is in the labour force, against more than two in five elsewhere. English coaching centres have become the most reliable employer in small-town Punjab. Learn English, and leave Punjab, and India.

The bills and debt mount to an ever-increasing record. Punjab's subsidies have risen to over 4 per cent of state GDP, up from 1.6 per cent in 2017-18. More than two-thirds goes to electricity, the highest share of any state, and price subsidies, the kind that distort most, are the highest in India. The revenue deficit, borrowing to pay for current spending, is 3.2 per cent of state GDP, against 0.4 per cent for the other big states. Debt is 46 per cent of state GDP, against 28 per cent for the rest; again, the widest gap on record.

Interest and pensions eat up more than 5 per cent of state GDP before a single school is built. AAP did not come to clean up the mess. It added free power for households to free power for farms. Who will pay? The children.

My workhorse model of Indian elections says that growth in real per capita income is the best predictor of whether an incumbent is re-elected. Punjab has had too little growth to reward anyone, so it has punished everyone. On that model, AAP should be worried. But Punjab should be more worried. The West Bengal lesson is that a state can stay down for half a century if its politics keeps rewarding the feudal populists. The Assam lesson is that a state can turn around once politics stops getting in the way.

Punjab fed India when it was hungry and defended it when it was attacked. We have been let down by Delhi, by Chandigarh and by ourselves. Don't cry for me, Punjab. I do — I cannot help it. There is an option. Get angry. And in 2027, Punjab should vote for growth, not handouts, while it can still afford the choice.

route their requests through American law enforcement.

However, these risks are not unique to Starlink. Digital telecom has made every country's communications more capable and more exposed. The cyberattack that disabled Viasat's satellite modems across Europe on the morning Russia invaded Ukraine showed how one breach can ripple far beyond a war zone. The intrusions into American carriers attributed to Chinese state hackers showed that even sophisticated terrestrial networks can be quietly penetrated for months. Satellites can be jammed, signals spoofed, ground stations and software updates compromised. Each new network carrying Indian traffic is a new door, and those guarding the house are entitled to inspect it before it is fitted.

Other governments agree. Sri Lanka paused a Starlink rollout it had already licensed because the permit did not guarantee lawful interception. Dutch officials licensing the service in the Caribbean Netherlands were advised to keep interception facilities on Dutch soil. Washington screens foreign-linked carriers and has expelled Chinese operators.

Europe is funding its own constellation, IRIS², to avoid dependence on one foreign provider. India's 29 conditions for satellite operators.

SUBIMAL BHATTACHARJEE

The record does not support the plot. Starlink received its telecom licence in June 2025 and its space-regulator authorisation a month later.

ELON Musk spent the second week of October turning a regulatory delay into a morality play. On October 7, he complained that "certain oligarchs" were keeping Starlink out of India. A day later, he asked whether Mukesh Ambani was "the real boss of India". By October 9, he was addressing "Prime Minister Ambani" in a sarcastic apology. The story had everything a social media feed wants: a foreign innovator, a domestic tycoon and an observant bureaucracy in between. The record does not support the plot. Starlink received its telecom licence in June 2025 and its space-regulator authorisation a month later. Jio Satellite and Eutelsat OneWeb are licensed too, and Union Communications Minister Jyotiraditya Scindia says none of the three has security clearance. All hold provisional licences. The Digital Communications Commission has set charges at 5% of revenue, 4% in rural areas, and the Union Cabinet is yet to approve them.

On the one big policy fight, Jio wanted spectrum auctioned and lost; the government chose administrative allocation, as Starlink had lobbied. On October 16, Reliance said it welcomed Starlink's competition and that Jio's own satellite service is stuck in the same queue.

The key hurdle to Starlink's launch is security



clearance from the Ministry of Home Affairs (MHA). The reasons lie in the technology and the mandatory regulatory process, not in Musk's temperament. Satellite broadband is different from the copper and fibre networks India's security apparatus learned to supervise. Its coverage is defined in software. A region can be lit up, throttled or switched off by an engineer thousands of kilometres away, and the host government may learn of it afterwards.

Musk showed this in 2022 when he declined to extend coverage for a Ukrainian operation near Crimea. He showed it again this February, when SpaceX and Kyiv cut off every unregistered terminal in Ukraine to stop Russian forces using the network to guide drones. Last week

brought another demonstration. On October 13, Ukrainian forces found their military Starshield terminals cut off above about 160 km/h, without warning. Drones lost their links and missions were cancelled.

Musk mentioned that Washington sets such limits; the White House said it imposed no restrictions; Ukrainian President Volodymyr Zelenskyy insisted it was deliberate, not a glitch. Service is back; nobody has said who pulled the lever. For any country weighing such dependence, that silence is the lesson.

Then there is the route data takes. Starlink's satellites pass traffic to one another by laser, so a message from a village in Assam could in principle land in another country without touching an Indian gateway.

Lawful interception, blocking orders and routine criminal investigation all depend on traffic crossing infrastructure the State can reach. A network able to route around it must prove that it will not. The terminals are the third problem. They are small and easy to smuggle. Russian units obtained them through grey markets and third countries for two years before the whitelist arrived. They surfaced in Iran, where Starlink holds no licence. In India, devices have been recovered from militants in Manipur and drug runners off the Andamans. Musk insists Starlink's beams have never been switched on over India. But a sovereign state cannot run border security on a company's assurance, least of all one that reportedly told Indian agencies to

Agoda Maps Asia's Travel Interest Ahead of the Bangkok Grand Final

SINGAPORE : (AGENCY)

Digital travel platform Agoda has seen a rise in travel interest to Bangkok this November, building towards one of the region's biggest cultural moments of the year with the inaugural Eurovision Asia Grand Final, happening in the Thai capital on 14 November. The contest marks a milestone for the region: the first-ever pan-Asian expansion of the 70-year-old Eurovision franchise, bringing finalists from 11 countries to the stage for a potential regional audience of millions. Against this backdrop, Agoda's insights on travel interest suggest the region is packing its bags in more ways than one. Travel interest to Bangkok is up 14% year on year for stays around the Grand Final period (9–22 November),



based on Agoda accommodation searches from travelers across Asia. The leading markets considering Bangkok stays during this period include Thailand, Japan, the Philippines, Singapore, Taiwan, South Korea, Malaysia, Hong Kong, Vietnam, and India. Vietnam travel interest to Bangkok more than doubled for the Grand Final period

year on year based on accommodation searches, up 105%. India followed with a 43% increase, reflecting Indian travelers' continued interest in short-haul travel to Southeast Asia, while Malaysia recorded a 4% rise, building on an already well-established travel relationship with Thailand. As host nation, Thailand is also embracing

the moment at home: domestic travel interest to Bangkok for the same period is up 30% year on year, as Thai travelers plan to be part of the excitement in their own capital. Beyond Bangkok, Agoda search data reveals increasing travel interest amongst some popular travel destinations across Asia that have also had their own National Finals. South Korea's national selection show, Korea's Next Wave, aired on 4 September, and general travel interest to South Korea from across the region rose 18% year on year. Vietnam saw a similar effect, with travel interest in the country rising 5% year on year around its own national selection show on 3 October. Andrew Smith, Senior Vice President, Supply at Agoda, shared: "As the Official Travel Partner

of Eurovision Song Contest Asia, Agoda is proud to support this cultural milestone and first in the region. We believe that Asia doesn't just watch moments like these, but travels for them. Whether you're heading to Bangkok for the Grand Final or inspired to explore the city this November, Agoda makes it easy to find the right stay for every kind of traveler, from Siam's shopping energy to the culture of the Old Town." Where to Stay in Bangkok: A Neighborhood Guide for The Grand Final Season For travelers planning a trip around the Grand Final, Bangkok offers a distinct experience depending on where you base yourself. Here's a closer look at four neighborhoods worth considering. Siam, Bangkok's commercial heart, is where the city's retail culture.

Taman Safari Indonesia Brings Wildlife, Entertainment and Family Experiences

JAKARTA : (AGENCY)

Taman Safari Indonesia Group continues to bring together wildlife, entertainment, culture, and family experiences through its diverse tourism destinations across Indonesia. From immersive safari adventures to marine attractions, cultural performances, and interactive entertainment, the Group offers visitors a variety of experiences that combine recreation, education, and discovery. In Bali, Taman Safari Bali features wildlife encounters, the Safari Journey, and the spectacular Bali Agung Show, celebrating the island's rich cultural heritage. Nearby, Marine Safari Bali offers immersive marine experiences, including Varuna, an underwater-themed theatrical dining show combining story-



telling, technology, and live entertainment. In West Java, Taman Safari Bogor invites visitors to explore wildlife through its signature drive-through safari experience. In East Java, Taman Safari Prigen combines wildlife encounters with the beauty of its mountainous surroundings, offering families opportunities to connect with nature and learn about wildlife. For visitors seeking an indoor adventure, Jakarta Aquarium & Safari brings

aquatic life and wildlife closer through interactive exhibits and themed experiences. The Group's portfolio also includes Solo Safari, Enchanting Valley, and Beach Safari Batang, alongside hospitality facilities that complement visitors' travel experiences. "Through our diverse destinations, we aim to create memorable experiences that bring people closer to wildlife, nature, and culture. By combining recreation, education,

India's auto tech companies secure \$1.3 billion so far in 2026 : Report

NEW DELHI : (AGENCY)

Indian automotive technology firms secured USD 1.3 billion through 97 funding rounds in 2026 so far, in contrast to USD 2.1 billion through 195 rounds in 2025, according to a report published by data intelligence platform Tracxn Technologies. The report indicated that a few substantial, later-stage funding rounds contributed to the majority of the capital raised throughout the period, with 10 deals of USD 34 million or greater collectively drawing in USD 900 million. The report noted that these 10 rounds contributed about 70 per cent of the overall USD 1.3 billion raised, while the other 87 rounds generated roughly USD 400 million. Several businesses on the soon-to-come list, which includes startups viewed as possible



future unicorns, appeared among the fundraisers. Nonetheless, the industry saw no new unicorns throughout the timeframe. The review in the report for the year 2026 examined funding movements, unicorns, acquisitions and public offerings from January 1 to October 15, 2026. Companies based in Bengaluru were the top beneficiaries of investment representing almost 70 per cent of the overall funding at USD 894 million. Firms situated in Delhi and

Mumbai secured around USD 107 million each. Investments in later stages totaled USD 810 million during the timeframe, with Series C and later funding rounds representing eight of the ten biggest deals. Public listings and initial public offerings (IPOs) reached three in 2026 up to October, in contrast to six in 2025. According to the report, the three IPOs' total market capitalisation was roughly USD 52 million. Concurrently, another report underscored the

increasing significance of automotive technology in mergers and acquisitions (M&A), with this sector representing 87 per cent of the overall M&A value during the second quarter of 2026. The trend indicated a rise in strategic investments in software, cybersecurity and connected mobility capabilities, despite overall deal volumes being lower. Average deal sizes rose markedly, demonstrating a heightened focus of capital on lucrative, technology-centric deals. In general, automotive deal values dropped slightly by 4 per cent sequentially, as funding stayed focused on a small number of significant transactions involving mobility platforms, automotive technology and public market fundraisers. Mobility-as-a-Service (MaaS) dominated total sector deal values.

SC ruling on Yes Bank's AT1 bonds to impact capital ratio, profitability : Moody's

MUMBAI : (AGENCY)

The Supreme Court's ruling on Yes Bank's additional tier 1 (AT1) bonds is expected to impact the lender's capital ratio and profitability, with its Common Equity Tier 1 (CET1) capital ratio projected to decline to 11.4 per cent from 13.7 per cent, according to Moody's Ratings. The rating agency, in a release enclosed in the bank's exchange filing on Tuesday, said it had affirmed Yes Bank's long-term foreign and local currency deposit ratings at Ba1 and maintained a stable outlook despite the expected decline in its core capital. The reinstatement of the AT1 securities is expected to weaken the bank's capital position and have a one-time negative impact on profitability. However, the Tier 1 capital ratio is expected to remain



unchanged as the reinstated bonds will continue to count towards regulatory capital adequacy. "Management estimates the bank's CET1 ratio will decline to 11.4% from 13.7% on a pro forma basis as of September 2026," Moody's said in the release. The rating agency added that the impact of the lower CET1 ratio would be mitigated by improvements in the bank's funding profile, asset quality and profitability. "We expect Yes Bank to replenish its capital buffers by raising new equity capital to a level that is sufficient to support loan growth, while strengthening its loss absorbing buffers," Moody's said. The Supreme Court on October 15.

Premium Experiences for Travellers Beyond Shopping and Sightseeing

DUBAI : (AGENCY)

Dubai has plenty to offer once you step away from the shopping bags and observation decks. A desert dinner, a morning on the water or a meal shaped by Emirati traditions can give your holiday a different rhythm. These experiences let you spend time enjoying a place rather than simply photographing it. For visitors and UAE residents planning a short break, the real question is how to spend that time well. Start with experiences that match your interests, then build the journey around them. Dubai's outdoor travel season broadly runs from October to April, when cooler conditions make activities outside more comfortable. Desert

outings, terrace dining and days by the coast become easier to fit into a holiday. Still, the season does not remove the need for planning. Check the forecast before boat trips or mountain activities. Carry sunscreen during the day and a light layer for an evening outdoors. Reserve experiences with limited capacity before arranging the rest of your schedule. For each booking, request a final price in AED and check cancellation terms. A quoted rate may cover only the core activity. Transfers, meals or other additions can change the total, so a written breakdown helps you decide where to spend your available holiday budget. A premium desert outing can focus on wildlife, local traditions.

Digital gold market could reach \$170 billion by 2031, India to remain key market

NEW DELHI : (AGENCY)

The global digital gold retail market may exceed USD 160–170 billion by 2031 in a base-case scenario, as per the recent report from the World Gold Council (WGC), indicating swift expansion in tech-focused gold investment. The report, compiled in collaboration with Boston Consulting Group, values the market at approximately USD 45–55 billion and predicts a potential annual growth rate of roughly 27 per cent over the next five years. If obstacles to adoption are eliminated more quickly, the market might expand to USD 270–280 billion by 2031. The WGC noted that digital gold has become popular with younger, tech-oriented investors who favour fractional ownership



of physical gold via digital platforms instead of buying jewelry or bullion directly. Over 70 digital gold products have been introduced worldwide, with countries like India, China and Indonesia becoming prominent centers for adoption. These products enable investors to purchase, trade and maintain small amounts of gold supported by physical reserves held by external custodians. The report states that digital

gold holdings now equal approximately 370 tonnes of gold, accounting for about 8 per cent of the worldwide gold-backed exchange-traded fund (ETF) holdings. The report emphasized a significant rise in trading activity for tokenised gold products, with spot trading volumes surpassing USD 90 billion in the first quarter of 2026 — exceeding the entire volume noted in 2025. The WGC projects that approximately USD 95 billion in

fresh investment might enter physical gold if digital gold suppliers resolve issues related to trust, transparency, custody and accessibility. David Tait, CEO of the World Gold Council, said that robust infrastructure will be essential for initiating the next growth phase as investor interest continues to move towards digital investment avenues. India is expected to continue being a significant market for digital gold, bolstered by extensive smartphone usage, rising knowledge of digital payments and a growing interest in alternative investment options. The report highlighted that digital platforms have reduced the entry barriers for novice investors by allowing purchases in small amounts while maintaining exposure to the price fluctuations.

Asian coal prices to stay elevated as Indonesian supply curbs tighten market : Report

NEW DELHI : (AGENCY)

Asian thermal coal prices are likely to remain elevated over the next few months as uncertainty over Indonesian supplies and lower Chinese production constrain availability, while gas-to-coal switching in Japan and South Korea supports demand, according to a report by Fitch Ratings. The rating agency said the tight supply outlook, along with winter restocking, would support prices in the near term, benefiting coal miners through stronger cash flows and improved debt-servicing capacity. However, it cautioned that these gains would not offset longer-term pressure from declining Chinese and Indian

import demand and the shift toward cleaner energy sources. Indonesian coal exports have faced disruptions from uncertainty over mining quotas and logistical constraints. Severe drought linked to El Nino has restricted barging along the Barito River, contributing to a 23.3 per cent year-on-year decline in exports in August and an 18.1 per cent fall in September. "Higher prices in Indonesia may ease pressure for the government to impose deeper production cuts, but uncertainty over production quota allocation for 2027, single-door export policy, domestic market obligation requirements, and broader mining regulation will continue to constrain operating visibility,"



the report said. Some Indonesian producers have declared force majeure on coal shipments because they could not secure mining quotas or faced logistical bottlenecks, Fitch said. Although the government eased its initial

2026 coal production target of 600 million tonnes, compared with an actual output of 790 million tonnes in 2025, uncertainty over 2027 quotas and export policies continues to affect operating visibility. China's coal production has also

been weak following tighter safety inspections after a mine accident in Shanxi in May. National raw-coal output declined 10.1 per cent year-on-year in July and 7.7 per cent in August, leaving production down 3.3 per cent in the first eight months of 2026. Fitch expects Chinese production to recover gradually, which could eventually ease prices. However, the timing will depend partly on whether Indonesian supply constraints and logistical disruptions persist. Demand trends remain mixed. Coal consumption in India and Southeast Asia continues to be supported by power demand growth of 5–7 per cent, weaker hydropower output, and constraints on adding

renewable energy capacity. In contrast, China's thermal power generation rose just 0.9 per cent in the first eight months of 2026, as higher renewable and nuclear output reduced reliance on coal. Fitch expects Chinese thermal power generation to remain broadly flat or decline mildly in 2027 as new renewable capacity meets additional electricity demand. For miners, higher prices should support near-term earnings, particularly for low-cost producers with strong balance sheets. However, Fitch said rising regulatory uncertainty and costs in Indonesia remain important credit risks, while the longer-term shift away from thermal coal continues to weigh on the sector's export outlook.

Briefs News

How Branded Manufacturing is reshaping India's Hardware Industry

NEW DELHI : (AGENCY) A few years ago, a dealer in eastern India approached a hardware manufacturer with a requirement for three products. The manufacturer could supply only two, forcing the dealer to source the third from another supplier. This meant managing two invoices, two deliveries and two separate points of contact in case of any issue. The dealer was not being difficult; this was simply how India's architectural hardware trade had traditionally operated. For decades, the fragmented nature of the industry was accepted as a normal part of doing business. However, this presents a significant opportunity for change. India's market for hinges, bolts, latches and door fittings is growing, estimated at approximately US\$3.96 billion in 2026 by Mordor Intelligence and projected to reach US\$6.31 billion by 2031. Much of the market continues to be served by small manufacturers specialising in a limited number of products and catering to specific regions. While these businesses are efficient within their niches, buyers are often left to coordinate multiple suppliers. For a builder fitting out hundreds of apartments, managing procurement across several hardware vendors adds unnecessary complexity. Recognising this gap, the company adopted a strategy focused on product range rather than concentrating on volume in a single category. It developed nine product categories.

Digital Science and Sunmedia partner to bring research impact reporting to Japan's medical affairs teams

TOKYO : (AGENCY) Digital Science, a leading technology company serving stakeholders across the research ecosystem, today announced a partnership with Sunmedia, a Tokyo-based scholarly information company, to help medical affairs teams across Japan understand the impact of their research. Under the partnership, Sunmedia will develop customized, narrative-driven reports using Digital Science's Dimensions and Altmetric data, helping medical affairs teams show how their published research and independent medical education (IME) activity translate into real-world outcomes, such as clinical guidelines. The reports help medical affairs teams understand the impact of their work — including how much attention their research and independent medical education activities receive and the sentiment regarding those activities. That understanding feeds directly into publication strategy. Sunmedia serves around 2,000 corporate customers across various sectors, with pharmaceutical as its core market, including most major pharma companies in Japan. Koji Yamashita, CEO, Sunmedia, said: "Medical affairs teams in Japan have long needed a clearer way to demonstrate the value of their work to leadership."

Global Trade Growth Accelerates and Globalization Sets New Record

NEW DELHI : (AGENCY) The global race to build infrastructure for artificial intelligence is giving world trade strong momentum at a time of higher tariffs and geopolitical conflicts. The AI boom has become a powerful driver of global trade — outweighing tariffs and geopolitical shocks, according to the latest DHL Globalization Tracker. The trade outlook has improved, with growth through 2029 now forecast to outpace the previous decade South and Central Asia to have the second-fastest goods-trade growth over 2026–29, behind only the Middle East & North Africa. This is one of the key findings of the latest edition of the DHL Globalization Tracker, released by DHL and New York University's Stern School of Business. Based on more than 30 million data points, the report analyzes international flows of trade, capital, information, and people. It offers the most comprehensive view of globalization available. This edition marks the report's first publication under its new name. It was previously known as the "DHL Global Connectedness Tracker". The report shows that global goods trade grew faster in the first half of 2026 than in any half-year in the past 15 years, apart from the exceptional Covid rebound. A major driver was strong demand for goods used to build AI infrastructure, such as semiconductors and data-transmission equipment. Trade in AI-enabling goods drove 42% of goods trade growth in 2025, and this share rose to 76% during the first quarter of 2026, according to WTO and OECD analysis.

Vijay Sharma visited Maa Danteshwari, Maa Parameshwari and Maa Chandī

RAIPUR, OPEN SEARCH

On the occasion of Maha Ashtami of Navratri, Deputy Chief Minister and Kawardha MLA Shri Vijay Sharma visited the famous Maa Danteshwari Temple, Maa Parameshwari Temple and Maa Chandī Temple in Kawardha town of Kabirdham district and offered prayers and wished for happiness, prosperity and well-being of the people of the state. On this occasion, he took blessings by seeing the Skull Yatra of Mata Kali which takes place at night as per the historical religious tradition of Kawardha. During this, he participated in Mata Seva along with the devotees and worshipped Maa Bhagwati by singing Jasgeet.

The tradition of carrying out the skull on the night of Maha Ashtami in Kawardha is believed to be



more than a hundred years old. This unique tradition, associated with the Maa Danteshwari, Maa Chandī, and Maa Parameshwari temples, is an important part of the region's religious faith and cultural heritage. According to religious beliefs, this tradition of carrying a skull in the form of

Goddess Kali and touring the city is performed with the wish for peace, security, and public welfare. Amid chants of praise and a devotional atmosphere, large numbers of devotees arrive to witness this special ritual.

Deputy Chief Minister Shri Sharma reverently visited Khappar Wali Mata and

expressed his faith in this ancient tradition. During this time, he had a cordial meeting with young people and devotees who had come for darshan from far-flung areas, including Kawardha. He participated in Mata Seva and sang jasgeet with everyone. The atmosphere was filled with devotion

In the historic Khappar Yatra of Kawardha, Mata Kali was seen and blessed, Jasgeet was sung with the devotees.

with devotional songs and chants of Mata's praises. He extended Navratri greetings to everyone and inquired about their well-being.

Deputy Chief Minister Mr. Sharma said that Kawardha's Khappar Yatra is a precious treasure of our ancient religious traditions and folk faith. This tradition, passed down through generations, still connects people to their culture and spiritual heritage. He said that it is a privilege to visit the Mother Goddess and join the devotees in serving and worshipping her on the auspicious occasion of Maha Ashtami. He prayed to Mother Goddess for happiness, peace, and prosperity in everyone's lives.

Bengal govt deploys doctors at 5 major Kolkata puja pandals after stampede

KOLKATA. (AGENCY)

After the death of 19 people in a stampede here, the West Bengal Health Department has decided to deploy doctors at five crowd-puller Durga Puja pandals in the metropolis to ensure quick medical care in case of any eventuality, according to an official order.

Leaves of doctors, health workers and all administrative officials have been cancelled. IAS officers on leave have been asked to rejoin duty immediately. The order stated that teams, including medical officers and doctors of the rank of assistant professor, would be stationed at the five pandals from 5 pm to 6 am from October 19 to October 21, when Durga Puja ends. Doctors from the Nil Ratan Sircar (NRS) Medical



College and Hospital will be deployed at nearby Santosh Mitra Square, while a team of medics from the R G Kar Medical College and Hospital will be stationed at the Tala Pratoy puja pandal.

Teams from the Medical College, Kolkata will cover the famed College Square Durga Puja, those from the National Medical College will be deployed at Ekdalia Evergreen, and doctors from SSKM Hospital will be on duty at Chetla Agrani pandal.

The health department has directed major hospitals in the city to keep their

emergency departments fully functional during the festival. Orthopaedic surgeons, neurosurgeons and anaesthetists have to be present so that emergency surgeries for trauma cases can be performed without delay in the event of a major accident, the order said. As many as 19 people died, and 25 were injured in a stampede at Chorbagan Durga Puja pandal in north Kolkata on Saturday following a crowd surge amid rain. The health administration in North 24 Parganas has been asked to remain extra vigilant in view of the large gatherings expected at the Dakshineswar temple complex and for idol immersion in Taki. The department warned that those failing to comply with the order would face disciplinary action, including dismissal or suspension.

Briefs News

Kolkata Police search for person who spread rumour before Durga Puja pandal stampede

KOLKATA. (AGENCY) Kolkata Police are looking for a person who had allegedly misled revellers by announcing that a section of the Chorbagan Durga Puja pandal was collapsing, which appeared to have triggered panic among them and led to the stampede that claimed the lives of 19 people and left 25 injured three days ago, a senior officer said on Tuesday. The police have not found evidence to substantiate the claim, he said. "At present, there is no evidence to suggest that any part of the pandal was in a position to collapse," the police officer told PTI, adding that investigators were examining CCTV footage to establish the sequence of events. Of the 30 cameras installed across the premises, footage from 13 covers the area where the incident took place, he said. "An analysis indicates that rain caused the exit point to be congested, while the entry point remained open despite the presence of a large crowd inside the pandal," the officer said. Nineteen people were killed and 25 injured in a stampede at the Chorbagan Durga Puja pandal in north Kolkata on Saturday evening. The CCTV footage is expected to help investigators reconstruct the crowd's movement and determine how the situation escalated, the officer said, adding that the circumstances under which entry was allowed despite congestion at the exit may also come under scrutiny. "Who made the announcement and why it was made are key questions that need to be answered," the officer said. The announcement that a section of the structure was collapsing allegedly triggered panic among visitors. "Police have not found evidence to substantiate the claim," the officer said.

Wife takes an unexpected 'road drop' as Uttarakhand man tries to dodge traffic police

CHANDIGARH : (AGENCY) A motorcyclist in Uttarakhand's Rudrapur may have managed to ride away from a police checkpoint, but his wife was left behind quite literally. The bid to dodge a police checkpoint turned into a rather unplanned drop-off for his wife, who fell onto the road after her husband allegedly made a sudden turn to evade the cops at Trishul Chowk. The incident captured on video that has since gone viral on social media. According to the available details, the incident occurred when officers signalled the motorcyclist to pull over; he allegedly accelerated and abruptly swerved in an attempt to get past the checkpoint. The sudden manoeuvre caused his wife, who was riding pillion, to lose her balance and fall onto the road. Police personnel at the checkpoint were seen rushing towards the woman to assist her after the fall. According to officials, the woman was questioned following the incident and reportedly told the police that she had not sustained any injuries. After counselling her, the police sent her home.

Manipur bandh: Markets, schools shut in five valley districts over killing of 3 Meiteis

IMPHAL : (AGENCY) Normal life was affected on Tuesday with closures of markets, educational institutions and business establishments in five valley districts of Manipur due to a statewide 48-hour strike called by a civil society group to protest against the killing of three Meiteis by suspected militants. Public transport remained off the roads, but a few private vehicles were seen plying. Most markets, educational institutions and business establishments were closed in Imphal East, Imphal West, Bishnupur, Thoubal and Kakching districts. Members of the Native People Committee Manipur in different parts of Imphal East and Imphal West districts blocked roads and staged protests against the killing of three firewood collectors at Sunurok hills in Kangpokpi district a day ago. The organisation called for the bandh on Tuesday and Wednesday. Security has been tightened in and around the state capital as a precautionary measure, a police officer said, adding that no untoward incident has been reported this morning, but protesters held demonstrations in some areas. On Monday night, they burnt tyres on roads at Kwakeithel and Chingmeirong in Imphal West district and Khurai Lamlong in Imphal East. The ethnic conflict that erupted in May 2023 between the valley-based Meitei and hill-based Kuki communities in Manipur has claimed at least 306 lives, while 49 people remain missing and thousands have been left homeless. In recent months, clashes between Kuki and Naga communities have also been reported.

IAF chief takes 'last sortie in uniform' near Hyderabad, flies Kiran aircraft

HYDERABAD : (AGENCY)

IAF Chief Air Chief Marshal AP Singh on Tuesday took his "last sortie in uniform" in a Kiran aircraft at the Air Force Academy (AFA) at Dundigal near here, in what he described as completing a circle by flying a machine that first showed him the skies. Days ahead of his retirement later this month, it was a nostalgic moment for Singh as he flew the Kiran aircraft with his instructor, Wing Commander (retd) V S Kochchar who taught him flying at the AFA, the IAF chief's alma mater, four decades ago. Recalling his first flight on January 20, 1984 with Kochchar in a Kiran aircraft at the AFA, Singh said he did his "last sortie in uniform" on Tuesday with his teacher by his side. He expressed

his gratitude to his guru. Air Chief Marshal Singh was given a water cannon salute as a mark of respect as he landed, concluding the sortie. The IAF chief passed out from the AFA in 1984 with a Sword of Honour. He had flown his last fighter jet sortie aboard an indigenous Tejas on October 12 during Exercise Tarang Shakti at Jodhpur Air Force Station. When reminded that he started his flying career with the Kiran aircraft and "ended" with the same, Singh said it was a "dream come true". "I started my journey with the same aircraft. I think I must be the only Chief who is retiring on the basic aircraft he flew is still serving. I am very grateful to my instructor Kochchar sir who taught me flying in the beginning, in this place itself."

Money, Power, Fame, Drugs : How Young Men are Pulled Into Crime

MUMBAI : (AGENCY)

The firing targeting Bollywood actor Tiger Shroff in Mumbai's Juhu area on Sunday evening has brought the spotlight back on the networks of organised crime that use shootings and threats to project power. The Lawrence Bishnoi gang has claimed responsibility for the attack, but investigators still need to establish the full chain of involvement and the circumstances surrounding the shooting. In the past Bollywood has seen threats issued to actor Salman Khan, firing at his Bandra residence and the cold-blooded murder of politician Baba Siddique.

Behind all of this lies a wider question: who carries out these attacks on the ground and how are these young men recruited? Across Delhi, Haryana,



Punjab and Rajasthan, young boys and men are being drawn into the world of crime and gangs. Some are recruited through friendships, social media and local connections. Others are attracted by the promise of money, power, glamour or a better life. In some cases, prison also becomes the place where they come into contact with established gangsters and are drawn deeper into criminal networks. "My friends

Surajkund Diwali Mela 2026 returns on Oct 23: What to expect, dates, attractions and more

CHANDIGARH : (AGENCY)

The Surajkund Diwali Mela 2026 will bring four days of festive shopping, traditional handicrafts, folk music and regional cuisine to Faridabad from October 23 to 26, with around 300 stalls showcasing Indian art and craft traditions. Haryana Chief Minister Nayab Singh Saini will inaugurate the third edition of the fair, while Union Minister Manohar Lal Khattar will attend the closing ceremony on October 26. Organised by the Haryana Tourism Department, the fair will offer visitors a mix of Diwali shopping, cultural performances, traditional food and family entertainment. A performance by renowned Sufi and folk singer Kanwar Grewal is expected to be one of the main attractions. Around 300 stalls will



showcase handicrafts, handloom products, traditional artefacts, home décor items and festive products from different parts of the country. Visitors will be able to explore and purchase traditional crafts at a single venue. The fair will also feature folk artists, traditional dance groups and musical performances celebrating India's cultural diversity. A spacious food court will serve regional delicacies alongside popular dishes

from well-known food brands. Sufi and folk singer Kanwar Grewal will perform during the cultural evening. Folk music and traditional dance performances will offer visitors a glimpse of India's diverse cultural traditions. Haryana Heritage and Tourism Minister Arvind Sharma said folk songs, dances and traditional music were an integral part of India's cultural heritage and helped pass traditions from one

The fair will also feature folk artists, traditional dance groups and musical performances celebrating India's cultural diversity.

generation to the next. Sharma said the Surajkund Diwali Mela was more than a shopping and entertainment event, as it provided artisans and craftsmen with a platform to display their skills, sell products directly to customers and connect with new markets. He said handicrafts were an important part of India's cultural identity and a source of livelihood for millions. Such events helped preserve traditional skills, encourage younger generations to carry them forward and support local economic activity. The state government is also seeking to expand tourism.

UP man shoots sleeping daughter in head over her refusal to marry man chosen by him

MAINPURI : (AGENCY)

A 48-year-old man allegedly shot his 19-year-old daughter in the head while she was asleep after she refused to marry a man chosen by him and insisted on marrying the person she loved, police said on Tuesday. The woman, identified as Shazia, sustained critical injuries in the incident that took place on Monday in Bhongana town of Mainpuri district. She was taken to the district hospital from where she was referred to Safai Medical College and is undergoing treatment, police said. Superintendent of Police (City) Arun Kumar Singh that he visited the spot and spoke to the family members and neighbours to ascertain the circumstances surrounding the incident. "Shazia was in a relationship with a person and wanted to marry him. However, her father, Asin Khan, who works as a

labourer, had fixed her marriage with another man for November 19. When she refused to marry the man chosen by her father and insisted on marrying the



person she loved, he allegedly shot her in the head while she was asleep," Singh said. "Hearing the gunshot, Shazia's mother, Kherunisha, rushed to the room and took her injured daughter to the district hospital from where she was referred to Safai Medical College," the officer said. Kherunisha subsequently lodged an FIR against her husband, accusing him of attempting to kill their daughter, police said.

Tiger Shroff firing case : US-based gangster Anil Pandit under scanner over extortion, targeted attacks

MUMBAI : (AGENCY)

Gangster Anil Pandit, who allegedly operates from the US, has emerged as a key suspect in the firing incident involving Bollywood actor Tiger Shroff, with police linking him to more than a dozen cases of extortion and targeted attacks in Haryana and Delhi.

Delhi Police has been probing his alleged involvement in different cases in Delhi, including the firing incident outside a gym of a famous Punjabi singer. Pandit, a native of Haryana's Panipat district, is suspected to be operating a network from the United States and coordinating with shooters in India, said a police

source.

Related news: Bishnoi gang's Mumbai shadow grows after murder attempt on Tiger Shroff Three alleged shooters -- two from Haryana and one from Bihar -- were arrested by Kota police in connection with the firing at Shroff.

The Special Cell of the Delhi Police is also collecting details of shooters active in Delhi-NCR and examining their possible links with the gang.

Around 10 teams have been deployed to investigate different aspects of the case, said the source. Investigators are also examining a social media post in which Pandit allegedly claimed responsibility for



the incident and issued a threat linked to the Bollywood industry.

Police are looking into his suspected connections with several firing and extortion cases reported in Delhi, Haryana, Rajasthan and Maharashtra. His name

had earlier surfaced during investigations into firing outside a gym associated with singer Guru Randhawa in Delhi's Paschim Vihar, the source said. The criminal network allegedly uses messaging applications to communicate with shooters

Police are looking into his suspected connections with several firing and extortion cases reported in Delhi, Haryana, Rajasthan and Maharashtra.

operating in different states, including Delhi. Investigators are trying to establish the roles of those involved, the source of weapons and the possible financial support provided to the shooters.

Police may also question suspected associates lodged in Tihar and Mandoli jails as part of the investigation. Investigators are also

checking whether the accused had planned any further attacks in Delhi.

A purported audio clip in which Pandit, 32, is heard claiming Tiger Shroff was attacked because he ignored warnings not to work with superstar Salman Khan was circulated widely across several media platforms. Pandit can be heard demanding an apology from Salman Khan to the Lawrence Bishnoi gang and community. The star was allegedly involved in the shooting of a blackbuck, sacred to the Bishnoi community, in 1998. If there was no apology, others in the film fraternity close to the star would also be targeted, Pandit threatens.

Paralympic champion Pramod Bhagat marches into men's singles SL3 semis

AICHI-NAGOYA : (AGENCY)

The current Asian and Paralympics champion Pramod Bhagat confirmed himself another medal in the para-badminton event at the ongoing Asian Para Games, defeating Japan's Daisuke Fujihara in the quarterfinal on Tuesday, sealing a place in the semi-final and also a medal.

Pramod, India's flag-bearer at the event, beat Daisuke in the men's singles SL3 quarterfinal by 21-12, 21-10 (2-0). Earlier, in para badminton, India's mixed SL3-SU5 pair of Pramod and Manisha Ramdass assured themselves of a medal by advancing to the semifinals. The duo defeated their Thai duo of Srinavakul Chanida and Teamarrom Siripong 21-15, 21-14 in



straight games in just 25 minutes in the quarterfinals. "PRAMOD BHAGAT STORMS INTO THE SEMIFINAL! Men's Singles SL3 - Quarterfinal The reigning champion is on a mission for GOLD at the #AsianPara Games 2026! TOPS athlete

Pramod Bhagat (WR-2), the reigning World and Asian Para Games champion, delivered a dominant performance, defeating Japan's Daisuke Fujihara (WR-6) in straight games, 2-0 (21-12, 21-10)! Earlier, former Paralympics para-shooter

Manish Narwal secured a silver medal in the men's 10 m air pistol SH1 category at the ongoing continental showpiece. Having won a bronze medal in the Asian Para Games 2023 in Hangzhou, Narwal (233.7) finished behind South Korea's Jo Jeongdu (241.3), and above China's Yang Chao, as per ESPN. Manish achieved a fifth-place finish in the qualification round, but the second series of 49.8 in the final lifted him into medal contention. The world record holder Jeongdu was excellent, way away from the chasing pack. The other Indian in the final, Rudranksh Khandelwal, managed a seventh-place finish and was the second person to be eliminated after a poor start. His final was in contrast to his performance in the qualifica-

tion, where he finished second. In para-table tennis, Jehan Madan secured a silver medal in men's singles class 1, finishing fourth in the group. In the five-man field, Jehan finished fourth, only beating compatriot Sandeep Dangi, but it was enough for him to take home a medal.

Also, Ashok secured a silver medal in the men's 65 kg para-powerlifting, with a best lift of 192 kg. He was behind the champion, China's Zou Yi, who took home the gold, with a best lift of 216 kg. This takes India's Asian Para Games medal tally to 22 medals, including five golds, eight silvers and nine bronze medals. India ended the day one of the competition with 11 medals, including four gold medals, five silvers and two bronze medals.

Hockey India announces free entry for spectators at men's Asian Champions Trophy Punjab 2026

NEW DELHI : (AGENCY)

Hockey India has announced that fans will enjoy free entry to the venues in Jalandhar and Mohali for the men's Asian Champions Trophy Punjab 2026, scheduled to be held from October 27 to November 5 - marking the return of international hockey to Punjab, which has a deep-rooted connection to the sport, according to a press release by Hockey India. Olympian Surjit Singh Hockey Stadium in Jalandhar and the Olympian Balbir Singh Senior International Hockey Stadium in Mohali will together host a total of 20 matches. All league-stage matches from October 27 to November 2 will be played in Jalandhar, while the semi-



finals and medal matches will be played in Mohali on November 4 and 5. Fans can secure their free entry passes by visiting www.ticketgenie.in or downloading the TicketGenie mobile application. After registering, fans can select their preferred matches from the list of fixtures and receive a digital entry pass with a QR code. The QR code must be scanned at the venue for free entry. The move underscores Hockey India's commitment to strengthening the sport at every level, from grassroots develop-

ment to elite competition, while bringing top international hockey action closer to fans. Speaking on the decision, Hockey India President Dilip Tirkey said: "By making entry free for the Hero Asian Champions Trophy Punjab 2026, we hope to bring more supporters to the stands and give them an opportunity to experience the excitement of top-level international hockey." Hockey India's Secretary General, Bhola Nath Singh, said he is looking forward to see packed stadiums at the two venues. "Hockey has always enjoyed a special place in Punjab, and we want fans to be part of this celebration of the sport," the Secretary General said. "Our objective is to make hockey more accessible.

Briefs News

Ronaldo suspended for 30 days, fined 255 euros for walking out on Portugal camp

LISBON : (AGENCY) Walking out on the Portugal camp earned Cristiano Ronaldo a 30-day suspension and 255 euros (\$285) fine from the national federation. The Portuguese Football Federation had provisionally suspended Ronaldo and on Monday called the punishment "adequate and sufficient." The federation said Ronaldo fully admitted the facts underlying the charges through a formal statement submitted on Friday. It said his confession and clean disciplinary record helped to reduce the punishment. The fine was the maximum allowable by the federation after mitigating circumstances were taken into account. Ronaldo can appeal the suspension, but he had already apologised and said he expected to be punished. He had not immediately reacted publicly to news of the suspension. During recent Nations League fixtures, Ronaldo played in the opening win over Wales then was an unused substitute in a win in Norway on September 27. Ronaldo accused coach Jorge Jesus of breaking an agreement to play him and walked out. Without him, Portugal also beat Denmark and Norway again to qualify for the quarterfinals. The suspension began on October 1, the day of the Denmark game, meaning he has served 19 days and is expected to be available for Portugal's next Nations League match on November 14 against Denmark.

Archers Sheetal Devi, Swati Chaudhary enter finals, assure India of 2 medals

NAGOYA : (AGENCY) Defending champion Sheetal Devi and Swati Chaudhary stormed into the finals of their respective events to assure India of two medals in para archery events of the Asian Para Games here on Tuesday. The 19-year-old Sheetal, who equalled the world record and created a new Asian record in the qualification round, defeated Japan's Shinohara Aya 145-137 in the women's compound semifinal to set up a gold-medal clash with Singapore's Alim Nur Syahidah. Swati, who is making her Games debut, also assured India of at least a silver medal after beating South Korea's Eunhee Lee 6-2 in the women's W1 semifinal. She will face China's Mengkan in the final. W1 classification is for athletes with significant impairment in functional strength, range of motion, or limb loss across all four limbs. India's recurve and compound mixed teams also advanced to the semifinals with victories over Thailand and Japan, respectively. Paralympic gold-medallist Harvinder Singh and Bhawna defeated their Thai opponents 6-0 in the recurve mixed team quarterfinals. World number one Sheetal, who was born without arms, progressed to the compound mixed team semifinals alongside Toman Kumar, with the Indian pair defeating Japan 154-147. The Jammu and Kashmir archer will be in action again later in the day when she partners Payal Nag in the compound women's doubles semifinals. However, Harvinder, Toman, Shyam Sundar Swami and Bhawna lost their individual matches. In the recurve singles quarterfinals, Harvinder went down 5-6 in a shoot-off to China's Yun Duo in the men's event, while Bhawna lost 2-6 to Mongolia's Selengee Demberel in the women's last eight match.

Shafali reprimanded for ICC Code of Conduct breach during Raipur T20I against Zimbabwe

RAIPUR : (AGENCY) Indian women's cricket team batter Shafali Verma has been handed an official reprimand for breaching Level 1 of the ICC Code of Conduct during the second T20I between India and Zimbabwe in Raipur on Sunday, according to the ICC website. Verma was found to have breached Article 2.2 of the ICC Code of Conduct for Players and Player Support Personnel, which relates to the "abuse of cricket equipment or clothing, ground equipment or fixtures and fittings during an International Match." In addition to the reprimand, one demerit point has been added to Verma's disciplinary record. It was her first offence in a 24-month period. The incident occurred in the 12th over of the first innings of the second T20I between India and Zimbabwe. After dropping Chipu Mugeritiripano at mid-off off Sree Charani's bowling, Verma threw the ball into the ground in frustration. Verma admitted the offence and accepted the sanction proposed by G.S. Lakshmi of the Emirates ICC International Panel of Match Referees, eliminating the need for a formal hearing. India defeated Zimbabwe by nine wickets in the second women's T20I in Raipur on Sunday, taking an unassailable 2-0 lead in the three-match series. Chasing 103, India reached the target in just 8.5 overs, with Shafali Verma scoring 55 off 25 balls and skipper Smriti Mandhana remaining unbeaten on 47 off 25 balls. Shafali and Mandhana added 96 runs.

Bangladesh head coach urges batters to seize opportunity amid Litton's fitness concerns

DHAKA : (AGENCY)

Bangladesh head coach Phil Simmons has urged his team's batters to view the possible absence of experienced wicketkeeper-batter Litton Das as an opportunity to step up and contribute to the side's success ahead of the upcoming two-Test series against West Indies, according to the ICC website. The first Test is scheduled to begin in Dhaka on October 28, followed by the second Test in Sylhet from November 5. Bangladesh are yet to announce their squad for the two-match



series. Litton, who is yet to regain full fitness following a hip joint injury, is racing against time to be fit for Bangladesh's first Test against the West Indies, beginning on October 28. However, Simmons acknowledged Litton's value to the team but said his possible absence would give another batter.

Shree Charani, Deepti Sharma maintain dominance in ICC Women's T20I Rankings

DUBAI : (AGENCY)

Indian spinners Shree Charani and Deepti Sharma continue their dominance in ICC T20I Rankings for bowlers, while pacers Kranti Gaud and Nandani Sharma made progress following a series win over Zimbabwe. The Asian side have already opened up a 2-0 series advantage in the three-game series on home soil, with a range of players making strong impact across the two fixtures in Raipur. Seamer Nandani Sharma is the joint leading wicket-taker across the first two



matches of the series with three scalps, and the right-armers gains a whopping 26 places to move to 45th on the list for T20I bowlers, as per the ICC. Teammate Kranti Gaud (up nine rungs to 43rd) also makes progress in this rankings category, with India duo Sree Charani (first) and

Deepti Sharma (second) maintaining their positions at the head of the rankings for T20I bowlers after economical returns against Zimbabwe. There is also some movement on the rankings for T20I bowlers following the first match of the trans-Tasman series between Australia and New Zealand, with Annabel Sutherland (up one rung to eighth), Jess Kerr (up five spots to 17th), Bree Illing (up six slots to 23rd) and Nensi Patel (up five places to 35th) all making gains in this rankings category. While Australia narrowly

claimed that series opener against the White Ferns in Sydney, it is a pair of New Zealand players that make the eye-catching progress on the updated rankings for T20I batters as Maddy Green (up three rungs to 34th) and Georgia Plimmer (up 13 places to 48th) both make gains. Aussie veteran Beth Mooney maintains her spot as the number one T20I batter in the world, while a pair of her Australian teammates make the biggest jumps on the ODI charts following the completion of their 50-over series with Bangladesh.

Shristi Arora clinches bronze in women's 10 m air pistol SH1 category

AICHI-NAGOYA : (AGENCY)

Indian shooter Shristi Arora clinched a bronze medal in the women's 10 m air pistol SH1 category at the ongoing Asian Para Games on Tuesday. Shristi finished in third place with a score of 214.7, having managed 96.3 in her first two series. She climbed into the third spot soon after and maintained her spot there; she finished behind Iran's Sareh Javanmardi (237.0) and Faezeh Ahmadi (237.3), who secured the silver and gold medals respectively, as per ESPN. This takes India's Asian Para Games medal

tally to 23 medals, including five golds, eight silvers and 10 bronze medals.

Earlier, former Paralympics para-shooter Manish Narwal secured a silver medal in the men's 10 m air pistol SH1 category at the ongoing continental showpiece. Having won a bronze medal in the Asian Para Games 2023 in Hangzhou, Narwal (233.7) finished behind South Korea's Jo Jeongdu (241.3) and ahead of China's Yang Chao, as per ESPN. Manish achieved a fifth-place finish in the qualification round, but the second series of 49.8 in the final lifted him into medal contention. The



world record holder Jeongdu was excellent, way away from the chasing pack. The other Indian in the final, Rudranksh Khandelwal, managed a seventh-place finish and was the second person to be eliminated

after a poor start. His final was in contrast to his performance in the qualification, where he finished second. He has also achieved the Los Angeles Paralympics 2028 for India. In para-table tennis, Jehan

Madan secured a silver medal in men's singles class 1, finishing fourth in the group. In the five-man field, Jehan finished fourth, only beating compatriot Sandeep Dangi, but it was enough for him to take home a medal. Also, Ashok secured a silver medal in the men's 65 kg para-powerlifting, with a best lift of 192 kg. He was behind the champion, China's Zou Yi, who took home the gold, with a best lift of 216 kg. India ended the day one of the competition with 11 medals, including four gold medals, five silvers and two bronze medals. Earlier, Indian para-table tennis players Baby

Sahana Ravi and Prachi Pandey won bronze medals in the women's singles Class 9 and Class 6 events. Baby Sahana lost 0-3 (8-11, 2-11, 4-11) to China's Mao Jingdian in the semi-finals of the women's singles Class 9 event and settled for a bronze medal. Notably, her medal marked India's first-ever medal in the standing category of para table tennis at the Asian Para Games. On the other hand, Prachi Pandey also secured bronze in the women's singles Class 6 event after losing her semi-final match to Iraq's Najlah Al-Dayyeni in straight games, 9-11, 2-11, and 8-11.

Asian Para Games: CWG medalist para-powerlifter Jhandu Kumar finishes fifth in men's up to 72 kg final



AICHI-NAGOYA : (AGENCY)

Indian para-powerlifter and Commonwealth Games bronze medallist Jhandu Kumar finished fifth in the men's up to 72 kg powerlifting final at the ongoing Para Asian Games on Tuesday. Jhandu, who made headlines with a bronze medal win at CWG in Glasgow just three months before the Asian Para Games, failed to make a mark, securing a best lift of 190 kg and failing twice at his attempts to lift 195 kg. The gold medal went to Malaysia's Bonnie Bunyau (225 kg), Zhang Pingkang of China (212 kg) got the silver, and Iran's Mohsen Bakhtiar (208 kg) took the bronze medal. Earlier, para-swimmer Himanshu Nandal secured a bronze medal for India in the men's 400 m freestyle S11 category on Tuesday. Himanshu secured India's second medal in para-

swimming in this edition, finishing third in the four-man final with timings of 5:10.91, 32 seconds behind silver medallist Uchu Tomita (Japan), and 45 seconds behind gold medallist Chuanzhen Sun (China), who also set an Asian record, as per ESPN. Ravi Karthik Budigina, who secured a silver medal in the men's 100 m freestyle S13 event earlier, finished sixth in the men's 400 m freestyle S13 event with a time of 5:41.70.

This takes India's Asian Para Games medal tally to 24 medals, including five golds, eight silvers and 11 bronze medals. Also, in the para compound archery doubles competition, the pairing of Sheetal Devi and Payal Nag confirmed another gold medal match for India, as they beat Thailand's Phannibha Srathongmaew and Wasana Khuthawisap by

151-135 to face China in the final. "INDIA'S ARCHERS AIM FOR GOLD! Para Compound Women Doubles - Semifinal India is assured of another medal at the #Asian ParaGames 2026! TOPS athlete Sheetal Devi and Payal Nag delivered a dominant performance, defeating Thailand's Phannibha Srathongmaew and Wasana Khuthawisap by 151-135 to storm into the FINAL! The ultimate showdown awaits! The Indian duo will face China in the GOLD MEDAL MATCH on 21 October from 5:55 AM IST onwards, aiming to turn this assured medal into GOLD! #Cheer4Bharat #Asian ParaGames2026 #Para Archery #TeamIndia #Medal Assured," posted by SAI Media. Earlier, Indian shooter Shristi Arora clinched a bronze medal in the women's 10 m air pistol SH1 category. Shristi finished in third place with a score of 214.7, having managed 96.3 in her first two series. She climbed into the third spot soon after and maintained her spot there; she finished behind Iran's Sareh Javanmardi (237.0) and Faezeh Ahmadi (237.3), who secured the silver and gold medals, respectively, as per ESPN. Earlier, former Paralympics para-shooter Manish Narwal secured a silver

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Aneet Padda closes Lakme Fashion Week as muse for Amit Aggarwal's show



The Delhi edition of Lakme Fashion Week 2026 has come to an end on Sunday night, with Saiyaara fame Aneet Padda walking the ramp for ace designer Amit Aggarwal. Aneet brought a cool, quirky Gen Z vibe to the runway as she show-

cased Amit's exquisite collection. The showcase captured the transition from day to evening wear, featuring structured silhouettes, expressive colours, rich textures and glamorous designs. Of course, it had Amit's signature metallic plecting. This collection beautifully interprets the 5PM Glam Reset, mapping out a fluid transition from the rigorous structure of the workday to the sheer freedom of after-hours expression. Speaking about his collection, Amit said, "I think how a working professional moves from a 9 to 5 and then from a 5 to 9. And I think in those conversations I think revealed such wonderful revelations about our own life. Like beyond 5 we literally feel like free birds who want to be a version of ourselves that's truly akin to who we are. And, I think I'm really happy with the fact that Lakme supported that vision and said let's bring it up with great product, great makeup because I think that's an integral part of how you feel post 5 pm." Aneet's outfit featured a striped shirt that she paired with a metallic corset and wide-leg purple trousers. Meanwhile, on the film front, Aneet was recently featured in Hunkkaar: The Roar series, which revolves around a 17-year-old girl who accuses a mighty god-man of sexual assault. She will next be seen in Maddock Films' Shakti Shalini. 'I don't blindly follow trends' Diana Penty does not believe in constantly experimenting with trends or blindly following everything that is popular online. She believes in choosing what feels right, what she is comfortable in, and what allows her to express herself best through her style. (AGENCY)

Austin Abrams keeps this uneven underwater survival thriller afloat

Imagine being swallowed alive by a giant sperm whale, with no way to call for help and a steadily diminishing chance of making it back to the surface. Whalefall takes this unsettling premise and turns it into an underwater survival thriller. Brian Duffield deserves credit for attempting something different in a genre overcrowded with familiar tales of shark attacks. Based on Daniel Kraus' novel of the same name, Whalefall follows Jay Gardiner (Austin Abrams), a young diver whose search for his father's remains takes a terrifying turn when he is swallowed by a sperm whale. What follows is a desperate race against time, as Jay must navigate the creature's enormous body, con-



tend with its hostile internal environment and find a way out before he runs out of air. On paper, this is an exciting premise that practically sells itself. The challenge, however, lies in sustaining the tension over a feature-length runtime without stretching the limits of plausibility. Whalefall manages both often enough to remain compelling, but its uneven execution prevents it from becoming the gripping survival drama it could have been. Abrams is

the film's biggest asset. As Jay, he spends much of the runtime alone, communicating his desperation through physical performance, muffled speech and expressions of mounting panic. With his character unable to breathe freely or engage in conventional conversations, the actor has to do much of the emotional heavy lifting without the usual tools of dialogue-driven drama. He makes Jay's predicament frightening. Jay is not an inexperienced adventurer who finds himself hopelessly out of his depth. Diving has been a part of his life since childhood, taught to him by his father, Mitt (Josh Brolin). His knowledge gives him a fighting chance, but it also brings. (AGENCY)

Karan Johar's 'Student of the Year' gets spin-off series, set for November premiere

Filmmaker Karan Johar's college romance franchise Student of the Year is set to take a darker turn with Student of the Year: After Dark, a thriller competition web series starring Shanaya Kapoor. JioHotstar on Monday unveiled the first look of the series, which is directed by Reema Maya and produced by Dharmatic Entertainment. The show will start streaming on November 13. Maya described the project as a reimagining of the franchise, stripped to its bones and transformed into a thriller competition series. "Karan Johar has put his faith in my voice and vision and I'm excited to have fun with this genre. The web series format is giving us a wide canvas for the conversations we want to have with our youth. We had so much fun with the music of the show," she said. Johar, who launched the original Student of the Year in 2012 with Sidharth Malhotra, Alia Bhatt and Varun Dhawan, returns as the producer of the new instalment. "When I look at this new chapter, I see a phoenix rising. We began this franchise with big dreams in 2012 and now we're breaking every rule we set. With Reema's genre-defying direction and Shanaya's powerful double-role performance, we're setting the stage for something spectacular," he said in a statement. "Shanaya isn't just stepping into the spotlight, she's shattering it and the first look is just the tip of the iceberg," he added. "It is an exciting creative leap bringing back a familiar and much-loved IP in a completely new avatar, while retaining the spirit of what made it connect with audiences in the first place," Alok Jain, Head - Hindi & English Entertainment Business (Streaming, TV & Studios), JioStar, said. (AGENCY)



'Rise and Fall' S2 : Sara Gural, Kajal Raghvani out in double elimination

The recent episode of Rise and Fall Season 2 witnessed a double elimination as Sara Gural and Kajal Raghvani exited the show. Three weeks into the Tower game, Niharika Tiwari and Shehzad Poonawalla's latest face-off brought the Rs 5 lakh Prize Pot decision back under scrutiny. Shehzad questioned Niharika's move, but Virender Sehwaq turned the spotlight on him, pointing out that his own friends were in the Basement and questioning whether the other Rulers were calling Niharika out simply because it suited their game. With blame seemingly following him at every turn, Shehzad declared himself ready to play the permanent villain. Karan Patel was pulled up over his promise to Priyanka Chahar Choudhary after choosing to save Jaswanth Bopanna, while Gautam Gulati's strategy continued to leave the Tower guessing. Kajal Raghvani, too, found herself under Sehwaq's scrutiny over her habit of carry-



ing conversations from one contestant to another. Aarush Bhola and Laila returned with a dose of comic relief. Their fun-filled game got the contestants talking, laughing, and trading playful jabs, but old rivalries were never too far away as Sara Gural and Priyanka reignited their feud. Manish Kashyap, meanwhile, became the subject of some cheeky teasing about whether he missed Kaira, only to clarify that someone else was waiting for him outside. Sehwaq added to the entertainment by asking Jaswant and Gautam to dance, with Jaswant choosing Niharika and Gautam picking Irina Rudakova. Manish received encouraging messages from Manoj Tiwari and Ritesh Pandey, with Manoj backing his hopes of a takhta palat. Niharika got an unexpected dose of affection from Nayandeep, whose message reflected how their equation had evolved from rivals to friends. Akanksha Choudhary followed with warm wishes and advice, leaving Niharika emotional as she told her, "Meri teekhi mirchi... (AGENCY)

Alia Bhatt Channels her Inner Rani at Ayan Mukerji's Family Durga Puja Pandal

Bollywood star Alia Bhatt today attended the North Bombay Sarbojanin Durga Puja, organised by her close friend and director Ayan Mukerji's family. The actor brought back her Rani Chatterjee vibe from her film Rocky Aur Rani Kii Prem Kahaani to the pandal, wearing a red saree which she paired with a sky blue blouse with puffed sleeves. The metallic border and gold motifs gave her saree, draped the traditional Bengali way, a festive edge. What also gave a regal look to her blouse were the motifs of lotuses and a cres-

The actor brought back her Rani Chatterjee vibe from her film Rocky Aur Rani Kii Prem Kahaani to the pandal,

cent moon. Alia Bhatt, who wore her hair in a neat bun with a gajra, completed her look with statement gold jhumkas, golden bangles, and a cocktail ring. Alia Bhatt attended the North Bombay Sarbojanin Durga Puja celebrations days after her husband and Ramayana

star Ranbir Kapoor graced the event. The actor also took the stage with singer Harshdeep Kaur and sang the popular song Kabira from his film Yeh Jawaani Hai Deewani, directed by Ayan Mukerji. Ranbir, who wore a red-and-gold kurta and white pyjamas for his Durga Puja pandal appearance, will next be seen in Ramayana: Part 1, set to be released on November 5. Whereas, Alia Bhatt and Ranbir Kapoor will soon co-star in Sanjay Leela Bhansali's Love & War, also featuring Vicky Kaushal. (AGENCY)



Don't try to find small faults, see it with an open mind : Yash on 'Ramayana'



Superstar Yash, who has co-produced and stars in "Ramayana" as Ravan, has urged fans to watch the film with an "open mind" and not try to find small faults with VFX as the film is their attempt to tell an Indian story to the world. The film's starry cast features Ranbir Kapoor as Ram, Sai Pallavi as Sita, Arun Govil as king Dashrath, Kunal Kapoor as Lord Indra; Rakul Preet Singh as Surpanakha and Ravie Dubey as Lakshmana. Yash, known for films such as "KGF" and "Toxic", said he came on board for "Ramayana" as he was impressed by the grand vision co-producer Namit Malhotra. "Sometimes when someone tries to do things like this, he has gambled his reputation and money to put this film on a global platform... One thing I will tell you, please don't try to find small faults: VFX, this, that. It will never happen again if we lose people like him now. It will take more years; we will go

back in time. "So, let's see the film with an open mind. He has always taken every feedback and criticism and tried to do it better. I request to all my well wishers, fans, every cinema fan, Telugu industry, Kannada industry, Malayalam industry, Tamil industry, and Hindi industry: For once, let's see come together and show the world," Yash said at a pre-release event of the movie in Hyderabad last night. Directed by Nitesh Tiwari and produced by Namit Malhotra's Prime Focus Studios and eight-time Academy Award-winning VFX studio DNEG, in association with Yash's Monster Mind Creations, "Ramayana: Part One" will release worldwide on Diwali 2026. Sony Pictures will distribute the film globally. Yash said only a person like Malhotra can have the "passion, dedication, determination and madness" required to realise a grand vision like "Ramayana". "As an Indian, I am telling you,

we need to protect this guy. It's our responsibility because this man was comfortably doing business in LA. Every time I met him, he always said, 'We all are doing so much and Indians have done so much, but we should do something for our Indian film industry and I want to do it. I am getting Oscars, but I am not happy. I want our country to be placed at that level and that's the day I am going to be happy.' This is what he told me." At the event, Ranbir described "Ramayana" as a special film. "Some stories are not just told, they live deeply within us. Ramayan is one such story. Playing 'prabhu' Shri Ram was an incredible emotional journey for me. It reminded me what it truly means to have strength, courage, compassion, forgiveness and gratitude in your heart and to always choose what is right," Ranbir said, adding that he hopes the film takes audiences to the stories they grew up listening to from their grandparents and parents. Ranbir also praised "childhood friend" Malhotra for being part of this journey with him. He also praised the director, and his co-stars. (AGENCY)

Gwyneth Paltrow to star in A24's 'The Apology', her first lead TV role

Gwyneth Paltrow is set to star in her first major television starring role in A24's upcoming drama The Apology, which just scored a two-season order at Netflix. The Oscar winner plays Evelyn Ampsoker, a grieving mother whose 18-year-old cold case is upended when a stranger confesses. When Evelyn and her husband, Caleb, learn the killer is heading toward a reduced sentence, they decide to take matters into their own hands. The Apology is created, written, and shownrun by Joe Murtagh (The Woman in the Wall), with Academy Award winner Thomas Vinterberg (Another Round) directing. A24 serves as the studio, with Joe Hipps of Cut To executive producing alongside Murtagh, Vinterberg, and Gwyneth Paltrow. Paltrow, known for films like



Shakespeare in Love, Iron Man, and Marty Supreme, has rarely ventured into television. Aside from guest roles and supporting parts in Glee and The Politician, The Apology marks her very first time leading a TV series. Netflix's two-season order for The Apology coincides with sweeping executive changes and a 6 per cent workforce reduction. While film head Dan Lin departed on Monday and chief content officer Beka Bajaria was replaced by Peter Rice last week, head of scripted TV Jinny Howe has remained steady through the turnover. (AGENCY)

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