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Advertisement
9210092542

E-mail
opensearchnews@gmail.com

Website
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PM Modi Showcases India's Grassroots Achievements

PM urges 'vocal for local' push as Mann Ki Baat completes 12 years, highlights grassroots innovation and self-reliance

NEW DELHI.OPEN SEARCH

Prime Minister Narendra Modi on Sunday highlighted grassroots innovation, rural healthcare, environmental conservation, traditional agriculture and scientific research during the 139th episode of his monthly radio programme 'Mann Ki Baat'. The programme, which began 12 years ago on Vijaydashami, has provided a platform to showcase the contributions of individuals and communities across the country. Describing the programme as an opportunity to celebrate the efforts of ordinary citizens, the Prime Minister said it had brought numerous inspiring stories from different parts of India to the forefront. He described 'Mann Ki Baat' as a journey to understand the efforts of people and acknowledge their contributions to society and the nation.

Highlighting the integration of traditional knowledge with innovative approaches, the Prime Minister spoke about the 'Nav-Trinjan' initiative in Punjab's Malwa region,

'Prioritise local artisans':

PM Modi's special appeal ahead of Diwali in Mann Ki Baat

Narendra Modi Mann Ki BaatIn his latest Mann Ki Baat address, PM Narendra Modi urged citizens to support local artisans this festive season to accelerate Atmanirbhar Bharat In his monthly Mann Ki Baat radio address on Thursday, Prime Minister Narendra Modi urged citizens to prioritise products crafted by local artisans during the upcoming festive season, framing the 'vocal for local' campaign as a vital push toward an 'Atmanirbhar Bharat'. Characterising the monthly broadcast as a "pilgrimage" (teerth yatra) to understand and salute

undertaken by the Kheti Virasat Mission to promote natural cotton cultivation and traditional weaving. Under the initiative, organic cotton is cultivated without chemicals, including varieties with natural colours that reduce the need for chemical dyes. The project



people's efforts, PM Modi highlighted grassroots innovations, global market expansion for indigenous goods, technological advancements, and key historical figures.

has also established a weaving school to pass traditional skills on to the next generation and create livelihood opportunities for women. Citing examples of women who have benefited from the initiative, the Prime Minister mentioned Ramandeep Kaur, who tran-

sitioned from labour work to skilled weaving, and Rekha Rani, whose handwoven shawl was presented to the President of India. He also highlighted the work of Suneha Devi and Rajni Kaur, who have developed weaving skills to support their households. The

Prime Minister extended his best wishes to the team, acknowledging its efforts to preserve traditional crafts while creating economic opportunities.

Emphasising the importance of environmental conservation, the Prime Minister highlighted community-led efforts to revive the Heval river in Uttarakhand's Tehri Garhwal region. He said declining water levels in the river and the drying up of natural water sources had prompted the local administration and villagers to work together to address the problem. Measures such as rainwater harvesting, groundwater recharge and large-scale tree plantation were undertaken as part of the campaign. According to the Prime Minister, these efforts have helped revive the river and restore several natural water sources. He also called for collective participation in cleanliness drives during the upcoming Diwali and Chhath festivities, stressing that individual efforts can bring significant changes to local surroundings.

CM Sai listened to the 139th episode of 'Mann Ki Baat'

'Mann Ki Baat' is a powerful medium of worship of the people's power of the country and an intimate dialogue with 140 crore countrymen: Vishnu Dev Sai

RAIPUR.OPEN SEARCH

'Mann Ki Baat' is a powerful medium of worship of the people's power of the country and an intimate dialogue with 140 crore countrymen: Chief Minister Shri Vishnu Dev Sai.

'Mann Ki Baat' is a powerful medium of worship of the people's power of the country and an intimate dialogue with 140 crore countrymen: Chief Minister Shri Vishnu Dev Sai

Chief Minister Shri Vishnu Dev Sai today listened to the 139th episode of Prime Minister Shri Narendra Modi's popular monthly radio programme 'Mann Ki Baat' along with former Union Minister Smt. Smriti Irani and Shri Siddharth Shambhu at Agarwal Bhawan in Abhanpur of Raipur district.

Chief Minister Shri Sai said that "Mann Ki Baat" is a powerful medium for the nation's people power and for Prime Minister Shri Narendra Modi's intimate connection with 1.4 billion citizens. Through this program, the Prime Minister gives national recognition to the extraordinary efforts of ordinary citizens who



are doing remarkable work in the fields of society, environment, culture, innovation, and public service. Such inspiring examples awaken the spirit of doing something new for society and the nation.

The Chief Minister said that it is a matter of pride for every Chhattisgarhi that the Prime Minister has prominently highlighted the state's rich culture, tribal traditions, sporting talent, water conservation, nutrition, and innovation efforts in various episodes of "Mann Ki Baat."

By mentioning the Bastar Olympics and Bastar Pandum, he has given national recognition to Bastar's sporting talent and rich tribal culture. Today,

Bastar, moving forward in the direction of peace, trust and development, is creating a new identity through its young talent and cultural heritage.

Chief Minister Shri Sai said that Prime Minister Shri Narendra Modi also praised the innovative "Five Percent Model" of water conservation in Korea district, under which farmers create ponds on five percent of their land to harvest rainwater. This is promoting irrigation as well as groundwater conservation. Similarly, the mention of the historic Malhar copper plates and nutrition-related initiatives like "Munga in Every Home" establish Chhattisgarh's unique identity on the national stage.

PM witnesses IAF air show

KASHI.AGENCY

Prime Minister Narendra Modi visited his parliamentary constituency, Kashi, on Sunday and, after inaugurating the first manufacturing plant of textile manufacturer Arvind Limited (Arvind Mills) in Khochwan, Mirzamurad, built at a cost of approximately Rs 150 crore, where he interacted with the women workers undergoing training there, he sat at Namo Ghat and watched the air show held at 'Wings Over Ganga' to commemorate the 94th anniversary of Air Force Day. During the air show held at "Wings Over Ganga," the feeling of having their MP and Prime Minister present among them was evident in the crowds gathered at Namo Ghat, all the other 84 Ganga Ghats, and on the sandy banks on the other side of the Ganga Ghat. Upon arriving at the venue, the Prime Minister was greeted with thunderous chants of "Har Har Mahadev" and "Bharat Mata Ki Jai," as per Kashi tradi-

Defence Minister Rajnath Singh, Uttar Pradesh Governor Anandiben Patel and Chief Minister Yogi Adityanath accompanied Mr. Modi on the final day of the three-day air show held to commemorate the 94th anniversary of the Indian Air Force



tion, and continued to do so throughout the air show.

Earlier in the day, the Prime Minister arrived at Babatpur Airport and then flew to Khochwan in Mirzamurad. There, he inaugurated the Arvind Mill and interacted with women workers. Prime Minister Narendra Modi then flew to the helipad at the Police

Line Grounds and proceeded by road to Namo Ghat to participate in the Air Force Day Aerial Display 2026.

The residents of Kashi welcomed their MP and Prime Minister with a grand welcome at 13 key locations along the route. While travelling by road from the Police Lines to Namo Ghat, the sea of ??people on both

sides of the road gave their MP and Prime Minister Narendra Modi a grand welcome.

PM Modi also stepped out of his moving vehicle to acknowledge the welcome greetings of his fellow Kashi residents. During this time, the delighted Kashi residents greeted him with chants of "Modi... Modi..."

Before the air show began, the Prime Minister was honoured with flags and caps.

Present during this event were Defence Minister Rajnath Singh, Uttar Pradesh Chief Minister Yogi Adityanath, Union Minister of State for Defence Sanjay Seth, Union Minister of State for Finance and State President Pankaj Chaudhary, Deputy Chief Ministers Keshav Prasad Maurya and Brajesh Pathak, among others.

CM Saini listens to 139th episode of 'Mann Ki Baat' in Panchkula

CHANDIGARH : OPEN SEARCH

Haryana Chief Minister Sh Nayab Singh Saini today listened to the 139th episode of Prime Minister Sh Narendra Modi's popular programme, 'Mann Ki Baat', in Panchkula. Special arrangements were made for the live broadcast at the Community Centre in Sector 10, where the Chief Minister joined public representatives, party workers and local residents to listen to the programme. Through 'Mann Ki Baat', Prime Minister Sh Narendra Modi connects with citizens across the country, sharing inspiring stories, innovative ideas and initiatives that bring about positive social change. The programme highlights the exemplary



contributions of individuals and organisations across various sectors, encouraging citizens to draw inspiration from their efforts and actively participate in nation-building. A large number of people attended the event, reflecting their enthusiasm for the issues and initiatives discussed during 'Mann Ki

Baat'. The participants listened attentively to the Prime Minister's thoughts and inspiring messages, which highlighted various initiatives and efforts undertaken for the greater good of society. Among those present on the occasion were the Chief Minister's OSD, Dr. Raj Nehru, BJP District President

■ **Watches the live broadcast at Community Centre, Sector 10, alongside public representatives, party workers and local residents**

Sh Ajay Mittal, former Speaker of the Haryana Legislative Assembly Sh Gian Chand Gupta, Chairman of the Haryana State Pharmacy Council Sh B.B. Singhal, Executive Vice-Chairman of the Haryana Shivalik Development Board Sh Omprakash Devinagar; Ward No. 4 Councillor Sh Bharat Hiteshi, Mandal President Sh Pramod Vats; and Media Sampark Pramukh Sh Praveen Atre, among others.

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Irrigation Minister Shruti Choudhry Visits Surajkund Diwali Fair, Appreciates Art and Culture on Display

CHANDIGARH : OPEN SEARCH. Haryana Irrigation and Water Resources Minister Shruti Choudhry visited the third Surajkund Diwali Fair in Faridabad on Sunday. Organised by the Haryana Tourism Department on the theme of ‘Aatmanirbhar Bharat, Swadeshi Mela,’ the fair showcases India’s rich cultural heritage and indigenous products. Former Rajya Sabha MP Kiran Choudhry was also present with her during the visit. They explored handicrafts, traditional artworks and products displayed by artisans from various states. The fair offered a glimpse into the diversity of Indian culture, folk traditions and indigenous products. Minister Shruti Choudhry said that artisans from different parts of the country were showcasing their skills and cultural heritage through their traditional products at the Surajkund Fair. Handmade items, traditional attire, decorative articles and regional products provide visitors with an opportunity to experience India’s diverse cultural identity. She said that under the leadership of Chief Minister Sh. Nayab Singh Saini, the State Government is emphasising the promotion of tourism, culture and local handicrafts. Events such as the Surajkund Fair strengthen Haryana’s cultural identity at the national level while providing artisans and small traders with a better platform to display and sell their products. Haryana Tourism and Heritage Minister Arvind Sharma is also working towards promoting the state’s tourist destinations and cultural events.

Anil Vij launches sharp attack on Farooq Abdullah, says ‘He loves Pakistan more than India’

CHANDIGARH : OPEN SEARCH Haryana’s Energy, Transport and Labour Minister Sh. Anil Vij said that on October 30, the INDI bloc’s mock parliament will pass only a mock resolution, and no action is taken on a mock resolution. He also attacked former Jammu and Kashmir Chief Minister Farooq Abdullah over his statement, saying, “Farooq Abdullah ji’s character is already well known to the people of the country; he loves Pakistan more than India.” Taking a dig at the opposition, he said, “Some deluded souls keep trying to attack this again and again, but none of their strikes will succeed.” Sh. Vij was responding to questions from media persons today. Attacking the opposition, he said that these are deluded souls because the people of the country have rejected them across the nation. He said that to keep themselves alive among the public, the opposition wants to prove that some issue or some company is still alive by putting it on an oxygen cylinder. Responding to a question regarding Farooq Abdullah’s statement that India’s intentions towards Kashmir are not right, he said, “Farooq Abdullah ji’s character is already well known to the people of the country; he loves Pakistan more than India.” He said that as far as Kashmir is concerned, Kashmir belongs to India, and Prime Minister Narendra Modi’s government abrogated Article 370, which had been imposed there by the Congress, thereby ending its special status. He said that today Kashmir is as much a part of India as Punjab, Haryana, Uttar Pradesh and Rajasthan, and Kashmir and its people have welcomed this. Vij said that G20 meetings are now being held in Kashmir.

India’s Progress Cannot Be Stopped When Every Citizen Contributes to Nation-Building : CM Saini

CM calls upon citizens to remain aware of their rights and resolve to discharge their duties with utmost dedication

VIJAY KUMAR.OPEN SEARCH

CHANDIGARH : Haryana Chief Minister Sh. Nayab Singh Saini said while the rights of a citizen are widely discussed today, comparatively less attention is paid to his duties and responsibilities. It is important to understand what our rights are, what our obligations entail and what our responsibilities as citizens are. He said that coming together to deliberate on an important subject such as ‘Hum Bharat Ke Log, Hamara Dayitva’ was a meaningful initiative. The ideas emerging from discussions at such events benefit future generations and guide them towards understanding their responsibilities to the country and the nation.

The Chief Minister was addressing the 33rd Annual Lecture-cum-Lokmanthan programme organised by the Panchnad Shodh Sansthan in Chandigarh on Sunday. The theme of the programme was ‘Hum Bharat Ke Log, Hamara Dayitva’. On the occasion, the Chief Minister also announced a grant of ₹11 lakh for the Panchnad Shodh Sansthan to support its research activities.



In his address, Sh. Nayab Singh Saini said that fundamental duties had been incorporated into the Constitution, but for a long time, rights received greater attention while duties were discussed less frequently. He expressed confidence that the ideas presented by the speakers at the programme would serve as guiding lights for future generations and show citizens the way towards fulfilling their responsibilities to the nation.

He said that the opening words of the Preamble to our Constitution are ‘We, the People of India’. These words remind us that the people are the foundation of India’s democratic system. The Constitution grants us rights and protects our freedom and dignity. At the

same time, it expects us to fulfil our responsibilities towards the country, society and one another with complete dedication. Rights empower us, while duties give that power the right direction. Democracy becomes strong only when rights and duties go hand in hand. The Chief Minister said that Article 51A of the Constitution lays down the fundamental duties of citizens. These include respecting the Constitution and its ideals, cherishing the values of the freedom struggle, protecting the unity and integrity of the country, promoting social harmony, respecting the dignity of women, and safeguarding our shared cultural heritage and nature. These are the values that unite society and help the nation move forward.



He said that the first expression of duty is respect for the Constitution and institutions. Indian democracy brings together diverse viewpoints, numerous languages, different traditions and many communities. Disagreement is a natural part of democracy. However, dialogue, decorum and respect for the law must be maintained even amid differences of opinion. Our views may differ, but our resolve in the national interest must remain united.

The Chief Minister said that another important responsibility was to strengthen brotherhood and mutual respect in society. No person is superior or inferior on the basis of language, caste, religion, region or economic status. The

country’s diversity is its identity. Therefore, whenever we meet a person belonging to any religion, caste, region or linguistic community, our first thought should be that the person is an Indian and our own brother or sister. When this sentiment takes root among all citizens, India will become an immense force.

He said that this attitude would automatically eliminate many social disparities. Every daughter would then receive respect and security, the elderly would be treated with dignity, disadvantaged people would receive opportunities, and every citizen would feel that the country belonged to them and that they were an equal stakeholder in its future. The Chief Minister

said that Prime Minister Sh. Narendra Modi had called upon young people, universities and institutions to participate in the journey towards a Viksit Bharat. The Prime Minister’s vision of collective participation by 1.4 billion citizens conveys the message that every citizen has an important role to play in the country’s progress. Haryana, too, is an important participant in this collective endeavour.

Sh. Nayab Singh Saini said that when every citizen begins to believe and say, ‘I too have a contribution to make to the nation’, no one can stop India’s progress. He appealed to citizens to remain conscious of their rights while also resolving to discharge their duties with complete dedication and ensure their active participation in nation-building. The Chief Minister highlighted the contributions of Haryana’s soldiers, farmers and sportspersons. He said that the state’s soldiers play an important role in defending the country, its farmers contribute to filling the nation’s food grain reserves, and its sportspersons bring glory to the country through their achievements.

‘Farooq Abdullah’s body lives in India, but his soul lives in Pakistan Anil Vij’

CHANDIGARH : OPEN SEARCH

Haryana’s Energy, Transport and Labour Minister, Sh. Anil Vij, took a dig at the Congress’s rally in Delhi on November 1 over alleged “vote theft,” saying that after losing across the country, this is their way of mourning. He said, “When there is a death in someone’s home, they observe mourning for 13 days. Under Rahul Gandhi’s leadership, the Congress has lost 99 elections, so this is their way of mourning.”

While interacting with media persons today, he said that from the kind of protests the Congress has held in Delhi recently, it is



clear that they want to spread anarchy in the country. “Every party has the right to form its own government, and in a democracy, the way to do so is by winning through voting. I would advise the Congress to go among the people, point out the shortcomings of our government, and if people then vote for them, they can form their own government.

Haryana patients to get faster hospital access as UPI payments reach 610 health centres

CHANDIGARH : OPEN SEARCH

In a major patient-friendly initiative to reduce long queues and ease registration at government hospitals, Haryana has introduced UPI-based digital payments at 610 public healthcare institutions across the state and expanded facilities allowing patients to complete OPD registration from home before visiting hospitals.

Additional Chief Secretary, Health and Family Welfare, Dr Sumita Misra, said the initiative would make hospital visits more convenient by simplifying registration, reducing waiting time at payment counters, and providing digital alternatives to con-



ventional procedures.

The digital payment system has been made operational across all 23 district civil hospitals, 52 civil and sub-civil hospitals, 121 community health centres, and 414 primary health centres in Haryana.

Patients can now use UPI to pay applicable charges for outpatient department (OPD) registration, inpatient department

(IPD) registration, medico-legal cases and other healthcare services. The facility has also been extended to Civil Surgeon offices in all 23 districts.

The department has also strengthened the facility for OPD pre-registration from home at 23 district civil hospitals, 31 civil and sub-civil hospitals, and other healthcare centres connected with the e-Upchar

Hospital Management Information System.

Patients can complete their OPD registration before reaching the hospital, reducing time spent at conventional registration counters. Those booking appointments online must visit the hospital on their scheduled date and time.

Dedicated pre-registration counters have been established at hospitals, and Scan and Pay facilities introduced to make fee payments quicker and more convenient, the department has introduced Scan and Register facilities at 118 healthcare institutions operating under the e-Hospital system, including centres up to the primary health centre level.

Protecting Youth from Drug Abuse Is Essential to Realizing the Dream of a Developed India : Governor

CHANDIGARH : OPEN SEARCH

Protecting the youth from drug abuse and engaging them in nation-building are essential to realizing Prime Minister Sh. Narendra Modi’s vision of a developed India by 2047. Drug abuse poses a serious threat to society, and combating this menace requires collective efforts by teachers, students and all sections of society. The creation of a drug-free India must become a mass movement. This was stated by Haryana Governor and Chancellor of Maharshi Dayanand University (MDU), Rohtak Prof. Ashim Kumar Ghosh, while flagging off an anti-drug awareness rally organized by the NSS Cell at MDU, Rohtak, on



Sunday. Prof. Ashim Kumar Ghosh said that the goal of a developed India could be achieved only when the country’s youth are healthy, aware and free from drug abuse. The energy, talent and potential of young people must be channelled towards nation-building and the overall development of the country. He

emphasized the need to create awareness about the harmful effects of drug abuse and encourage young people to actively engage with social issues.

Haryana’s First Lady, Smt. Mitra Ghosh, also graced the occasion. A total of 172 outstanding NSS volunteers from nine states - Andhra Pradesh, Telangana,

Odisha, Madhya Pradesh, Himachal Pradesh, Rajasthan, Jammu and Kashmir, Punjab and Haryana -participated in the rally. The volunteers are attending the National Integration Camp at MDU and, dressed in their traditional attire, conveyed a strong message against drug abuse while promoting awareness and social responsibility.

MDU Vice-Chancellor Prof. Milap Poonia underscored the importance of collective efforts to create a drug-free environment for a healthy society. NSS Programme Coordinator Prof. Savita Rathi, in her welcome address, briefed the gathering about the National Integration Camp.

Providing better facilities to farmers in mandis and ensuring fair prices for their crops is Govt’s priority : Rana

CHANDIGARH : OPEN SEARCH

Haryana Agriculture and Farmers’ Welfare Minister Sh. Shyam Singh Rana visited the Jatauli and Farrukhnagar grain markets in Gurugram on Sunday to review arrangements for the procurement of bajra. During the visit, he inspected the crops brought to the mandis, the procurement process and the facilities being provided to farmers. He also interacted with farmers and commission agents to obtain feedback on the arrangements. SDM Dinesh Luhach welcomed the Agriculture Minister and briefed him on the procurement process. The Agriculture Minister directed officials to ensure that



farmers do not face any inconvenience in the mandis and that their grievances are resolved promptly. He said that crop procurement must be carried out transparently and in accordance with the prescribed standards so that farmers do not have to wait unnecessarily to sell their produce.

To review procurement arrangements in the mandis, the Agriculture Minister

He also interacted with farmers and commission agents to obtain feedback on the arrangements. SDM Dinesh Luhach welcomed the Agriculture Minister and briefed him on the procurement process

held a meeting at the Market Committee office with officials of the concerned departments and procurement agencies. He said that the Central and Haryana Governments are continuously working to strengthen farmers financially and safeguard their interests. Ensuring fair prices for farmers’ produce, along with providing better

facilities in mandis, remains among the government’s key priorities. He directed officials to pay close attention to every stage of the procurement process and ensure that farmers do not face any difficulties while selling their crops.

Sh. Shyam Singh Rana said that merely procuring crops in the mandis is not enough; timely lifting of procured produce, proper storage and payment to farmers within the stipulated period are equally important. He directed procurement agencies to work in coordination and regularly review the arrangements. He said that unnecessary accumulation of crops in the mandis must be avoided.

‘Vocal for Local’ pledge : Vij appeals to buy local products during Diwali and Chhath, a grand Chhath ghat will be built in Ambala Cantonment

CHANDIGARH : OPEN SEARCH

Haryana Energy, Transport and Labour Minister Sh. Anil Vij said that “Mann Ki Baat” is a family-reunion/gathering programme. Through it, the country’s successful Prime Minister, Sh. Narendra Modi, connects with nearly 140 crore people of the country as members of one family and shares important thoughts with them.

Sh. Vij was watching and listening to the Mann Ki Baat programme today with eminent residents and workers of the city at the residence of Dr. Tarsem Monga, Director of Monga Hospital in Ambala Cantonment. Before this, Dr. Tarsem Monga, his wife Dr. Asha, their son Dr. Akhil



Monga, and other family members welcomed him upon his arrival.

Speaking to media persons on the occasion, Energy Minister Anil Vij said that on the last Sunday of every month, the country’s successful Prime Minister, Narendra Modi, connects with the people of the country through Mann Ki Baat. On that occasion, he shares important

thoughts and information with them. He informs everyone about the experiments being carried out by people in different parts of the country experiences from science and technology, as well as information about people who contributed to the country’s independence. He also said that today, through Mann Ki Baat, Modi ji inspired farmers to take up organic farm-

Mann Ki Baat” is a family-reunion/gathering programme, PM Modi inspired farmers to take up organic farming and cultivate 25 percent of their land organically : Energy Minister Anil Vij

ing and gave examples of it. He said, “I also believe that every farmer, whatever land they have, should cultivate 25 percent of it organically so that people can get food items without fertilizers and chemicals.” He added that the Prime Minister also spoke about diversification in farming. ‘Vocal for Local’ pledge: Energy Minister Anil Vij appeals to buy local products during Diwali and Chhath; a grand Chhath

ghat will be built in Ambala Cantonment. Energy Minister Anil Vij said that the Prime Minister has also emphasized ‘Vocal for Local’. People have been encouraged to buy products made by local artisans. He said that during Diwali and the upcoming festival, we should buy local products that is, products made by local artisans so that Vocal for Local receives a boost. By adopting local products, we should also support local artisans.

He further said that the Prime Minister extended greetings for Diwali, Chhath Puja, and other festivals, wishing happiness in everyone’s lives. Vij said that he has approved funds for constructing a ghat for Chhath Puja in Ambala Cantonment.

Centre and Haryana Govt Committed to Farmers, Youth, Women and Rural Development; Eligible Youth Getting Jobs on Merit : Krishan Lal Panwar

CHANDIGARH : OPEN SEARCH

Haryana Development and Panchayats Minister Sh. Krishan Lal Panwar said that the Central and State Governments are committed to the overall development of rural areas, the prosperity of farmers, providing employment opportunities to youth and empowering women.

The government aims to provide basic amenities in every village and improve the standard of living of rural residents. He said that the sentiments and demands of the residents of Harsana Kalan village would be respected, and further action would be taken as per the rules after receiving a proposal from



the Gram Sabha. The Minister was addressing a programme held in Harsana Kalan village of Sonipat on Sunday as the chief guest. He listened carefully to the demands of the villagers and informed them about the initiatives being undertaken by the State Government for rural development and various public welfare schemes. Sh. Panwar said that a

Delhi Strengthens NCR-wide coordination to curb winter air pollution

AJEET KUMAR.OPEN SEARCH

NEW DELHI. In line with the vision of Hon'ble Chief Minister Smt. Rekha Gupta for a cleaner, greener and healthier Delhi, Environment, Forest and Wildlife Minister Shri Manjinder Singh Sirsa held a high-level virtual meeting with senior traffic police and police officials from neighbouring NCR districts to review preparedness for controlling air pollution during the upcoming winter season.

Senior traffic police officials from Noida, Faridabad, Gurugram, Sonipat and Bahadurgarh participated in the meeting. Delhi Police Special Commissioner (Traffic) and the Transport Commissioner, Government of NCT of Delhi, were also present. The meeting focused on strengthening inter-state coordination and



ensuring effective implementation of pollution-control measures under the Graded Response Action Plan (GRAP) and directions issued by the Commission for Air Quality Management (CAQM). The Delhi Government is working in close coordination with the Government of India and Central agencies, with continued support for measures aimed at improving air

quality, strengthening clean mobility, reducing road dust and ensuring coordinated enforcement across the NCR. The meeting deliberated on the following five key measures in accordance with GRAP and CAQM directions to strengthen traffic management and pollution control across Delhi and the NCR: 1. Improved Traffic Management and

Focus on Decongestion at Border Areas, Prevention of Entry of Non-Compliant Buses, Enforcement Against Polluting Vehicles and Promotion of Public Transport

Decongestion: Traffic movements will be synchronised, and adequate traffic personnel will be deployed at identified high-traffic corridors and congestion-prone locations, particularly near NCR border areas, to ensure smoother traffic flow and minimise vehicular emissions caused by prolonged congestion.

2. Strict Enforcement of PUC Norms: Vigilance and enforcement of Pollution Under Control (PUC) norms will be strengthened. Visibly polluting vehicles will be stopped, and strict

action will be taken, including impounding of vehicles and imposition of the maximum permissible penalties, wherever applicable.

3. Diversion of Non-Destined Heavy Vehicles: The directions of the Hon'ble Supreme Court regarding the diversion of truck traffic not destined for Delhi through the Eastern and Western Peripheral Expressways will be strictly enforced to reduce unnecessary heavy-vehicle movement through the city.

4. Enforcement Against Non-Compliant Vehicles: The applicable orders of the National Green Tribunal (NGT) and the Hon'ble Supreme Court concerning restrictions on the plying of overage diesel and petrol vehicles, along with other restrictions prescribed under the prevailing rules and regulations, will be strictly implemented.

NEW DELHI (AGENCY)

Former Indian Administrative Service (IAS) officer Divya Mittal has announced that her party, Jan Neeti Bharat, will contest the Uttar Pradesh election on all the seats in the assembly. The UP assembly has 403 seats, so she needs to find that many candidates for her party's debut contest. Mittal, who recently took the plunge into politics, made the announcement while addressing people in Mirzapur. She also garlanded a statue of Nishadraj during the event.

The former IAS officer earlier this month announced the formation of her party just weeks after she chose voluntary retirement from service. She has said the party will focus on making people central to policymaking and ensuring that the government remains accountable to them throughout its five-



year term and not just on election day. "Politics rules over you. In Jan Neeti, you will be the ones who rule," she said on October 15, announcing the party's name. Mittal, an alumnus of IIT Delhi, IIM Bengaluru and a former Wall Street trader, resigned from the IAS after a 13-year career before she announced her entry into politics. She said her appeal to people to enter politics received an overwhelming response, with many sending messages to a phone number she shared. "The problem is not a shortage of parties; the problem is a lack of people being heard. Some people are heard, but not every-

one," Mittal said. She highlighted that unlike the existing arrangement, in which MLAs often acted as intermediaries between the government and the public, Jan Neeti Bharat representatives will have to remain accountable to citizens. "Political parties may appear to compete with one another, but agree on keeping decision-making out of the hands of ordinary people," she said, adding Jan Neeti Bharat lacked the money needed for extensive advertising and will instead rely on a door-to-door campaign, with every household serving as an office and every supporter acting as a campaigner.

Class 12 student found burnt to death in east Delhi school, breakup suspected, suicide note recovered

NEW DELHI (AGENCY)

Police are probing a suspected breakup as a possible reason behind the death of a 17-year-old Class 12 student who was found burnt on her school premises in east Delhi's Krishna Nagar on Saturday, with investigators recovering a three-page purported suicide note from her school bag, officials said. The student, who studied at a government school, is suspected to have brought petrol from home in her bag and set herself on fire on the school premises, police sources said.

Investigators are examining whether the end of a relationship prompted her to take the extreme step. They are also probing the family's allegation that she could have been the victim of a conspiracy. The girl



was found in a severely burnt condition behind the guard room on the school premises. She was taken to Dr Hedgewar Hospital, where doctors declared her dead, police said.

According to police sources, the three-page note recovered from her bag contained references to her family and a friend. In one of the pages, she had purportedly apologised to her family, while another reportedly mentioned that a friend should not be harassed. Police were examining the contents of the note and declined to disclose further details.

Delhi Assembly to host committee meeting on uniform rules for legislatures

NEW DELHI. OPEN SEARCH

The Delhi Legislative Assembly will host a meeting of the Committee of Presiding Officers, constituted by the Hon'ble Lok Sabha Speaker to formulate a Uniform Model of the Rules of Procedure and Conduct of Business for Legislative Bodies across the country, on October 27, Delhi Assembly Speaker Sh. Vijender Gupta said on Sunday.

The meeting will be held at the Taj Hotel on Sardar Patel Marg here under the chairmanship of Uttar Pradesh Legislative Assembly Speaker Sh. Satish Mahana. Sh. Vijender Gupta, who is a member of the committee, will deliver the welcome address.

The meeting will bring together Presiding Officers and representatives of the



Legislative Assemblies of Uttar Pradesh, Nagaland, Maharashtra, Himachal Pradesh, Karnataka and Delhi. The participating Speakers will include Shri Satish Mahana (Uttar Pradesh), Shri Rahul Narwekar (Maharashtra), Shri Kukkeep Singh Pathania and Shri Gurupadagouda Sanganaagouda Patil (Karnataka), along with other members of the Committee and officials representing the participating legislatures. The committee will deliberate on a draft report containing recommendations for the proposed

Draft report to be deliberated upon; meeting to be chaired by UP Assembly Speaker Sh. Satish Mahana

Uniform Model Rules. The discussions are expected to focus on examining the recommendations, addressing issues requiring further consideration and building consensus on a common procedural framework for legislative bodies.

The draft report is expected to be taken up for consideration and adoption, subject to the outcome of the deliberations. The meeting will also help determine the next steps towards finalising the proposed model rules and taking the recommendations forward through the appropriate institutional process. The

initiative aims to promote greater consistency in legislative procedures, facilitate the exchange of best practices among state legislatures and strengthen the effective functioning of democratic institutions. The proposed framework is intended to support the orderly, transparent and efficient conduct of legislative business while respecting the institutional requirements of individual legislatures.

Sh. Gupta said the meeting would provide an important platform for consultation and coordination among legislative institutions on procedural practices and the strengthening of democratic traditions.

The Delhi Legislative Assembly Secretariat is coordinating arrangements for the visiting Presiding Officers and officials.

Delhi govt steps up coordination with neighbouring NCR districts to curb winter air pollution

NEW DELHI (AGENCY)

The Delhi government has stepped up coordination with neighbouring NCR districts to curb winter air pollution, with Environment Minister Manjinder Singh Sirsa on Sunday reviewing measures to decongest border areas and intensify action against polluting vehicles.

According to an official statement, the environment minister held a high-level meeting with senior traffic police and police officials from Delhi, Noida, Faridabad, Gurugram, Sonipat and Bahadurgarh to review preparedness for implementing pollution-control measures under the Graded Response Action Plan (GRAP) and directions of the Commission for Air Quality Management



(CAQM). Stressing that air pollution is a regional issue requiring coordinated action by NCR states, Sirsa said that effective border management, smoother traffic movement, cleaner public transport and coordinated action against non-compliant vehicles would remain key components of the city's winter pollution-control strategy.

The meeting focused on synchronising traffic movement and deploying adequate personnel at congestion-prone locations, particularly

near NCR borders, to reduce vehicular emissions from prolonged traffic jams.

The participating agencies discussed strict enforcement of Pollution Under Control (PUC) norms, including action against visibly polluting vehicles. Directions concerning the diversion of trucks not destined for Delhi through the Eastern and Western Peripheral Expressways will also be strictly enforced to reduce unnecessary heavy-vehicle movement through the city, the state-

Stressing that air pollution is a regional issue requiring coordinated action by NCR states, Sirsa said that effective border management, smoother traffic movement

ment said. The meeting also reviewed enforcement of restrictions on overage diesel and petrol vehicles and other non-compliant vehicles under applicable court orders and regulations. Buses operating in Delhi-NCR from cities and towns outside Delhi will have to comply with prescribed fuel and emission standards. Buses other than electric, CNG or BS-VI-compliant diesel vehicles will not be permitted to operate in the region, in accordance with applicable directions.

Delhi schoolgirl's death: Police question teachers, examine CCTV footage

NEW DELHI (AGENCY)

Police are examining CCTV footage, questioning teachers and school staff, and probing personal reasons, including a suspected breakup, as possible factors behind the death of a 17-year-old class 12 student who was found burnt on her school premises in east Delhi's Krishna Nagar, sources said on Sunday. The incident occurred at Sarvodaya Kanya Vidyalaya on Saturday when a school inspection was underway. According to sources, the student was attending her seventh-period class when she sought permission from her teacher to go out to drink water. "Teams are probing multiple angles in this case. A suspected breakup of the girl is also



under scanner. Teams are questioning her classmates, family and friends," the police source said. According to the police, on Saturday the girl had left the classroom carrying a bottle and went to an area behind the guard room, where a water tank is also located, before pouring a flammable substance on herself and allegedly setting herself on fire. Police are investigating how she managed to reach the spot and carry out the act without being noticed in time by teachers or security personnel.

79th Annual Nirankari Sant Samagam-Day Two Illuminated with the Divine Light of 'Awakening' and the Message of Oneness

SAMALKHA: OPEN SEARCH

"Awareness is not confined merely to outward alertness; it must also be reflected in our thoughts, conduct, and emotions." With this profound spiritual message, Nirankari Satguru Mata Sudiksha Ji Maharaj addressed the vast gathering of the global human family on the second day of the 79th Annual Nirankari Sant Samagam.

The four-day Annual Sant Samagam has brought together lakhs of devotees and followers from India and abroad. The congregation, comprising people from diverse cultures, languages, and backgrounds, presents a beautiful example of love, harmony, goodwill, and universal brotherhood. The entire atmosphere of the Samagam is imbued with devotion, spir-



itual awareness, and mutual affection. Explaining the true essence of 'Awakening', Satguru Mata Ji said that genuine awareness is not limited to external vigilance but must also encompass our thoughts, behaviour, and emotions.

Highlighting the significance of devotion, Satguru Mata Ji explained that true devotion does not depend upon any external identity; rather, it finds expression through love, humility, tolerance, and living a life founded

on truth. While embracing changes in lifestyle with the passage of time, one must always remain firmly rooted in truth. The real purpose of Satsang is fulfilled only when its teachings are reflected in one's conduct and inspire continuous self-improvement.

Prior to Satguru Mata Ji's discourse, Nirankari Rajpita Ramit Ji illustrated the importance of inner enlightenment through the example of a visually impaired person carrying a

Spiritual Awakening is the True Foundation of Life Nirankari Satguru Mata Sudiksha Ji Maharaj

lantern. He explained that merely adopting the external appearance of a GurSikh is not sufficient; one must remain illuminated with the light of Brahm Gyan, love, and complete surrender. True spiritual awakening is attained by constantly refining one's thoughts, emotions, and conduct through Seva, Simran, and Satsang.

On this occasion, Satguru Mata Sudiksha Ji Maharaj was also honoured with the Global Peace Award by the Chishti Foundation. The Nirankari Exhibition, beautifully designed with modern tech-

nology, creative presentations, and captivating illumination, continues to be one of the major attractions of the Annual Sant Samagam. Keeping in view the convenience of visitors and the interests of different age groups, the exhibition has been thoughtfully divided into three major sections: Main Exhibition, Children's Exhibition, and Sant Nirankari Charitable Foundation (SNCF) Exhibition.

The Main Exhibition showcases the history of the Mission, its spiritual journey, and the humanitarian tours of Satguru Mata Sudiksha Ji Maharaj and Nirankari Rajpita Ramit Ji. Through three specially designed models based on the central theme 'Awakening', visitors are inspired towards self-reflection, spiritual understand-

ing, and adopting a positive outlook towards life.

Dedicated to the mental, emotional, and spiritual development of children, this section presents inspiring and interactive displays that promote moral values, good character, and life-enriching lessons. It encourages children to embrace human values alongside academic learning.

The Sant Nirankari Charitable Foundation (SNCF) Exhibition highlights the Mission's various social welfare and community service initiatives, including voluntary blood donation, healthcare services, social awareness programmes, and simple mass marriages. Through these initiatives, the exhibition inspires visitors to uphold the ideals of selfless service, humanity, and social responsibility.

Briefs News

NDMC plans larger tulip garden at Nehru Park, dedicated parking for visitors

NEW DELHI (AGENCY) The New Delhi Municipal Council (NDMC) is planning to develop a larger tulip garden inside Nehru Park, with dedicated parking and recreational activities, to allow visitors to spend more time enjoying the seasonal blooms, its chairman Manoj Kumar Dwivedi said on Sunday. The civic body has identified a site for the proposed garden and started preparations, Dwivedi said in a post on X, adding that the new facility would supplement the existing tulip displays along Shanti Path. The tulip blooms along Shanti Path attract visitors every year, but the lack of parking facilities often leads to traffic congestion and roadside parking, making it difficult for people to spend extended periods at the site, he said. "The proposed garden at Nehru Park will have dedicated parking and activities such as music and drone photography, allowing families to enjoy the flowers and spend more time at the venue without traffic-related hassles," Dwivedi said.

Before the lights : two Diwalis Delhi can never forget

NEW DELHI (AGENCY) Four days before Diwali in 1997, the pre-festival crowd at Karol Bagh's Roshan Di Kulfli was savouring a happy evening. Minutes later, a series of bomb blasts ripped through the market. Eight years later, on Dhanteras in 2005, a similar horror struck Sarojini Nagar, Paharganj and Govindpuri. The attacks did not target political rallies. They targeted ordinary shoppers and commuters. For the families left behind, the festival of lights has carried a shadow ever since. Karol Bagh in October 1997 was crowded, and business was brisk. For shopkeepers, the days before the festival were among the most important of the year. For customers, they offered an opportunity to buy new clothes, household goods, sweets and gifts for loved ones. "I cannot forget those scary moments when ear-splitting blasts rocked the area. The noise of celebration gave way to screams, confusion and fear. People who had arrived to shop found themselves running for safety. Others stopped to help the injured. Karol Bagh, which had been filled with festive anticipation, became a place of grief and desperate searches for the missing," recalls Rajesh Vachher, a senior member of Karol Bagh Traders' Association.

Temperatures dip after overnight rains in Delhi

NEW DELHI (AGENCY) Delhi's temperatures dropped to 17 degrees Celsius on Sunday after overnight rains and thunderstorm, according to the weather office. The city received 4.4 mm of rainfall from 8.30 pm on Saturday to 8.30 am on Sunday. The city logged a low of 18.3 degrees Celsius the day before. The minimum temperature recorded was 0.2 notch below the season's average, according to the India Meteorological Department (IMD). The weather department has also predicted rainfall with thunderstorms for the day, with maximum temperature expected to reach 31 degrees Celsius. The air quality was recorded in the 'moderate' category at 9 am, with an Air Quality Index (AQI) reading of 167, according to Sameer App. Out of 54 AQI stations, 11 are in 'poor' category with highest reading of 245 at IIT Delhi followed by 233 at Alipur. Relative humidity was recorded at 94 per cent at 8.30 am. According to the CPCB, an AQI between zero and 50 is considered 'good'; 51 to 100 'satisfactory'; 101 to 200 'moderate'; 201 to 300 'poor'; 301 to 400 'very poor'; and 401 to 500 'severe'.

The Ashok: seven decades of Indian hospitality

NEW DELHI (AGENCY) 1956, marked a new dawn for hospitality in Delhi. The capital was a smaller, more manageable city then, and the mood was upbeat as the newly built Ashok Hotel was inaugurated in Chanakyapuri. Among those present was Professor EB Doctor, a distinguished Parsi architect from Mumbai whose vision had shaped the remarkable building that would go on to become one of the capital's most recognisable landmarks. The Ashok's story began with a diplomatic commitment that presented New Delhi with an unexpected challenge. In 1955, Prime Minister Jawaharlal Nehru was attending a UNESCO meeting in Paris when he proposed that India host the following year's gathering in the capital. The proposal was accepted, but when Nehru returned to India, his advisers pointed out a major problem: Delhi did not have a sufficiently large and well-equipped hotel to accommodate the international delegates and dignitaries expected to visit the city.

Open Search

EDITORIAL

A healthcare revolution in digital India

In today's digital age, the use of technology is rapidly expanding across every sphere of life. Healthcare services are no exception. The e-Sanjeevani initiative, launched by the Government of India, is an important step in the field of digital healthcare. Its objective is to provide citizens with online medical consultations from the comfort of their homes and make healthcare services more accessible, convenient, and affordable.

In a country as populous as India, ensuring the equitable distribution of healthcare services is a major challenge. People living in rural and remote areas often have to travel long distances to access specialist doctors. In this context, e-Sanjeevani establishes a digital link between doctors and patients through telemedicine services. It enables patients to receive medical advice from home, thereby saving both time and money. This service can be particularly beneficial for elderly people, women, persons with disabilities, and residents of remote areas.

One of the key features of e-Sanjeevani is its effort to bring healthcare services to ordinary citizens through digital platforms. It can help reduce unnecessary overcrowding in hospitals, strengthen primary healthcare services, and improve access to specialist medical consultations. This initiative also supports the objectives of Digital India and universal health coverage.

However, certain challenges may hinder the successful implementation of this initiative. Limited internet connectivity, a lack of digital literacy, and inadequate technological resources in many rural areas can restrict its reach. Moreover, not every medical condition can be diagnosed through online consultations alone. Direct medical care remains essential in cases involving serious illnesses, medical emergencies, and conditions requiring physical examination.

Therefore, digital healthcare services should not be treated as a replacement for the conventional healthcare system but rather as a supplement to it. It is essential for the government to strengthen internet connectivity, promote digital literacy, and improve the availability of healthcare centres in rural areas, alongside creating greater awareness about e-Sanjeevani. Ensuring the confidentiality of patients' personal health information and the security of digital systems is equally important.

Daughter's film promotion, and meeting Bachchanji

GOVARDHAN GABBI

Some meetings happen unexpectedly, yet behind them lies a story spanning decades. My recent visit to the sets of 'Kaun Banega Crorepati (KBC)' was something like that. On September 12, we went to our village in Punjab from Chandigarh to rebuild our ancestral house. We wanted to retain its original structure and layout because this was the house our parents had built. We were born and brought up there. It was within those walls that our love for films first took root - a love that has travelled through the generations. Papa was very fond of watching films. He would bring slippers and shoes from Jalandhar and travel from village to village selling them. Every Friday, he had to go to Jalandhar, and the day held another special meaning for us: new films. There was the 6 pm to 9 pm show, followed by the 9 pm to midnight show. Sometimes he took me along, sometimes my younger brother, and at times my sisters. In time, watching films together became a family tradition.

He could never have imagined that one day his children would become part of the film industry. My first visit to Bombay was in 1990. In those days, Bombay was spoken of in much the same way as Lahore once had been: if you had not seen Amitabh Bachchan's house and Juhu Beach, it was almost as though you had never visited the city at all. During the past few years, whenever we travelled to Mumbai to visit our children, Wamiqa and Puran, we would drive towards Juhu Beach in the morning. On the way, we would stop the car outside Bachchanji's house and I would often say to myself, "One day I will surely meet you." Sometimes, I would jokingly tell Wamiqa, "Until you do a film with Amitabh Bachchan, I will not consider you a complete actor." That film has not happened yet. However, she has a film coming up with his wife, the renowned actress Jaya Bachchan. Last month, we were busy with the work at our village house when Wamiqa messaged: "The whole family, come to Mumbai." I was surprised. I soon learnt that she was going to 'KBC' to promote her film, 'Prahaar', and that we were expected to join her. My wife Raj Kumari, younger sister-in-law Shakha Rani and I prepared to leave. Our son was to join us in Mumbai. The next day, we took a flight from Adampur. On September 19, we found ourselves sitting at Famous Studios in Goregaon. The day began with rehearsals at 9 am. We were told where to sit, when to stand and when to clap. Microphones were fitted, the lights were ready, and we were asked to deposit our phones and watches. Then came the moment we had all been waiting for. When he introduced the guests "Sitting before me are actor Rajkummar Rao, actress Wamiqa Gabbi and renowned lawyer Ujjwal Nikam" something inside me gave way. I cannot say whether they were tears of happiness, pride or some unspoken memory accumulated over the past 60 years. Perhaps they were a mixture of all three.

During the conversation, Wamiqa mentioned about the role I had played in her becoming an actor. I wanted to tell Bachchanji that behind our journey lay the long shadow of a father who, by taking his children to watch films every Friday, had unknowingly planted a love for cinema that would endure for generations.

At one point, Wamiqa said, "Amitji, you should invite my father and my family for a meal." He laughed and laid down a condition: "First answer 10 questions." That brought another round of laughter. After the recording, we took photographs with Bachchanji. I told him that like his father, Harivansh Rai Bachchan, I too am a writer and gave him two of my books, which he accepted with pleasure. In terms of age, Bachchanji belongs to my father's generation. Sitting before him, I felt that I was also catching a glimpse of him. Perhaps that was why this was not merely an encounter with a great film star.

ASHOK SAJJANHAR

Marco Rubio's dash to Jamnagar was driven by Trump's hope that India could do something about the shortage of diesel that the world is experiencing and thereby help his mid-term performance

Jamnagar, rubio, and why the US wants india to 'Obey', not negotiate



The year 2026 has emerged as a defining litmus test for the strategic partnership between the United States and India. Characterised by an intricate dance of macroeconomic friction, anti-Indian commentary, and deep-rooted defense collaboration, the bilateral relationship is navigating a cycle of real structural turbulence. No single series of events captures this paradox better than the high-stakes diplomatic itineraries of US Secretary of State Marco Rubio. Following a critical repair mission in May 2026 to stabilise relations jolted by trade tariffs, Rubio's tour in October 2026 to the financial, industrial, technology, and energy hubs of Mumbai and Jamnagar underscores a relationship shifting away from an all-encompassing strategic partnership towards hyper-pragmatic, transactional diplomacy.

To appreciate the current state of India-US ties, one must look back to the spring of 2026. The bilateral relationship entered the year under severe stress. The second Trump administration had introduced a series of aggressive economic manoeuvres, including the imposition of a 50% import tariff on certain Indian goods in August, 2025. Compounding these economic shocks were geopolitical grievances: Washington had renewed diplomatic engagement with Pakistan - which New Delhi viewed as insensitive to its counterterrorism challenges - and public praise from the White House for Pakistan's military leadership had caused a severe trust deficit.

Puja dreams of returning to school and becoming the class topper. Help her heal! From the 'repair mission' of May 2026 when Rubio worked aggressively to reassure India of its status as a vital strategic partner, extended an invitation to PM Modi on behalf of President Trump to visit the White House, sought to address the 50% penalty import tariffs and trust deficit, pushed the 'Mission 500' to increase bilateral trade to \$500 billion by 2030, and reaffirmed Quad cooperation in New Delhi, Rubio's objectives in October, 2026 represented a transactional shift which coincided with a pause in the Sanctions of Russia and Iran Act seemingly triggered by broader U.S. conflicts with Iran and Russia. The October visit has been defined by hard, transactional realism. In a move that unnecessarily ruffled feathers among some political opposition circles in India, Rubio skipped the traditional diplomatic reception in New Delhi entirely. Instead, the State Department mapped an itinerary focused squarely on the economic and financial muscle of Mumbai and the energy infrastructure of Jamnagar in Gujarat - home to the world's largest oil refining complex. The backdrop to Rubio's October arrival was the looming threat of the Lindsey O. Graham Sanctioning Russia and Iran Act. In a significant diplomatic decision just prior to Rubio's departure, the Trump administration paused these sanctions as they applied to any country. Speaking on his way to India, Rubio stated directly that India is an "important ally" whose energy needs must be meticulously factored into US foreign policy calculations. Rubio equated energy security with national security and declared that America's keenness to stop the Russia-Ukraine conflict has to be balanced with the impact that such measures might have on other countries. This argument sounds somewhat hypocritical, as such thinking seems to have been nowhere under consideration when penalty tariffs of 25% on account of India's purchases of Russian oil were imposed in August 2025, while the largest importer of Russian oil and gas, China, was left untouched because of varying strategic considerations. It would have been tactless for Trump to have imposed sanctions on India on the eve of the Rubio visit. This would have totally left

Rubio bereft of any negotiating leverage on what he sought to achieve. Moreover, it appears that the US today desperately wants more diesel to flow into the global markets to control the prices. In this context, the Reliance Refinery at Jamnagar, the world's largest and one of the few with the capacity to refine the hard, sour crude from Venezuela, can meet the current US needs. It is in this context that Rubio was compelled to speak of India as a "Refining Superpower". Rubio's dash to India and to Jamnagar was to seek immediate reprieve for the shortage of diesel that the world is currently experiencing, and Trump's hope that India could help in ameliorating the situation and thereby help him in his mid-Term performance.

However, this relief comes with an explicit American counter-demand: Rubio emphasized a 60-day window for India to actively diversify its energy supply away from Moscow and toward American energy exporters, declaring that Washington "will not let Iran hold the global energy market hostage". The bilateral economic domain continues to remain a persistent

battlefield. Long-running efforts to finalise an interim bilateral trade agreement have repeatedly stalled over market access, agricultural barriers, and tariff structures. Yet, ahead of his October meetings with Jaishankar, Rubio injected a burst of optimism into the narrative, telling media outlets that negotiations were in their "last inches" and that a breakthrough was imminent. This push is tied to a broader political timeline: Washington is leveraging the trade agreement to set the stage for an official presidential visit by Donald Trump to India early next year. This could also be timed with PM Modi's anticipated visit to Miami, Florida, for the G20 Summit in December 2026. Commerce and Industry Minister Piyush Goyal has highlighted that India wants to be assured of a position of comparative advantage relative to its global trade competitors.

However, the path to a finalised deal remains complicated by domestic policy incoherence in Washington. While the State Department attempts to cultivate India as the premier alternative to Chinese manufacturing supply chains, simultaneous crack-downs on Indian technology firms by US immigration authorities have severely strained the relationship. These immigration restrictions - implemented just as delegations attempt to pitch technology partnerships under the TRUST Initiative have raised concerns in New Delhi about America's predictability as an economic partner. While public and media attention naturally gravitates toward high-profile tariff disputes and diplomatic scheduling snubs, an entirely separate reality is unfolding at the operational level.

Charm offensive for the fading beauty



As a longtime resident of Shimla, I tend to regard her as an aristocratic prima donna whose beauty is now of the past, but some of the charms remain. For me, the main attraction on Mall Road is still Trishool, that cute little bakery next to Gaiety Theatre. In the metros, the standalone bakery is now a thing of the past; what you have are chains and their mass-produced stuff. You can no longer easily get an honest, simple pastry; you'll instead be hawked a meringue, or a gateau, or a truffle at five times the price of the original thing. Cream roll is passe except in the slums. The simple, delicious patty is unrecognisable. The bun has metamorphosed into the croissant.

For all of this, you pay humongous amounts through your e-nose. And that's precisely why I keep going back to Trishool: the same chocolate pastries, fruit buns, cream rolls and patties that eased the white man of his burden a hundred years ago, and I can have the whole lot for the price of one meringue in Khan Market. Then there's Dewan Chand Atma Ram (DCAR, to the oldies) just across the road. It has clothed me, my two sons, one wife, and many generations of Cottonians. You may spend your life ordering from Flipkart or Amazon, but you'll never find anything to match the styles in DCAR. And the prices are so reasonable, you wonder why either Deepak or Dinesh (the burghers who preside over the garments) bother asking you for money at all!

Moving from the man-made to the natural charms of this fading beauty, there's Forest Hill Road, a 2-km stretch of sylvania that has somehow escaped the

degradation and traffic chaos which have befallen all of the town's roads. A walk along it in the evening can almost make you want to get married again well, okay, that may be pushing it a bit. Since nobody walks in Shimla these days, the road is quiet and contemplative. If you're unlucky, you will probably bump into Yogesh Khanna.

One evening, he was walking down the road in the middle of a tempestuous storm, the rain coming down in buckets. Suddenly, he saw a procession of nuns coming towards him, brightly lit candles in their hands, chanting hymns. Yogesh stood aside, let the procession pass and continued on his way. Suddenly, he froze: how on earth were all the candles burning bright and steadily in the middle of this storm and rain? He looked back the

nuns had disappeared. Yogesh hurried home, not looking back even once, like the Ancient Mariner who "turns no more his head, for he doth know that close behind a fearful fiend doth tread..."

Then there's Annandale, that divinely picturesque glen cradled in the lap of majestic deodars. It is here that the Army trains day and night to clobber the Chinese at golf. This golf course is one of the Army's treasured possessions and they would sooner vacate Siachen than Annandale. I've played golf here for a few years, though "played" is a euphemism: I spent most of my time looking for the ball in the forests, because, for some strange reason, all my drives invariably went in the direction of Kasauli. After seven years on the course, I've never hit an eagle or birdie, though I have hit a cow (twice) and

my good friend Yatish Sud (once). Annandale is a wonderful place, and I hope the Army never hands it over to the civilian administration, for then it will become another Sanjauli.

One wouldn't normally add the HP government Secretariat to Shimla's list of charming memories, not even if Sunny Leone became Chief Secretary and gyrated her sinuous way up that historic staircase. But I do retain fond memories of one small corner of the Secretariat: the dingy, refrigerated building behind Armsdale. We christened it Guru Nanak Niwas (GNN), because it was a kind of refuge-cum-exile for those out of favour with the rulers of the day. At one point in time in the mid-1980s, I was sentenced to serve time as Joint Secretary (Animal Husbandry). I was exiled because of a rumour that I

had named my dog after the then Chief Secretary, ostensibly so that I could kick him around vicariously! The rumour was, of course, a canard: my dog was named Brutus.

Quite unknown to the mandarins of the Secretariat Administration Department, it was actually a jolly fine place. No minister or senior officer ever visited GNN so we could do just about what we wished to. We usually strolled in at about 11 am, to find loud singing emanating from the bathrooms where all the Section officers were having a bath in order to save water at their residences. I worked till noon and then made my way up the hill behind the building to Raj Bhavan where my batchmate, the late JP Negi, was the Secretary to the Governor. The afternoons were spent in playing billiards and parking of the fine food.

At 5 pm, I would return to office, sign the couple of files that had mistakenly found their way to my table, pick up my squash kit and go to the Raj Bhavan court. It was a wonderful time but, like all good things in life, didn't last very long. Someone conveyed to the Chief Secretary that my dog was named after a Roman statesman and not a Kinnaura worthy, and so I was shifted to Finance. There I learned, among other things, the similarity between a bikini and a budget that what they conceal is much more interesting than what they reveal. Don't grieve over the beauty that once was Shimla, but use your memories to bring back those charms. It doesn't matter that Mary's lamb has now become a mutton burger; remembering her other charms can still bring back the good times.

Vedanta iron and Steel Limited’s run-forzerohunger surpasses 15 lac meals

PANAJI : OPEN SEARCH

Demonstrating the power of collective action to drive meaningful social impact, Vedanta Iron And Steel Limited (VISL), a leading producer of iron and steel with operations across India and Africa, has contributed more than 15 lac meals since 2022 through the Vedanta Delhi Half Marathon (VDHM) 2026 - #RunForZeroHunger movement, including approx. 5.5 lac meals in 2026. The milestone reflects the commitment of employees, business partners and their families towards supporting communities in need through an initiative that transforms every kilometre walked or run into a meal.

RunForZeroHunger - has grown into one of Vedanta’s most impactful employee-led initiatives.



Through their participation, employees have supported flagship initiatives of the Anil Agarwal Foundation, including Nand Ghar and TACO (The Animal Care Organization), while contributing to the broader RunForZeroHunger movement that has enabled over 2.7 crore meals across Vedanta over five editions. Employees across Vedanta Iron And Steel Limited participated by converting their daily walks and physical activities into measura-

ble social impact. The campaign was further strengthened through a series of on-ground engagements, including mini walkathons across Goa, Maharashtra, Karnataka, Odisha and Jharkhand. As part of the initiative, participants engaged with Olympic champion and Vedanta Delhi Half Marathon 2026 International Event Ambassador Shaunae Miller-Uibo, who shared insights on discipline, per-

The milestone reflects the commitment of employees, business partners and their families towards supporting communities in need through an initiative that transforms every kilometre walked or run into a meal

severance and consistency. The campaign culminated with Rise & Stride, a signature walkathon held at Goa’s Divar Island, bringing together employees, business partners, leadership team members and their families. The walkathon was flagged off by Mr Navin Jaju, CFO, Vedanta Iron And Steel Limited, and attended by senior management from across locations. Commenting on the initiative, Mr Navin Jaju said: “What makes the Vedanta Delhi Half Marathon -

#RunForZeroHunger - truly special is its ability to transform an everyday act into a meaningful act of service. For several years now, employees, business partners and their families have embraced this movement with remarkable enthusiasm & continue to rally behind the thought for a world without hunger. I extend my sincere appreciation to everyone who has contributed to this remarkable journey. Among the standout contributors this year was Ratnesh Kumar, who emerged as VISL’s highest individual contributor after covering over 2500 km over the course of VDHM 2026. Through RunForZeroHunger, Vedanta Iron and Steel Limited continues to demonstrate how collective action can create lasting impact and help build stronger, healthier and more resilient communities.

Global luxury goods industry set for recovery in 2027, US to remain bright spot : Goldman Sachs

NEW DELHI.(AGENCY)

The global luxury goods industry is expected to witness a recovery after several years of sluggish sales performance, with revenues of major listed luxury brands projected to grow by 7 per cent in 2027, with the US likely remaining the “bright spot” according to a report by Goldman Sachs. Goldman Sachs noted that the luxury goods industry has faced several challenges, including China’s prolonged property market slowdown, US tariffs in 2025, volatile equity markets, higher interest rates, upcoming US midterm elections, the ongoing Middle East conflict and broader geopolitical tensions, which have affected consumer spending decisions. However, the report highlighted that sharp



price increases following the Covid-19 pandemic likely played a “larger role” in the slowdown in growth for luxury goods. Prices of traditional high-end luxury brands rose by an estimated 60 per cent between mid-2019 and mid-2026, creating opportunities for more affordable luxury brands to attract customers. Along with this, “the aggressive price increases, limited innovation by the industry in the post-Covid period led to diminished consumer

interest, and store traffic tailed off,” GS said. However, several luxury companies have appointed new CEOs and creative directors, who began showcasing their collections last year, signalling efforts to revive consumer interest. “A basket of large, publicly traded luxury-goods makers is forecast to increase revenue by 7% in 2027,” it said. Meanwhile, the report highlighted the US as a potential growth market for the luxury

goods industry, noting that the “appetite of American consumers for luxury goods has picked up strongly.” “US has become a surprising bright spot for luxury goods, with behaviour shifting in a market where buying habits have not fully reflected the significant number of wealthy consumers,” it said. For several years, there had been “a surprising disconnect between wealth in the US (high) and luxury demand among American consumers (low).” This gap is partly attributed to a possible “guilt factor” or “outlet culture,” which may have discouraged luxury spending despite high levels of wealth. However, consumer behaviour has begun to change since the Covid-19 pandemic, indicating growing demand for luxury products in the US.

OMCs back interim LPG distributors' commission hike, ministry approval awaited : AIHPGDA

NEW DELHI.(AGENCY)

Oil marketing companies (OMCs), including Indian Oil Corporation (IOCL), Bharat Petroleum Corporation (BPCL) and Hindustan Petroleum Corporation (HPCL), have agreed to jointly recommend an interim increase in LPG distributors’ commission, even as proposals for a commission revision await approval from the Ministry of Petroleum and Natural Gas, according to a statement by the All India HP Gas Distributors Association (AIHPGDA). In a communication dated October 22, AIHPGDA President Rajendra B said the assurance came during a bipartite meeting held on October 21 at IOCL’s head office in Mumbai, attended by marketing directors, executive directors and senior officials of the three OMCs, along with repre-



sentatives of LPG distributor associations. “Management informed us that revision proposals have already been submitted to MoPNG. The Directors also agreed to jointly recommend an interim increase within a definite timeframe. Ministry approval remains awaited,” the association said. During the meeting, distributors highlighted financial distress, rising operational costs and commercial pressures, including declining refill sales in several markets, restrictions on new LPG connections and unsold commercial stock affecting working capital.

Briefs News

India's September industrial output growth expected to slow to 6% from 8% in August : Union Bank report

NEW DELHI.(AGENCY) India’s industrial production growth is expected to moderate to 6 per cent in September 2026 from 8 per cent in August, with a sharp slowdown in capital goods output and continued weakness in mining, according to a research report by Union Bank of India. The forecast comes ahead of the government’s September Index of Industrial Production (IIP) data, scheduled for release on October 28, and points to slowing industrial momentum despite continued support from domestic demand and a favourable base effect. “Index of Industrial Production (IIP), expected to grow by 6.0% (y/y) in Sep’26, moderating from 8.0% (y/y) in Aug’26 due to moderation in sequential momentum though favourable base-effect holds up,” the bank stated in its research report. A significant concern is the expected sharp moderation in capital goods production, which is projected to grow by just 2.2 per cent in September, compared with 16.9 per cent in August. Capital goods, which include machinery and equipment used in production, are an important indicator of investment-related industrial activity. Consumer durables growth is also expected to slow to 3.1 per cent from 11.1 per cent, indicating weaker momentum in these segments. Among major sectors, manufacturing output growth is projected to moderate to 6.3 per cent from 9 per cent in August, while mining production is expected to contract by 8 per cent, compared with a decline of 5.6 per cent in the previous month.

India mulling to add gig workers, unpaid household jobs in employment survey

NEW DELHI.(AGENCY) India has proposed changes to its employment survey to sharpen the data on gig workers and include unpaid household jobs to arrive at a more comprehensive picture of the country’s changing labour market. The Ministry of Statistics and Programme Implementation (MoSPI) has proposed changes to the Periodic Labour Force Survey (PLFS), which will take effect from January 2027 alongside a revised sampling design. It has also invited public and expert feedback on the proposals. Under the revised framework, the survey will introduce a separate sampling category for households with digital platform workers, including people engaged through services such as ride-hailing, food delivery and online marketplaces. The move follows findings that the existing sampling arrangement did not adequately capture this segment. “Fresh data will reflect urbanisation, changes in district boundaries, and creation, splitting or merger of administrative units. The survey will also ask rural and urban households if members are engaged in digital platform work. It will add queries about ‘own-use production’ of goods, unpaid household work, caregiving, volunteer work and unpaid trainee work,” the ministry said.

Mumbai Airport T1 capacity to rise 33% to 20 million passengers after redevelopment : Adani Airports

Mumbai (AGENCY) Adani Airports is working towards the phased redevelopment of Terminal 1 at Chhatrapati Shivaji Maharaj International Airport (CSMIA), with plans to increase its annual passenger-handling capacity by approximately 33 per cent, from 15 million to 20 million. The redevelopment will be supported by the planned transfer of some flight operations of IndiGo and Air India to Navi Mumbai International Airport (NMIA). According to a media briefing note issued by Adani Airports, “The planned transfer of around 3.6 million passengers accounting for approximately 70% of the traffic targeted for relocation in the first phase will create the necessary headroom for the phased redevelopment of CSMIA’s Terminal 1.” The initial phase aims to shift approximately 5 million passengers to Navi Mumbai, enabling critical safety enhancements, modernisation, upgraded passenger facilities and expanded handling capacity at CSMIA. “The redevelopment of CSMIA’s Terminal 1 will create a safer, modernised and digitally enabled facility, increasing its annual passenger-handling capacity by approximately 33% from 15 million to 20 million,” the briefing note stated.

PhonePe Invest, Empowering Investors with Smart Tools

PANAJI : OPEN SEARCH

PhonePe today announced the evolution of its investing and trading platform Share.Market to PhonePe Invest, bringing it under the PhonePe brand. The transition from Share.Market to PhonePe Invest, brings research-backed wealth management into PhonePe’s unified financial ecosystem, alongside payments, lending and insurance. It also enables the wealth offering to reach a broader audience, making investing more accessible to PhonePe’s large and diverse user base. As part of this evolution, PhonePe Invest pairs its Stocks, IPO, mutual fund, and F&O offerings with its newly launched Portfolio Optimiser - a



holistic proprietary portfolio intelligence tool that enables users to Build, Review and Optimise their portfolios in one unified experience. Moving beyond investment execution, Portfolio Optimiser supports every stage of the investor journey - guiding beginners with intuitive tools while empowering seasoned users with deep, actionable insights on their portfolios. Portfolio Optimiser’s capabilities include: Build - helps new investors start their investing journey with clarity and confidence and build a portfolio.

Indian rice companies eye expansion into UK, European markets amid export growth optimism

NEW DELHI.(AGENCY)

Indian rice companies are looking to expand their presence in overseas markets, including the United Kingdom and Europe, as exporters see opportunities for growth in international trade. Speaking to ANI on the sidelines of the Bharat International Rice Conference (BIRC) 2026 in New Delhi, industry representatives highlighted plans to enter new markets, expand their export networks and strengthen India’s position in the global rice trade. Shashi Shrivastava, Business Head, Hari Bhog Agra Food (HBAF) LLP, said the company is looking to expand into European markets after establishing its presence in the Middle East.



“We cover the Saudi market, Middle East, Iran, Iraq. Now we are expanding to UK, Europe market. This is our goal,” he told ANI. He said the company has been able to establish its presence in domestic and overseas markets by focusing on product quality, competitive pricing and customer requirements. Expressing optimism about the industry’s

growth prospects, Ashish Nainani, Director, International Sales, Goenka Group of Industries, said India remains a major hub for rice exports, with overseas demand creating opportunities for exporters. “The progress will be quite good and as you know that India is the major hub for rice and there are many Indians settled abroad who like to

Private capex pipeline grows four-fold since 2014, but lending risks rise amid sectoral concentration

NEW DELHI.(AGENCY)

India’s private capital expenditure (capex) pipeline surged 39 per cent year-on-year as of September 2026, but increasing concentration across a few states and sectors, larger project sizes and potential execution delays pose significant risks for lenders, according to a report by Union Bank of India. The report highlighted that India’s outstanding private capex pipeline reached Rs 99.7 lakh crore in September 2026, nearly 4.1 times its March 2014 level and 39 per cent higher than a year ago. At the same time, the pipeline expanded by Rs 46.4 lakh crore over the past two years, compared with an increase of just Rs 7 lakh crore in the eight



years to March 2022. However, the number of projects rose by only 50 per cent to 5,311, with the average project size increasing 2.7 times to Rs 1,878 crore. Sector-wise, manufacturing and electricity accounted for the largest share of the private capex pipeline, while the services sector registered the fastest growth. “Manufacturing (Rs 41.3 lakh crore) and electricity (Rs 32.2 lakh crore) hold 74% of the pipeline; services grew fastest, up 347%.

IndiGo, Adani Airports announce phased expansion of international flight operations at Navi Mumbai Airport

MUMBAI (AGENCY)

IndiGo and Adani Airport Holdings Limited (AAHL) jointly announced that they are in the final stages of operationalising a plan for IndiGo to commence international operations from Navi Mumbai International Airport (NMIA) from February 2027 and progressively expand its presence thereafter, further strengthening their partnership and Mumbai Metropolitan Region’s (MMR) dual-airport system. According to a joint media release issued by IndiGo and Adani Airports, “As part of its expansion at NMIA, IndiGo will progressively transfer 12 daily international departures from Chhatrapati Shivaji Maharaj International



Airport (CSMIA) to NMIA, representing all the present operations from CSMIA to Bahrain, Riyadh, Dammam, Jeddah, Madinah, Kuwait, Ras Al Khaimah, Fujairah, Muscat, Dhaka and Jakarta.” “An additional daily service to Kathmandu will also be introduced, taking IndiGo’s international network at NMIA to 12 destinations between February and July 2027,” the release stated.

IndiGo will also transition the required domestic connectivity from CSMIA to NMIA to support these international services from CSMIA to NMIA ensuring seamless onward connections for customers. In close collaboration with IndiGo, AAHL has been working to enable the necessary infrastructure at NMIA for delivering a smooth and efficient transfer experience between

CM Rural Bus Scheme : Bus service started on two new routes in Kanker, remote villages will get transportation facility

RAIPUR, OPEN SEARCH

Under the Chief Minister's Rural Bus Scheme, bus services have been launched on two new routes in Kanker district. Transport Minister Shri Kedar Kashyap flagged off the buses on the Bhanu Pratappur-Korar and Bhanu Pratappur-Antagarh routes. The launch of bus services on these routes will provide regular public transportation to residents of more than 40 forest villages. This will facilitate rural travel for education, health, market places, and government purposes.

Transport Minister Shri Kedar Kashyap stated that under the leadership of Chief Minister Shri Vishnu Dev Sai, infrastructure is being expanded to remote



rural areas. The Chief Minister's Rural Bus Scheme is connecting villages with public transportation that previously lacked regular bus service.

This is making it easier for villagers to reach block headquarters, hospitals, schools, and markets. He stated that expanding rural transportation is not only a

means of transportation, but also a means of connecting remote areas to new development opportunities. Kanker MLA Shri Asharam Netam said

Transport Minister Shri Kedar Kashyap flagged off buses on Bhanupratappur-Korar and Bhanupratappur-Antagarh routes.

that continuous efforts are being made to extend the benefits of government schemes and facilities to remote areas.

The expansion of bus services to remote villages is an important government initiative in this direction. District Panchayat President Smt. Kiran Nareti, Municipal Council President Shri Arun Kaushik, along with public representatives, officials, employees, and villagers were present on the occasion.

Himachal CM Sukhvinder Singh Sukhu launches Pangli brand apple produced through natural farming

SHIMLA (AGENCY)

The Chief Minister on Saturday launched the Pangli apple brand produced through natural farming. He said that the state government was promoting natural farming vigorously and the initiative would go a long way towards establishing a distinct identity for locally produced apple in Pangli under the Pangli apple brand.

He said that Pangli had been declared the state's first natural farming subdivision to strengthen the local economy and bring this remote tribal region on a par with other parts of the state in terms of economic opportunities and quality of life. "Pangli has around 370 hectares under apple cultivation, with an expected production of around 35,000 boxes of fruit this season. Until now, apples



produced in Pangli have been marketed outside the valley in cartons branded as 'Kullu apple' or 'Kinnaur apple', limiting the recognition of Pangli's own produce," he added.

Sukhu said that customised 'Pangli apple' cartons in 20 kg and 10 kg capacities had been launched and were being provided to farmers at a 50 per cent subsidy. He added that the initiative would help in establishing a distinct identity for Pangli

apple, promoting the region's natural-farming produce and improving market recognition.

He said, "It marks an important step towards strengthening the livelihoods of around 6,300 farming households, promoting local entrepreneurship and ensuring greater economic opportunities for the people of this remote tribal region." Revenue Minister Jagat Singh Negi was also present on the occasion.

Briefs News

Tension In Hyderabad After Egg Allegedly Thrown During Durga Idol Procession

HYDERABAD (AGENCY) An egg was allegedly thrown at a Goddess Durga idol procession in Hyderabad leading to brief tension in the area after which police reached the location, pacified the agitated people and detained suspects. The alleged incident happened in Madannapet area of Hyderabad's Old City where a Goddess Durga idol procession was being taken out late Saturday night. Police said an egg was allegedly thrown at the procession at around 2.00 am. Soon after receiving the information senior police officers, including DCP Charminar zone Kiran Khare, Additional DCP Majid, ACP Shyam Sunder, Saidabad ACP Venkat Reddy and Madannapet Station House Officer K Chandra Sekhar, reached the spot. They talked to people to calm the situation and also detained suspects. Police are also examining the CCTV footage to establish the sequence of events and identify anyone else who may have been involved. "We received information that an egg was thrown while the Durga Mata idol procession was passing near Santosh Hotel Lane at around 2 am. Senior officers arrived at the spot, spoke with the organisers and took the suspects into custody. We are checking CCTV cameras," an official said. The official further stated that the organisers had understood the situation and were continuing with the procession. "There are no issues here. The overall atmosphere in the area is completely peaceful. We request the general public not to spread any kind of rumours," the official added. cPolice said they would conduct further inquiries and take strict legal action against anyone found responsible. They have also urged residents to remain calm and refrain from sharing unverified information, particularly on social media and messaging platforms.

Major CoBRA Raid On Designated Kuki Insurgent Camp In Manipur Finds 17 Impersonators

GUWAHATI (AGENCY) Seventeen men who impersonated as insurgents already registered with the government under a ceasefire deal for rehabilitation have been arrested from a designated camp in Manipur, in one of the biggest operations in recent times in a very high-risk area in the state by the CRPF and its commandos, CoBRA. This was the first major operation directly at the very location of a camp of Kuki insurgents who had signed the controversial suspension of operations (SoO) agreement. They have been facing allegations of misusing the SoO agreement to break up Manipur by lying about staying put in designated camps, ever since the Meitei-Kuki ethnic violence began in May 2023. The location, called Sinai Camp, was also a designated camp for insurgents under the SoO agreement to stay, with their weapons kept in locked storage and monitored by a joint monitoring group whose members included the military. In the operation on October 23, security personnel seized 24 firearms, explosives, ammunition and communication equipment, the Manipur Police said. The operation was launched by the Quick Action Team of the Central Reserve Police Force (CRPF) and its special CoBRA units along with Manipur Police commandos. The CRPF's CoBRA has done very well in eliminating Maoists in the heartland. They are now operating in Manipur for the first time.

On Camera, Punjab Man Thrashes Wife. He Wanted Thar, Bike After Marriage

LUDHIANA (AGENCY) A woman in Punjab's Ludhiana was thrashed by her husband after she allegedly failed to give him a Mahindra Thar and a bike after their marriage. A CCTV has surfaced that shows the husband, Ritish Sharma, slapping and grabbing the woman, Twinkle, by her hair outside their home on the night of October 21. Alarmed by her screams on the street, the neighbours rushed out of their homes and rescued the woman. Twinkle has filed a formal complaint with the police and shared the CCTV footage as proof. Sharma, who worked in the healthcare sector, married Twinkle, who ran a salon, in November last year. It was the first marriage for Sharma and second one for Twinkle. The two had met during Twinkle's divorce proceedings about two years ago, and the friendship then turned into love. However, Twinkle alleged that Sharma started demanding a Mahindra Thar three months after the marriage, leading to near-daily fights. On the day of the incident, the dispute over the motorcycle escalated and Twinkle fled to a neighbour's home in a desperate attempt to protect herself.

Kullu Dasehra : Lord Narsingh's 'Raja Ki Jaleb' procession draws devotees

KULLU (AGENCY)

The traditional "Jaleb" religious procession of Lord Narsingh was taken out during the ongoing international Kullu Dasehra festival, with palanquins of various deities and the palanquin of Maheshwar Singh, the "Chharibardar" or chief caretaker of Lord Raghunath, encircling the entire dasehra ground. The ritual is performed every day from the second day of the festival until the second-last day, known as "Mohalla". It is believed that Lord Narsingh ensures the security and safety of the public during festivities and deities from different regions participate every day.

The procession, also called "Raja Ki Jaleb", is led by a decorated mare and the musical instruments of Lord Narsingh, followed by



palanquins of deities on both sides of the Chharibardar's palanquin, carried by porters. Kardars or caretakers and Devaloos (volunteers) danced to the beats of drums. The "Jaleb" began around 4.30 pm from Raja ki Chananani, the king's camp, and passed along the Hospital road to the old State Bank park before circling the festival area from behind the Kab Kendra and returning to the Chananani through the Dhalpur Chowk. The priests of other deities offered flowers as the procession crossed their camp temples.

KDA leaders warn of protests against 'unilateral' notifications, rejects Centre's governance draft

KARGIL (AGENCY)

Leaders of the Kargil Democratic Alliance on Saturday expressed concern over a series of recent notifications issued by the Ladakh administration, accusing it of taking unilateral decisions even as negotiations over an empowered governance framework for the region remain unresolved. They also warned that continued disregard for Ladakh's demands could trigger a public response.

The concerns come amid dissatisfaction over a draft governance proposal presented during an October 15 sub-committee meeting involving the Kargil Democratic Alliance (KDA), the Leh Apex Body (LAB) and representatives of the Ministry of Home



Affairs (MHA). The two regional bodies rejected the proposal, maintaining that it failed to meet the commitments made during earlier discussions. A subsequent meeting scheduled for October 22 in Delhi was postponed. Addressing a press conference in Kargil, KDA co-chairman Sajad Kargili said the administration's continued issuance of notifications, including those concerning the

'Nitish kumar is gone, so is JDU': MLA Anant Singh after expulsion

PATNA (AGENCY)

Bihar MLA Anant Singh, after being expelled from the JD(U) party for six years over alleged anti-party activities, has said he has no regrets over the action and asserted that the party has no political future. Speaking to reporters, Singh said, "I have no regrets. The public is like God, and whatever action they have taken, it was the right decision. I have no problem with it. The party belonged to Nitish Kumar, and he made the decisions himself. What is left in the party now? Who contributed to it? The party has expelled me, but what have those people done? What will we do next?"

"Nitish Kumar is no longer there. The party belonged to him, and now that he is gone, the party is



also finished. The JD(U) will face trouble in at least 10 seats. I do not know who ordered this action; perhaps those who have taken control of the party are responsible," he added.

Singh further mentioned, "I will make my own party. I will stay where I am; I never asked for a ticket. I believe the JD(U) has no future. It will become clear during the elections," Anant

Singh said. Reiterating his position on Nitish Kumar, Singh said, "I have no differences or disputes with Nitish Kumar. I will meet him again."

The JD(U) has expelled Mokama MLA Anant Singh and his wife, former MLA Neelam Devi, from the party for six years over alleged anti-party activities during the recent Bihar Legislative Council elec-

tions. JD(U) state president Umesh Kushwaha

announced the action on Saturday, citing repeated violations of party directives, alleged derogatory remarks against the party's senior leadership, and Anant Singh's decision to oppose the party's candidate in the Patna Graduates' constituency election and campaign in support of a candidate associated with Jan Suraj. In a letter announcing the action, Kushwaha said Anant Singh's primary membership had been terminated for six years.

The party has also written to the Speaker of the Bihar Legislative Assembly, seeking action against his membership under the Tenth Schedule of the Constitution, which deals with disqualification on grounds of defection.

Mumbai's Air Quality Worsens as Dust, Traffic, Construction Fuel Smog

Mumbai (AGENCY)

Mumbai's worsening air quality has exposed a wider urban pollution problem, with road dust, vehicle emissions, industrial activity and construction sites all contributing. As authorities announce fresh measures, questions remain over monitoring, enforcement and the sources responsible for the city's polluted air.

Mumbai's coastal location has long been considered an advantage in dispersing pollution. Yet, as haze settles over the skyline and air-quality readings fluctuate sharply across neighbourhoods, the city is confronting a problem that cannot be explained by its construction boom alone.

Mumbai's Air Quality Index (AQI) reportedly



touched 322, placing it in the very poor category, while Delhi recorded 176, according to a report published the following day. The contrast was striking, but a single day's readings do not establish which city has worse air over the long term. Mumbai's latest spell of pollution instead highlights the combined impact of emissions, weather conditions and gaps in pollution control. A scientific study published in the journal Urban Climate in 2024 identified transport, wind-blown road dust and industrial activity as major contributors to Mumbai's PM10 emissions.

Sukhoi, Tejas, Kiran: Prime Minister Narendra Modi Modi Witnesses Spectacular Air Show In Varanasi

VARANASI (AGENCY)

Prime Minister Narendra Modi on Sunday attended the Indian Air Force's air show 'Wings over Ganges' at Namo Ghat in Varanasi and witnessed a display of aerial manoeuvres by the IAF's premier display teams.

Defence Minister Rajnath Singh, Uttar Pradesh Governor Anandiben Patel and Chief Minister Yogi Adityanath accompanied PM Modi on the final day of the three-day air show held to commemorate the 94th anniversary of the Indian Air Force. According to Air Force officials, the show features fighter aircraft, including the Sukhoi-30 MKI, indigenous Tejas and LCH Prachand, along with helicopter displays. Three Kiran



aircraft flew in a 'V' formation, creating a spectacle in the colours of the national flag, while Mi-17 helicopters carrying the tricolour participated in the Omkar formation.

The Surya Kiran aerobatic team showcased precision flying and coordinated manoeuvres, while the Sarang helicopter display

team enthralled spectators with its aerial stunts.

PM Modi's presence at the event generated considerable enthusiasm among residents, with large numbers of people gathering along the route from the police lines to Namo Ghat to welcome the prime minister. BJP workers and local residents greeted PM Modi

with rose petals, traditional musical performances and cultural programmes at designated points along the route. These points, many of them with tents, were erected at the Police Lines main gate, Police Lines crossing, Yes Bank on Khajuri-Maqbool Alam Road, Hukulganj Tirumuhani, Chowkaghat wood market,

According to Air Force officials, the show features fighter aircraft, including the Sukhoi-30 MKI, indigenous Tejas and LCH Prachand, along with helicopter displays

City Railway Station, Gol Gadda crossing, the railway underpass and the CNG station near Namo Ghat.

People raised slogans of "Har Har Mahadev" and "Jai Shri Ram" as the prime minister stood on the footboard of his vehicle to acknowledge the crowds. Spectators expressed pride at witnessing the air show in the prime minister's presence. "It is a memorable

experience to watch the Indian Air Force's air show at Namo Ghat in the presence of Prime Minister Narendra Modi. The spirituality of Kashi, combined with the might of fighter aircraft in the sky, fills us with pride," he said. He added that the event would inspire children and young people to develop respect for the country and a spirit of national service. Another spectator, Govind Pandey, said it was the first time he had witnessed an air show of this scale.

He said watching the event alongside PM Modi, who represents Varanasi in Parliament, had made the experience particularly memorable. Such displays could inspire young people to join the Indian Air Force, he added.

‘Probably missed out on a couple of opportunities’: New Zealand coach after back-to-back defeats against India

WELLINGTON (AGENCY)

New Zealand head coach Rob Walter expressed disappointment after his side lost the first two T20Is against India in closely contested matches. Speakties that could have helped them seal victories. However, he remained pleased with the team's overall performance, noting that both games could have gone in New Zealand's favour. "In T20 cricket, it's the finest of margins as we know. Both games, we could easily have been on the winning side of it, but weren't," Walter said on landing in Wellington on Sunday ahead of the third T20I, as per Cricinfo.

"Probably missed out on a couple of opportunities



each time where you probably would have sealed the game off for us. It's a bit of a disappointment, but also very happy with how we've played," he added. India have taken a 2-0 lead in the five-match T20I series against New Zealand after securing back-to-back four-wicket victories in Christchurch. In the opening T20 on October 22, New Zealand posted a massive 225/4 in 20 overs.

However, India responded with a strong batting performance, with Sanju Samson scoring a quickfire 67 off 33 balls to help the visitors chase down the target at 230/6 in 19.4 overs. In the second T20I on October 24, New Zealand posted 180/5, with Glenn Phillips scoring 70. Tilak Varma's unbeaten 51 off 26 balls guided India to 181/6 in 19.5 overs, securing

India have taken a 2-0 lead in the five-match T20I series against New Zealand after securing back-to-back four-wicket victories in Christchurch

another four-wicket win and a 2-0 series lead. Walter also said his team had performed well for most of the first two T20Is against India despite limited competitive cricket in recent months. Walter felt that New Zealand had "just not been able to put the finishing touches" on their performances in the opening two matches. "We haven't played much

competitive cricket coming into the series as a team [New Zealand last played in July, an ODI series in the West Indies. And actually, I felt we've played pretty well in probably 80% of each game. We just haven't been able to put the finishing touches on it each time, which is disappointing. But still so much good stuff to come out of both games so far, Walter added. India and New Zealand will face off in the third T20I in Wellington on Tuesday. India will aim to win the match and take an unassailable 3-0 lead in the five-match series, while New Zealand will look to secure their first victory and keep their series hopes alive.

Shardul Thakur to miss Mumbai's third-round Ranji Trophy clash against Haryana

MUMBAI (AGENCY)

Star all-rounder Shardul Thakur is set to miss Mumbai's third-round Ranji Trophy clash against Haryana at the BKC complex, starting Monday, as he continues to recover from an injury. The all-rounder had also sat out the first two rounds due to the same issue. Mumbai have retained the same squad that defeated Himachal Pradesh by a bonus point in Bilaspur in the previous round, as per Cricinfo. Thakur fractured his right middle finger during a training session ahead of the tournament's opening round. Initial reports suggested that he would be sidelined for at least the first two matches.

Although the Mumbai camp had hoped he would regain fitness in time for the third game, Thakur is yet to be declared match-fit. He



has continued training with the squad and was also seen alongside Suryakumar Yadav at a Major League Baseball event in Mumbai on Saturday evening. During his recovery, Thakur will also take up commendary duties for some of the T20Is in India's ongoing series against New Zealand. Thakur last featured in the Duleep Trophy quarter-final for West Zone against North Zone in late August. The out-of-favour India all-rounder claimed one wicket

in 14 overs and scored 10 runs in his only innings at the crease. He remained unbeaten on zero without facing a delivery in the second innings as North Zone secured a 54-run victory. Mumbai will continue to deal with an injury-hit squad, with newly appointed vice-captain Ayush Mhatre sidelined by a hamstring injury, while Yashasvi Jaiswal is in New Zealand to feature in the Test matches following the ongoing 'A' series.

Briefs News

If it was up to me, it wouldn't have ended like this: James Anderson on his Lancashire exit

LONDON (AGENCY) Legendary seamer James Anderson has admitted that his departure from Lancashire was not his preferred outcome, expressing disappointment over the development. The 44-year-old enjoyed an impressive 2026 season as captain, claiming 50 wickets at an average of 17 despite Lancashire's struggles in Division Two of the County Championship. However, Lancashire have decided not to offer Anderson a new contract for the 2027 season, bringing his 25-year association with the club to an end. Anderson said representing Lancashire for 25 years was a dream come true, adding that playing at Old Trafford and captaining the club were among his most cherished memories. He admitted he would have preferred a different ending but wished the players and fans the best for the future. "I've supported Lancashire since I was a kid, and so to get to play for them for 25 years was a dream come true. I have always found it special walking out to play at Old Trafford and have some incredible memories of doing so, including the honour of being captain - if it was up to me it wouldn't have ended like this, but I wish the players and fans all the best for the future," Anderson said in an Instagram post.

‘A lot of room still there’: PV Sindhu after French Open final defeat

PARIS (AGENCY) Double Olympic medallist PV Sindhu finished runner-up at the French Open 2026 after losing to world No. 1 An Se Young of South Korea in the women's singles final. Speaking after the match, Sindhu said competing against top players requires giving 100% on every point and fighting hard throughout the match. "When you're playing with the top athletes, you have to be at your 100% every single point. I know it's not going to be easy and you have to fight for every point. That's what we were doing," Sindhu said as per BAI. Sindhu settled for a 21-16, 11-21, 12-21 defeat at the Arena Grand Paris, as the top-seeded Korean secured her fourth French Open title. Sindhu started on the front foot, bringing great intensity and sharp court control right from the opening shuttle. Taking advantage of some early errors from the world champion, the Indian ace drew level at 11-all before pulling clear to take the first game 21-16. It marked only the second time in 11 career meetings that Sindhu managed to take a game off the Korean star. An bounced back with her trademark consistency in the second game. After a tight opening phase, the top seed took complete control with a long run of points to win 21-11 and force a decider. The momentum stayed with her into the third game where, following a 9-9 deadlock, An used her exceptional court coverage and defence to pull away and wrap up the match in 61 minutes.

New Zealand make squad changes for final three T20Is against India

WELLINGTON (AGENCY) New Zealand have announced several changes to their squad for the remaining three T20Is against India, with Lockie Ferguson set to miss the third match, Matt Henry staying back to prepare for the ODI series, and Blair Tuckner joining the squad for the final three games as part of workload management ahead of the five-match ODI series, according to the New Zealand Cricket (NZC) website. Ferguson will depart for Auckland before rejoining the squad for the final two T20Is. Matt Fisher will travel with the team to Wellington as pace cover for the third T20I only, before returning to the New Zealand A squad. Henry will remain in Christchurch to join the ODI squad in Auckland on November 2, while Kyle Jamieson will feature in the third T20I on Tuesday, October 27. Jamieson will also remain available for Canterbury's second-round Ford Trophy fixture on October 31 before rejoining the Black Caps for the ODI series. Tuckner will join the T20I squad for the final three matches, while Josh Clarkson will be available for selection for the last two T20Is. New Zealand head coach Rob Walter said the team had benefited from the depth of its squad as it manages the workload of its fast bowlers. "It's been a competitive start to the T20 series with two close games and plenty more cricket to come. We're very fortunate with the depth in the squad to be able to call upon different players to help manage our pacers workloads, and to try and ensure they're best placed to perform for the team for all the cricket coming up," he said as per the New Zealand Cricket website.

Padikkal, Sudharsan lead India A's fightback against New Zealand A on Day 2

LINCOLN (AGENCY)

Devidutt Padikkal and Sai Sudharsan led India A's fightback with an unbeaten 96-run stand for the third wicket against New Zealand A on Day 2 of the first four-day match on Saturday after earlier being bundled out for a paltry 113 in the first innings of the match.

At stumps on Day 2, India A were 106 for two in their second innings, trailing New Zealand A by 98 runs after the hosts posted 317 in their first innings to take a 204-run lead.



Padikkal is unbeaten on 56, while Sai Sudharsan will resume batting on 39. The duo steadied the innings after India A lost openers KL Rahul (4) and Yashasvi Jaiswal (5) early, slipping to 10 for two. Earlier, New Zealand A resumed the day at 135 for three and extended their total to 317, with Dean Foxcroft scoring 51 and Curtis Heaphy contributing 44.

Caribbean muscle sets the tone for the 2026 Abu Dhabi T10

DHABI (AGENCY)

When the six franchises built their squads for the new-look Abu Dhabi T10, most of them started in the same place: the Caribbean. Sixteen West Indies internationals will be in action at Zayed Cricket Stadium from November 7 to 20, and every team has at least one. Four of the six icon players, the marquee names, each franchise signed before the draft are West Indian, according to a press release.

Kieron Pollard leads defending champions UAE Bulls. Jason Holder is the face of Yas Lions, Nicholas Pooran captains Royal

Desert Champions, and Rovman Powell heads Emirates Eagles. Arabian Aces signed Andre Russell before the draft, which makes it five headline names, and United Tigers used the draft to bring in fast-bowling all-rounder Odean Smith.

A T10 innings lasts 60 balls, and nobody has time to play himself, whereas in a T20 he might have a few overs. Anyone who can clear the rope from his first delivery is worth more in this format than in any other, and the Caribbean keeps producing them.

They know this tournament well, too. Pooran was



the leading run-getter and Player of the Tournament in 2022, when he captained Deccan Gladiators to the title with 345 runs and 31 sixes, and he led them to another title in 2024. By the

the tournament's history. Akeal Hosein, now with Yas Lions, took five wickets for six runs, including a hat-trick, in Qualifier 1 of the 2023 season.

Some franchises went well beyond one star. UAE Bulls have kept Pollard, Narine and Romario Shepherd together from last season's title-winning squad and added Andre Fletcher at the draft. Royal Desert Champions have surrounded Pooran with Sherfane Rutherford, Brandon King and Keemo Paul. Shimron Hetmyer joins Powell at Emirates Eagles, while Alzarri Joseph and Obed McCoy add West

Indian pace to Arabian Aces and Yas Lions.

Pollard also knows how fast a campaign can turn in this format. UAE Bulls won only two of their first six matches last season and came close to going out. They then won four in a row, including all three playoff games, to lift the trophy. With this much hitting power spread across six teams, few totals will feel safe this year. The tournament opens on November 7 with UAE Bulls against Yas Lions, which puts Pollard and Holder on opposite sides from the first ball. The final will be played on November 20.

Tilak, Nitish's 69-run stand scripts India's record death-over chase against New Zealand



CHRISTCHURCH (AGENCY)

Tilak Varma and Nitish Kumar Reddy's unbeaten 69-run partnership off 30 balls helped India script a record chase in the final five overs of a T20I during their second match against New Zealand in Christchurch on Saturday, according to ESPN. India needed 68 runs from the final five overs to chase down a target of 181, with Tilak and Nitish combining to take the team to victory with one ball to spare.

The 68 runs scored in the final five overs marked India's highest successful chase during that phase of a T20I, surpassing their previous best of 60 runs against Pakistan at the Melbourne Cricket Ground (MCG) during the 2022 T20 World Cup. In the memorable World Cup encounter, Virat Kohli's unbeaten 82

guided India to victory. India's latest effort stood out as the team completed the chase with five wickets already down.

Tilak anchored the chase with an unbeaten 51 off 26 deliveries at a strike rate of 196.15, hitting six fours and one six. Nitish provided crucial support with an unbeaten 26 off 13 balls at a strike rate of 200, including one four and one six. The pair's unbroken seventh-wicket stand of 69 runs from 30 balls turned the contest in India's favour and secured the win with a ball remaining. While nine instances have seen teams score more runs in the final five overs of a successful T20I chase, all those teams had at least five wickets in hand, unlike India in Christchurch. The victory gave India a 2-0 lead in the five-match T20I series. The third match is scheduled to

be played in Wellington on October 27. Speaking about the match in a video posted on social media by the Board of Control for Cricket in India (BCCI), Tilak Varma said the slower pitch, large ground and quick bouncers made hitting sixes difficult, forcing India to rely on smart batting, hard running and fitness to complete the chase. "I think the wicket was really challenging today. Especially if you see, big ground, slower side, and also if you see when they were bowling bouncers, it is really coming quick. So it's not easy to hit whenever you want sixes. Honestly, if you see in the first game, it was easy to hit sixes, but this game was pretty challenging. Then the challenge comes to us, you know, how we want to play smartly, how we played today. We want to show our fitness level, our core works into the game. In those twos, singles, running hard, and whenever we want, we were hitting sixes," he said.

Tilak Varma said he resisted the urge to play big shots while Naman Dhir was batting, sticking to his promise to head coach Gautam Gambhir and batting coach Sitanshu Kotak to take the game deep and remain patient. Notably, before stitching the match-winning partnership with Reddy, Varma had combined with Naman Dhir for a 42-run partnership.

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Nithya Menen says filmmakers have less creative freedom today : ‘It’s become backwards’



Actress Nithya Menen believes filmmakers today have less creative freedom and it has become easier to make certain kinds of films as audiences have become more sensitive to content. Speaking at the 16th edition of the India Film Project (IFP), Menen shared her views on the changing landscape of cinema during a conversation with film journalist Vishal Menon at Mehboob Studios

here. The session, titled Becoming Kanmani, revisited the enduring appeal of her 2015 romantic drama OK Kanmani, directed by Mani Ratnam, and explored the writing, performances and music that shaped its characters and relationships. “I don’t think filmmakers are as free today,” Menen said, reflecting on the challenges facing creative professionals. “It’s become backwards, like it’s

easier to do certain kind of films; this is really offending me. You know, like everybody gets offended, I think people think a lot more; they like use their intellect a lot more today, you know?” she added. The actress also challenged the notion that on-screen chemistry depends solely on the lead pair, stressing that the writing is central to making relationships believable. “Chemistry is not that. Chemistry is in the writing, first and foremost chemistry is in the writing,” she said, explaining how writing, direction, performances and music work together to create a compelling cinematic experience. Menen recalled being surprised by the chemistry between her and co-star Dulquer Salmaan when she watched the film’s premiere, given their friendly relationship off screen. “Dude, what is this? Because Dulquer and me had a sort of very buddy-like relationship,” she said. Menen also spoke about the pressure women face while navigating relationships and professional ambitions. “Today, I feel I want both. I can have both, and it’s okay. It’s not an either-or; it’s not black or white, right? It can be worked out. Unfortunately, it is a thought process, especially for a woman, because it’s biological and everything. That’s sadly the case; it’s something we have to live with.” IFP Season 16 is being held at Mehboob Studios, bringing together creators from different disciplines to discuss their work and the evolving creative landscape. (AGENCY)

Vijay Deverakonda and Rashmika Mandanna's fans call KWK trolling unfair

Vijay Deverakonda and Rashmika Mandanna have once again caught fans’ attention after Rashmika revealed in a recent interview that Vijay comforts her during her periods with tummy rubs and hand and foot massages. The revelation has struck a chord with fans, with many highlighting Vijay’s thoughtful and caring side while recalling the trolling he faced following his appearance on Koffee With Karan. “Green flag is when a man doesn’t just say he loves you but actually shows up for you when you’re uncomfortable or in pain. Those little things Rashmika mentioned about Vijay are honestly adorable.” “Vijay was called



all sorts of things after that KWK episode but look at what Rashmika is saying now. Now everything needs to become a debate on social media. Sometimes people are just sharing a beautiful part of their relationship.” Fans expressed their disappointment over the backlash Vijay received, emphasising that personal expressions of affection should not automatically become subjects of online controversy. (AGENCY)

Shilpa Rao after performance cut short at Mumbai Music Festival, organisers apologise

Singer Shilpa Rao, the voice behind tracks such as “Chakya”, “Tere Hawaale” and “Besharam Rang”, shared a note on social media and said she was “deeply hurt” after her performance was abruptly cut short and her microphone was switched off. Rao performed in Mumbai on Saturday at the 10th-anniversary edition of the Bollywood Music Project. Even as she tried to thank the audience from the stage, Kutle Khan began another performance. However, the audience didn’t stop as they called Rao’s name. The 42-year-old artist shared a post on her Instagram handle on Saturday and thanked her fans for the support. “Mumbai, a piece of my heart broke tonight. It hurts deeply to have something so beautiful taken away from us like this. But even when the music stopped you didn’t,” she wrote. “The way you kept calling my name, the love in your voices, I could feel it all I promise I will come back to Mumbai,” she added. The organisers reacted by sharing a statement. “We deeply apologise. At BMP, our mission is always to deliver an unparalleled live music experience for both our artists and their fans. We want to address the abrupt conclusion of Shilpa Rao’s performance at this weekend’s festival. First and foremost, we hold Shilpa Rao in the highest regard,” it read. “We deeply value and respect her incredible legacy, her unparalleled artistry, and the profound impact she continues to make on the music industry. It was an absolute honour to have her on our lineup,” it added. (AGENCY)



Manipur’s pain finds voice in Mangka Mayanglambam’s unfinished song on humanity

Manipuri artiste Mangka Mayanglambam began writing Apocalypse: The Call of Mother Nature during the Covid-19 pandemic, shaken by the loss of human lives. But the composition remained unfinished for four years, until the ethnic violence that erupted in her home state in 2023 gave her the words to complete it. Performed midway through her folklore-driven set at Jodhpur RIFF on Friday, the song reflects her response to both crises, its sombre message carried by the soulful strains of the traditional single-stringed instrument pena. “It felt like human civilisation had come to an end during Covid-19 and mother nature was taking revenge on us for our behaviour. I could not write more than two paras. Then in 2023, so many innocent lives were lost, even small babies were murdered,” Mangka told PTL. Manipur has been gripped by an ethnic conflict between the valley-based Meitei and hill-based Kuki communities



since May 2023. The violence has claimed at least 306 lives, with several people still missing. Three Meitei men were killed in an ambush on October 19. The final two paragraphs of her composition speak of humanity’s collapse under the weight of hatred. “The last two paragraphs said that because of the hatred we have for each other, humanity has lost. There’s no love between us. There’s no harmony. It is in a metaphor: the birds are mocking us. The trees are dancing. The rivers, the lakes feel that humans are going to end,” the 30-year-

old said. The conflict, she said, has transformed the songs and stories of Manipur, making it difficult for artistes to perform even their most peaceful compositions without recalling the violence. “The songs, the stories, everything has changed. Even when I am telling a story of love, peace and harmony, it takes me back to that year and it all turns black. I may be dressed up well, putting on make-up and costumes, but deep inside, whenever I sing the songs of Manipur, it gives me that pain that cannot be explained in words,” she said. (AGENCY)

One woman’s pain cannot be another woman’s victory, says Upasana Kamineni Konidela

Upasana Kamineni Konidela has always been vocal about women’s empowerment, and she has done it again. This time, she sent a strong message to those women who bring other women down for their personal benefit or to please men. She firmly believes that one woman’s pain should never be another woman’s victory. At a recently held event, she expressed that there is nothing more empowering than women who genuinely support, celebrate and inspire one another. “There are so

many women out there who require us and require our help, but my research has also told me that there are a lot of women out there who step on other women for their success. And those women, this is my warning to you: Do not think that you can step on a woman for your success or to

please a weak man,” shared the entrepreneur and philanthropist. She is married to Telugu superstar Ram Charan. “One woman’s pain cannot be another woman’s victory. We have to rise together, we have to stick together, and our mindset has to change. This is what I believe in and my research has taught me this. I am so happy to be amongst these women here who selflessly empower women and have a good heart. I surround myself with such people, and I also give people who have done injustice a chance to heal,” she continued. (AGENCY)



Days after Tiger Shroff firing case, Rohit Shetty breaks silence on attacks on Bollywood celebs

Filmmaker Rohit Shetty has publicly spoken out about the firing incident outside his home for the first time, during his appearance on Bigg Boss 20 on Saturday’s Weekend Ka Vaar episode. Addressing the security threat for the first time, Shetty also referred to the recent firing incident on Tiger Shroff. Shetty filled in for host Salman Khan on Saturday’s Weekend Ka Vaar and channelled his nonsense authority to pull up contestants Scout OP, Aasif Khan and Yung DSA for repeatedly ganging up on Qazi Touqeer. Drawing a parallel to the real-life security threats and firing incidents targeting Bollywood personalities, Rohit called out the contestants for trying to act like gangsters inside the house. “Yahan humare ghar par goliyan chal rahi hain, tum kya gangster banke ghoom rahe ho?” Rohit admonished the



contestants. In the early hours of February 1, at least five rounds were fired at the first floor of Rohit Shetty’s Mumbai residence, though fortunately, no injuries were reported. Mumbai Police subsequently arrested multiple suspects. This security breach mirrors a similar high-profile attack last year, when assailants opened fire at Salman’s Bandra apartment. Adding to the string of attacks on Bollywood stars, Tiger Shroff was recently targeted in a Juhu firing incident on October 18. (AGENCY)

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