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Contact for Advertisement 9958699302

E-mail opensearchnews@gmail.com

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DELHI EDITION

Rajnath offers counter-terror expertise to ASEAN partners

Addressing the 13th ASEAN Defence Ministers' Meeting Plus in Cebu, the Philippines

NEW DELHI.AGENCY

India is ready to share its battle-tested counter-terrorism expertise with partner countries to strengthen collective security and joint operational capabilities, Defence Minister Rajnath Singh said on Thursday, asserting that the country's experience in combating cross-border terrorism has been shaped by decades of operational challenges.

Addressing the 13th ASEAN Defence Ministers' Meeting (ADMM)-Plus in Cebu, the Philippines, Singh said India remained committed to regional security and the elimination of terrorism in all its forms, adding that counter-terrorism strategies developed by the country were rooted in real-world operational experience rather than theoretical knowledge. "India's extensive expertise in counter-terrorism is not theoretical classroom knowledge, it is an experience hard-earned through decades of directly confronting complex cross-border security challenges," he said. Referring to Operation

Sindoor, Singh said the operation demonstrated India's proactive approach to tackling terrorism. He said it had shown the country's resolve to dismantle terrorist infrastructure and establish a firm red line against state-sponsored terrorism. Emphasising the need for closer international cooperation, the Defence Minister said India is prepared to work with ADMM-Plus partners through joint military exercises, capacity-building initiatives and intelligence sharing to enhance collective preparedness against terrorist threats. He highlighted counter-terrorism as an important pillar of cooperation under the ADMM-Plus framework, noting that India and Malaysia are co-chairing the Experts' Working Group on Counter-Terrorism for the 2024-2027 cycle.

Singh also reiterated India's support for ASEAN centrality and a secure, open, inclusive, resilient and rules-based Indo-Pacific, stressing that regional peace and stability depended on shared

India's extensive expertise in counter-terrorism is not theoretical classroom knowledge, it is an experience hard-earned through decades of directly confronting complex cross-border security challenges

responsibility and sustained cooperation. The theme of the 13th ADMM-Plus, 'Navigating Our Future, Together', reflected India's approach to international engagement and its civilisational ethos of 'Sarve Bhavantu Sukhinah' (May all beings be happy), he said. "Our greatest strength lies in our solidarity and the shared ability to leverage our geographic, economic and strategic diversity. India believes in an international system built on mutual trust, co-operation, and collective responsibility," Singh said.

He recalled that the second ASEAN-India Defence Ministers' Informal Meeting, held in Kuala Lumpur in October last year, had reaffirmed the commitment to strengthening the defence and security dimensions of the ASEAN-India Comprehensive Strategic Partnership and implementing the ASEAN-India Plan of Action for 2026-2030.

Highlighting maritime security as a key area of regional cooperation, Singh pointed to India's designation of 2026 as the ASEAN-India Year of Maritime Cooperation and the conduct of the second ASEAN-India Maritime Exercise.

He said the Indian Navy has been maintaining an uninterrupted operational presence in volatile maritime corridors, including the Gulf of Aden, since 2008, contributing to the protection of commercial shipping and international sea lanes. "Since 2008, the Indian Navy has maintained an uninterrupted, active presence in highly volatile corridors like the Gulf of Aden, without coercion or unilateral actions that undermine the rights of other nations," he said.

PM's National Service to Be Portrayed in SUPVA's Theatrical Presentation

Event to be held at Indradhanush Auditorium in Panchkula : CM

CHANDIGARH : OPEN SEARCH

Dada Lakhmi Chand State University of Performing and Visual Arts (DLCSUPVA) and the state government's Department of Information, Public Relations, Languages and Culture will organize a theatrical presentation on October 30 at Indradhanush Auditorium in Panchkula under the Seva Sankalp Abhiyaan. During the event, the theatre production 'Shoonya Se Shikhar Tak, prepared by DLCSUPVA students, will portray various aspects of Prime Minister Sh. Narendra Modi's life, struggles, service to the nation and public life. On this occasion, Chief Minister Sh. Nayab Singh Saini will be the Chief Guest.

DLCSUPVA Vice-Chancellor Dr. Amit Arya stated that through 'Shoonya Se Shikhar Tak', prepared by students, the Prime Minister's life journey and his contributions to the nation will be presented through theatre. For this, the university team has departed for Panchkula.

Presenting a person's life journey through theatre requires weaving facts, events, and emotional episodes together into a cohesive narrative

This theatre production has been prepared by students under Seva Sankalp. It weaves together various milestones in the PM's life, struggles, challenges, and episodes related to public service in a dramatic form. Its objective is to convey different aspects of his life journey to the audience in an impactful manner. The theatre production attempts to bring the story to life through dialogue, acting, music, and stage design. He stated that the students had used theatrical art and creative expression to prepare it. This event is also an opportunity for students to showcase their acting talent, writing, direction, and teamwork. Presenting a person's life journey through theatre requires weaving facts, events, and emotional episodes together into a cohesive narrative. 'Shoonya Se Shikhar Tak' has been prepared with this very idea at its core.

Sh. K Makarand Pandurang, Commissioner and Secretary of the Department of Information, Public Relations, Languages and Culture, stated that this performance, to be held at the Indradhanush Auditorium, will give audiences an opportunity to witness ideas and episodes related to service to the nation through theatrical art. Such events provide students with a platform to showcase their talent while also developing a creative perspective on social and national issues.

Naseeruddin Shah faces backlash over 'Dimagi Naxal' remark

NEW DELHI.AGENCY

Veteran actor Naseeruddin Shah has triggered a political controversy after describing himself as a "Dimagi Naxal" while criticising the government over student protests, the education system and the state of democracy, drawing sharp reactions from union Minister Kiren Rijiju and several BJP leaders. The controversy erupted after the 76-year-old actor posted a video on Facebook backing students of Jamia Millia Islamia demanding the restoration of their students' union. Wearing a badge bearing the words "Dimagi Naxal", Shah questioned the government's response to dissent and its treatment of young people. Union Minority Affairs Minister Kiren Rijiju launched a scathing attack on the actor, describing him as a "dangerous urban Naxal" and a "subversive intellectual".

Every citizen has role to play in building 'Viksit Bharat': Venkaiah Naidu

NEW DELHI.AGENCY

Highlighting the broader aspirations of a developed India, Naidu added, "By 2047, we must ensure there is no hunger, atrocity, discrimination, or disparity

India's journey towards Viksit Bharat by 2047 depends as much on citizen participation as it does on governance and economic progress. Delivering the keynote address at Mantra?a, the flagship discussion series of Bharat Ki Soch, Former Vice President M. Venkaiah Naidu stressed that nation-building cannot rest on the government alone.

"Policies provide the vision, but citizens' actions determine the pace and success of the outcome," he said. While the government must deliver effective governance, infrastructure, and growth opportunities, he noted that citizens share an equal responsibility to uphold constitutional values and fulfill their civic duties. Highlighting the broader aspirations of a developed India, Naidu added, "By 2047, we must ensure there is no hunger, atrocity, discrimination, or disparity. True progress is reflected not merely in economic metrics, but in societal well-being, equity, and unity." Expanding on the core pillars of nation-building, he defined true patriotism as everyone diligently performing their duty and called upon the country's youth to dream big, work hard, and actively contribute to national development. In his welcome address, Anil Rajput, Chairman, Bharat Ki Soch, said the vision of Viksit Bharat must be supported by a stronger sense of civic responsibility and individual accountability. "We often measure a developed India through its infrastructure, thriving businesses, advanced technologies and modern cities. While these are essential, the choices we make every day determine how fully we benefit from this progress. Respecting public property, protecting the environment, following rules and acting with integrity are not merely individual actions; they shape the society we collectively build.

CM Sai unveiled the life-size statue of Baba Kartik Oraon on his birth centenary

RAIPUR: OPEN SEARCH

Chief Minister Shri Vishnu Dev Sai today virtually participated in the birth centenary celebrations of Baba Kartik Oraon, a great leader of the tribal community, renowned engineer and former MP, held in the Surguja region from the Chief Minister's residence in Civil Lines, Raipur, and unveiled his magnificent life-size statue. Respecting the sentiments of the tribal community, Chief Minister Shri Sai made the important announcement of renaming the Government Engineering College, Digma, Ambikapur, as 'Engineer Baba Kartik Oraon Chhattisgarh Institute of Technology, Ambikapur'. The Chief Minister said that Baba Kartik Oraon's life is an inspiring saga of education, struggle, social consciousness and self-respect of the tribal community.

His ideals will continue to inspire future generations to progress through education and serve society and the nation. On this occasion, Chief Minister Shri Sai, giving a significant infrastructure development gift to the Sitapur region, performed the ground-breaking ceremony for the construction of a 3.82-kilometer-long four-lane road from Sontarai to Sur. More than 28 crore rupees will be spent on this road's construction. Its construction will make travel in Sitapur city and surrounding rural

CM big announcement : Government Engineering College, Digma will now be named 'Abhiyanta Baba Kartik Oraon CG Institute of Technology, Ambikapur'

areas easier and safer, and will give a new impetus to business and economic activities.The Chief Minister also inaugurated the newly constructed Women's NGO Mess Building by the Chhattisgarh Police Housing Corporation, 12 non-gazetted officer residences and 12 head constable and constable residences in Udaipur, and 12 head constable and constable residential buildings at Sitapur Police Station.

Give Top Priority to Facilities for Devotees and Tourists at International Gita Mahotsav: Governor

International Gita Jayanti Has Established Kurukshetra's Global Identity : Chief Minister Nayab Saini

VIJAY KUMAR.OPEN SEARCH

CHANDIGARH : Haryana Governor Prof. Ashim Kumar Ghosh, while chairing the 83rd meeting of the Governing Body of the Kurukshetra Development Board (KDB), appreciated the excellent arrangements made during last year's International Gita Mahotsav. He said continuous efforts should be made to further streamline the festival and enhance the experience of devotees and tourists.

Haryana Chief Minister Sh. Nayab Singh Saini, MP Sh. Naveen Jindal, Gita Manishi Swami Gyananand Maharaj, MLA Sh. Ashok Arora, Chief Secretary Sh. Anurag Rastogi and several senior officers were present at the meeting.

The Governor said that a large number of devotees and tourists from India and abroad visit the International Gita Mahotsav. Therefore, transportation services and connectivity need to be further strengthened to ensure their convenience. He emphasised facilitating access to the fairgrounds, expanding bus services and providing better transportation facilities during the festival so that visitors do not face any inconvenience and can fully enjoy the event. Prof. Ashim Kumar Ghosh urged the Board members and district administration to prioritise these arrangements through mutual coordination. He expressed confidence that better planning, coordinated efforts and continuous improvements would make this year's International Gita Mahotsav more grand, well-organised and convenient for visitors. Governor Prof. Ashim Kumar Ghosh and Chief Minister Sh. Nayab Singh Saini also launched the 'Digital Heritage App' and the 'Kurukshetra Sarathi Mobile App'.

Chief Minister Sh. Nayab Singh Saini said that the International Gita Jayanti celebrations would be organised in Kurukshetra from December 5 to 25. Several religious, spiritual and cultural programmes would be held during this period. An awareness campaign would begin on December 2 and cover 182 pilgrimage sites located in the 48-kos region. In addition, a procession would be taken out from Pipli on December 4. Along with the Bhagwat Katha and Gita conferences, an exhibition would also be organised to mark the completion of 60 years of Haryana's formation. Programmes for academicians would also be held, along with activities aimed at instilling values and building strong character among young people. The Chief Minister said that West Bengal and Delhi would participate as partner states this year. ISRO, the Navy, the Air Force and the Indian Council for Cultural Relations (ICCR) would also participate in the exhibition organised during International Gita Jayanti. A crafts fair and a Gita book fair would also be organised, featuring renowned artisans from across the world.

He said that Gita Jayanti celebrations would be held at the district level from December 18 to 20. During this period, Gita recitation programmes would be organised in temples in every village of the state. Students from all Kendriya Vidyalayas and Jawahar Navodaya Vidyalayas across the country would also be encouraged to participate.

Reviewing pending development works, the Chief Minister directed the formation of a joint committee comprising the Deputy Commissioner of Kurukshetra and his Officer on Special Duty (OSD), Sh. B.B. Bharti. The committee would audit and examine these works and submit a report. He said strict action would be taken against those found responsible for any irregularities.

Anil Vij Expresses Anger Over Electricity Connection Delay of 12 Months, Gives Officer Seven-Day Ultimatum

CHANDIGARH : OPEN SEARCH

Haryana Energy, Transport and Labour Minister Sh. Anil Vij heard public grievances at the PWD Rest House in Ambala Cantonment today and directed the concerned officials to take prompt action. During the public grievance hearing, he issued strict instructions to the officials present, stating that every problem for which he directed a resolution during the hearing must be resolved within one week, that is, seven days.

During the public hearing, a complainant raised the issue of an alleged illegal electricity connection at Jaggi City Centre. He claimed that the land on which Jaggi City Centre stands belongs to the Municipal Corporation and that an electricity connection had been obtained illegally.

According to the complainant, the electricity connection serving Jaggi City Centre had been obtained in the name of a house in Friends Colony, Model Town, approximately four kilometres away from the site. He said that he had brought a copy of the 1960 land revenue records (jamabandi) and had also presented a map dating back to 1963. He further stated that the land originally belonged to the village panchayat and was subsequently transferred to the Municipal Corporation.

The complainant also informed the minister that a case concerning Jaggi City Centre was pending before the Lokayukta court. Additionally, he alleged that the Municipal Corporation had issued a fraudulent No Dues Certificate (NDC). He questioned how an allegedly illegal electricity connection could have been provided on land claimed to be government property.

After hearing the grievance, Sh. Vij asked the complainant to submit a single comprehensive application along with all relevant documents so that the matter could be examined and appropriate action taken. Sh. Vij said emphatically, "My name is Anil Vij, and whoever is found guilty under the law in this matter, no matter how influential the person may be, will not be spared."

Taking cognisance of the complaint and the documents submitted, Sh. Vij immediately directed the Deputy Commissioner to constitute a committee and conduct a thorough investigation into the matter.

During the public hearing, another complainant levelled allegations against the Municipal Corporation Commissioner, Ambala, claiming that money was being made in the name of issuing NDCs.

Briefs News

Haryana Governor Administers Oath of Office to Satish Kumar as HPSC Chairman

CHANDIGARH: OPEN SEARCH Haryana Governor Prof. Ashim Kumar Ghosh administered the oath of office to Sh. Satish Kumar as the new Chairman of the Haryana Public Service Commission (HPSC) here today. Sh. Satish Kumar took the oath of allegiance, office and secrecy in the presence of Punjab Governor Sh. Gulab Chand Kataria, Haryana Chief Minister Sh. Nayab Singh Saini, Haryana Vidhan Sabha Speaker Sh. Harvinder Kalyan and Punjab Vidhan Sabha Speaker Sh. Kultar Singh Sandhwan. The swearing-in ceremony was held at Haryana Lok Bhawan here today. Chief Secretary Sh. Anurag Rastogi, Additional Chief Secretary (Home) Sh. Sudhir Rajpal, Additional Chief Secretary Sh. A.K. Singh, Principal Secretary, Department of Future, Smt. Amneet P. Kumar, Secretary, Haryana Public Service Commission, Sh. Pankaj, Director General, State Vigilance and Anti-Corruption Bureau, Dr. A.S. Chawla, Chairman, Haryana Staff Selection Commission, Sh. Himmat Singh, members of the Haryana Public Service Commission, other dignitaries and family members of the newly appointed HPSC Chairman, Sh. Satish Kumar, were also present on the occasion.

Chandigarh : CBI court dismisses realtor's bail plea in Rs 82-cr CREST fraud case

CHANDIGARH (AGENCY) A CBI court here dismissed the bail plea of realtor Vikram Wadhwa, an accused in the alleged misappropriation of Rs 82 crore belonging to the Chandigarh Renewable Energy and Science & Technology Promotion Society, which had been deposited in IDFC FIRST Bank. The FIR in the case was initially registered by the Chandigarh Police on March 12. It pertained to a "large-scale fraud" involving fictitious transactions to divert CREST funds to shell entities, in connivance with bank officials and public servants. The case was later transferred to the CBI. As per the prosecution, Wadhwa was engaged in the real estate business and was closely associated with accused Ribhav Rishi, the then branch manager of the bank in Sector 32, Chandigarh. An analysis of their call detail records revealed frequent telephonic contact between Wadhwa and Ribhav Rishi over a prolonged period covering the period of the alleged offences, thereby indicating their close association and coordination. The prosecution claimed that the funds siphoned off from the CREST's bank account were routed through Capco Fintech Services, an entity used for the diversion and layering of funds. The counsel for the accused said he had been falsely implicated in the case. He argued that the main allegation against Wadhwa was that he had received money in his account from shell entities and transferred it to the account of co-accused Ribhav Rishi's wife.

SAD-BJP bonhomie on display at Manpreet Badal's daughter's wedding reception

CHANDIGARH (AGENCY) Bonhomie between the Shiromani Akali Dal (SAD) and the BJP was on display at the wedding reception of BJP national vice-president Manpreet Singh Badal's daughter in Chandigarh, with a photograph of SAD president Sukhbir Singh Badal posing with senior BJP leaders going viral on social media amid renewed speculation about an alliance between the two parties. The photograph shows Sukhbir with former Punjab BJP president Sunil Jakhar, former minister Vijay Sampla and former MLA Jagdeep Nakai. Also in the frame are BJP district presidents Jagbir Brar , Amarpal Singh Binu Ajnala and Kuldeep Singh. The reception was attended by leaders from across the political spectrum. Sukhbir and Manpreet are cousins, and the occasion was largely a family affair. However, the photograph of the Akali chief posing alongside a group of BJP leaders from Punjab has acquired political significance amid speculation that the two parties could join hands again ahead of the 2027 Assembly elections.

State Govt Committed to Providing Farmers with High-Quality Seeds : Rana

CHANDIGARH : OPEN SEARCH

Haryana Agriculture and Farmers' Welfare Minister Sh. Shyam Singh Rana said that the state government is fully committed to providing farmers with modern and advanced technology and high-quality seeds. Efforts are being made to increase the income of potato-growing farmers in the state by ensuring the availability of quality potato seeds. Sh. Rana said that, as part of this initiative, the state government has made seeds of various potato varieties available at the Potato Technology Centre, Shamgarh, Karnal, to help farmers obtain better prices for their potato produce.

The Agriculture Minister urged farmers to visit the department's portal to book potato seeds online according to their requirements. Providing details about the varieties, classes and sizes of seeds available at the Potato Technology Centre, Shamgarh, it was informed that 1,097.5 quintals of seed of the K. Pukhraj variety is currently available, while 38,000 units of the K. Frysona variety. Sh. Shyam Singh Rana appealed to farmers to book these improved seeds in time.

SAATH Programme to Involve Parents in Adolescent Mental Healthcare : Arti Rao

CHANDIGARH : OPEN SEARCH

Haryana Health Minister Arti Singh Rao said the state government would pay special attention to the mental health of schoolchildren. For this purpose, an annual activity calendar for the SAATH (Support & Awareness for Adolescents Through Parents) programme will be prepared in coordination with the nodal officers of the Health and Education Departments.

Arti Singh Rao said that the National Health Mission (NHM), Haryana, in collaboration with the School Education Department, is set to launch the SAATH programme. This state-wide initiative will transform schools into regular meeting points for parents, teachers and the healthcare system. Through monthly sessions organised in schools, parents and guardians of adolescents aged 10 to 19 years (Classes 6 to 12) will learn to recognise early signs of emotional distress, communicate openly with their children and approach the appropriate services for help.

Monthly Sessions to Be Held in Schools to Help Parents Recognise Stress, Listen Better and Seek Timely Help for Adolescents

Any child requiring support will be assisted through a clearly defined referral pathway, beginning with the teacher or parent, followed by the school counsellor, Community Health Centre (CHC), adolescent health or Rashtriya Bal Swasthya Karyakram (RBSK) services, and specialist care wherever necessary. Follow-up will be ensured at every stage. Providing further details, NHM Haryana Mission Director Dr. R.S. Dhillon said that adolescence brings challenges such as examination pressure, conflicts with peers, bullying, digital exposure and, in some cases, the early use of tobacco, alcohol or drugs. Most of these concerns first become visible at home. However, parents often lack access to reliable information about what is normal and which signs require attention. The SAATH programme seeks to bridge this gap.

Selja Calls for United Action to Protect Electoral Fairness and Constitutional Rights

CHANDIGARH : OPEN SEARCH

The Sirsa MP, Former Union Cabinet Minister, All India Congress Committee General Secretary and Congress Working Committee member Kumari Selja said the 'Vote Bachao, Desh Bachao' mega rally, scheduled to be held at Delhi's Ramlila Maidan on November 1, would be an important mass movement to protect the country's democracy, Constitution and citizens' voting rights. She appealed to people from Haryana and across the country to participate in the rally in large numbers.

Kumari Selja said the Congress alleged that the BJP-led Central government was weakening the autonomy of democratic institutions and that serious questions had been raised about the fairness of the electoral process. She called for an impartial investigation into allegations of vote theft. She said the people were supreme in a democracy and no government should be allowed to misuse constitutional institutions for political interests. Citizens must raise their voices peacefully and constitutionally to protect their democratic rights, she added.

Kumari Selja said she had held detailed discussions with Haryana Congress Incharge Sanjay Dutt and state Congress President Rao Narender Singh regarding preparations for the rally, organisational coordination and ensuring large-scale participation from Haryana. The leaders called upon Congress workers to reach out to people in villages and cities to encourage participation. She expressed confidence that Haryana would record historic participation in the rally being held under the leadership of Rahul Gandhi, Leader of Opposition in the Lok Sabha. She reaffirmed that the Congress would continue its struggle to protect democratic values, constitutional rights and a fair electoral system.

Rain threat clouds Karwa Chauth, IMD issues orange alert for Chandigarh Tricity on Friday

CHANDIGARH (AGENCY)

A stronger spell of unsettled weather is set to keep Chandigarh, Mohali and Panchkula on alert on Friday, with the India Meteorological Department (IMD) upgrading its warning to orange for thunderstorms, lightning, gusty winds of 50-60 kmph and hailstorms at isolated places. The warning follows a day when thick clouds and a cool breeze played spoilsport with Karwa Chauth moon-sighting plans across the Tricity, delaying the wait for the moon among fasting women gathered at Sukhna Lake, parks and other public places, as well as on rooftops. The IMD has forecast fairly widespread rain over Chandigarh and Haryana on Friday, with scattered showers likely in Punjab. The spell is expected to be accompanied by thunderstorms, lightning and strong gusty winds, with hail possible at isolated places in Chandigarh, Haryana and Punjab. Rain and thunderstorm activity is forecast to continue through Saturday, before conditions turn dry from Sunday. Thursday's weather remained largely subdued in terms of rainfall despite the alert being upgraded from yellow to orange later in the day. Skies stayed overcast, with a cool breeze and reports of isolated light thunder and lightning. The IMD's 24-hour rainfall data recorded no rain in Chandigarh city, while the Chandigarh airport station reported trace rainfall between 8.30 am and 5.30 pm. The evening observatory figures also showed no measurable rainfall in the city.

Amit Shah to Inaugurate 'Azadi ki Pehli Ladai ka Shaheed Smarak–1857' in Ambala on November 5 : Anil Vij

CHANDIGARH : OPEN SEARCH

Haryana Energy Minister Anil Vij said that Union Home Minister Amit Shah would visit Ambala Cantonment on November 5 to inaugurate the 'Azadi ki Pehli Ladai ka Shaheed Smarak–1857'. He said a public rally would be held at Gandhi Ground in Ambala Cantt. following the inauguration. He also said that students from all educational institutes in Haryana would be taken to visit the Martyrs' Memorial at government expense. Vij said, "I bow in reverence to everyone who took even one step forward in the struggle for India's freedom. Our objective is to honour all those bravehearts who fought for the country's independence but whose contributions did not receive the recognition they deserved."

Vij further claimed that, during an incident at Ambala Cantonment in September 1857, 135 soldiers of the 5th and 60th Native Infantry were killed at the parade ground within just 10 minutes, 33 were taken prisoner, and approximately 40 managed to escape. Vij was speaking to media representatives in Ambala Cantonment. He said it was important to share some significant facts about the historic Martyrs' Memorial of the First War of Independence–1857. In particular, he said, two questions needed to be addressed: why the memorial had been built in Ambala Cantonment and why the uprising of 1857 was called the First War of Independence.Vij said a key basis for establishing the Martyrs' Memorial in Ambala Cantonment was the research and findings presented in a book by Dr. K.C. Yadav, former head of the Department of History at Kurukshetra University. According to Yadav's research, the uprising of 1857 which the British called a "mutiny," or military revolt began in Ambala Cantonment approximately nine hours before it began in Meerut. He said he had also conducted extensive research on the subject and collected several important documents. According to Vij, on May 10, 1857, soldiers of the 5th and 60th Native Infantry at Ambala Cantonment came out of their barracks armed, approximately nine hours before the events in Meerut. He said these facts indicated that Ambala Cantonment had played a highly significant role in the history of the 1857 uprising.

Unsung heroes of India's freedom struggle to receive due recognition at the Martyrs' Memorial, "I bow in reverence to every braveheart who took even one step for India's freedom": Anil Vij

The Energy Minister said he had obtained an important historical document from the National Archives and that a copy would also be made available. According to the document, during September 1857, soldiers of the 5th and 60th Native Infantry were assembled at the parade ground in Ambala Cantonment. During the gathering, a soldier allegedly shouted "fly," meaning to flee, following which European soldiers opened fire on them.

Language is the soul of a nation, and literature gives permanence to its ideas and values': Vijender Gupta

AJEET KUMAR. OPEN SEARCH

Shri Gupta Underscores the role of language and literature in preserving India's cultural heritage and strengthening national identity

NEW DELHI. Language is the soul of a nation, and literature gives permanence to its ideas and values. The identity of a country is shaped not merely by its geographical boundaries, but by its language, literature and cultural heritage," said the Hon'ble Speaker of the Delhi Legislative Assembly, Shri Vijender Gupta, while addressing the inaugural session of the Rachayita Literary Festival 2026 as the Chief Guest at Delhi University today. Speaking on the theme "Language, Literature and the Nation", he emphasised that language, literature and national identity are deeply interconnected and that preserving linguistic heritage is essential to safeguarding the civilisational legacy of India.

Addressing the gathering, Shri Gupta said that language is far more than a medium of communication; it embodies a society's consciousness, emotions, traditions and collective memory. Citing the contributions of literary figures such as Kabir, Surdas, Mirabai, Tulsidas and Goswami Tulsidas, he observed that India's literary traditions have enriched regional languages while weaving the country into a shared cultural fabric. He noted that literShri Gupta Underscores the role of language and literature in preserving India's cultural heritage and strengthening national identityscend geographical and social boundaries, preserve collective wisdom and express the joys, struggles and aspirations of generations. Highlighting the historical significance of language and literature, the Speaker said that attempts to weaken a nation's civilisation often begin with attacks on its linguistic and literary traditions. Referring to India's experience under foreign rule, he recalled how indigenous languages and literary works sustained the country's cultural consciousness despite prolonged political domination. He also cited examples from Japan, Germany, France and Israel to demonstrate how language and literature can strengthen national identity, revive cultural confidence and contribute to a nation's intellectual and social development.

Shri Gupta invoked the thoughts of Bharatendu Harishchandra and Mahatma Gandhi to underline the importance of Indian languages in national awakening and education. Referring to Gandhi's views on mother-tongue education, he stressed that children learn and understand concepts more effectively when taught in their own language. He also highlighted the contribution of Rabindranath Tagore, Bankim Chandra Chattopadhyay and Subramania Bharati, whose literary works inspired national consciousness and strengthened the spirit of freedom. Emphasising that linguistic diversity is a source of strength, he said that Indian languages must receive due respect and encouragement without diminishing the importance of learning other languages.

The Speaker further highlighted the relevance of language and literature in contemporary India, particularly in education, research and public administration. Referring to the Delhi Legislative Assembly's efforts to promote Hindi in its official functioning, he said that the Assembly has been expanding the use of Hindi in correspondence and other activities.

Wildlife, Yoga, Classical Dance : Delhi's flyovers get a story of their own

NEW DELHI. OPEN SEARCH

The bare, often neglected spaces beneath Delhi's flyovers are being turned into themed public spaces, as the Public Works Department (PWD), Government of NCT of Delhi, brings major corporations on board to adopt and maintain them through their Corporate Social Responsibility (CSR) funds.

Delhi's PWD Minister Shri Parvesh Sahib Singh today visited the Chirag Delhi and IIT Delhi flyovers to review the work on the ground and check its progress.

Under an MoU signed Indian Oil Corporation Ltd has adopted five flyovers along with the Aurobindo Marg road stretch Chirag Delhi, Panchsheel and IIT Delhi flyovers in the South, and Punjabi Bagh and Mukarba Chowk flyovers in the North. Indian Oil will maintain these sites for three years. Instead of a one-size-fits-all makeover, Indian Oil studied the surroundings of each site and picked a theme that fits its neighbourhood:

Speaking on the initiative, Delhi's PWD Minister Shri Parvesh Sahib Singh said, "Since our government took office, we have partnered with major corporations and used their CSR funds to have them adopt the spaces beneath our flyovers. Every MoU we have signed carries a commitment of two to three years of maintenance. I am pleased to share that Indian Oil has taken on five flyovers. They have studied the surrounding areas and are bringing in themes made for each location. To beautify Delhi and uphold its status as the national capital, our PWD department and our government are working day and night to improve the look of our roads."

At Chirag Delhi, one of South Delhi's busiest junctions, the space below the flyover is being turned into a green pocket built around the Nature & Wildlife theme. Wall art and installations bring the birds, animals and plant life of Delhi and India to the heart of the city, set amid landscaped greenery. For thousands of commuters who pass through every day, a dull grey underpass becomes a reminder of the natural heritage the city shares space with. In a parallel move, PWD is building 400 to 500 police booths for Delhi Police, from its own funds and in coordination with the force, beneath flyovers across the city.

HC refuses access to Race Course mosque for prayers

NEW DELHI.(AGENCY)

The Delhi High Court on Thursday refused to allow worshippers access to the Race Course mosque, even as the Centre assured no coercive action will be taken against the religious structure for the time being. Justice Anish Dayal, while hearing a petition to protect the mosque situated on a Lutyens' Delhi land parcel that has been taken over by the Centre for "public purpose", noted the ongoing demolition work around the structure and said, "If somebody gets injured, who is going to pay compensation?" Union government standing counsel Ashish Dixit submitted that the authorities will decide a representation by the Delhi Waqf Board on the issue within four weeks and no coercive action would be taken in the meantime. In response to the petitioner's request to permit ingress and egress to the mosque, Dixit said such access would not be safe at this stage due to the ongoing demolition activity around it."Let it go. Let them decide. It is a fair submission. We can't force them to give access for prayers," the court told the petitioner's lawyer.

Dixit said at present, worshippers are not permitted access to a temple on the site as well. Syed Ahmed Saud has sought directions from the court to protect the Race Course mosque a notified Waqf property since 1977 located in the precincts of Jaipur Polo Ground from demolition, as well as restoration of entry to the mosque.

Delhi HC asks Sourav Ganguly to specify infringing content in film 'Doosra'

NEW DELHI.(AGENCY)

Prepare a table with time stamp of the objectionable scene and narration of the objections...We will see it over the weekend and we will hear you," the court stated

The Delhi High Court on Thursday asked cricketer Sourav Ganguly to identify specific portions of the film "Doosra" that allegedly infringe his personality rights. Justice Tejas Karia directed the defendants to submit a pen drive containing the movie, which is stated to be a fictional story of a middle-class Rajasthani girl who is inspired by certain sporting events involving the cricketer, and listed the former India captain's lawsuit against the filmmakers for hearing on November 2. "Prepare a table with time stamp of the objectionable scene and narration of the objections.

We will see it over the weekend and we will hear you," the court stated. Besides Ganguly, Luv Films LLP, which is producing a biopic of the former cricket captain, is also a plaintiff and has alleged violation of his "contractual rights" by "Doosra". The court asked the plaintiffs to submit the manuscript of their upcoming movie "Dada" in a sealed envelope, and also specify how the defendant's film was violating the contractual rights.

The plaintiffs' counsel pressed for interim relief of injunction against the defendants even after the release of "Doosra" in theatres last week, and informed that the movie was yet to come on OTT platforms. "It is all about Sourav Ganguly's life. His image has been badly exploited without consent.. After intermission, it is all about the (2002) NatWest match," the counsel submitted. Senior counsel, appearing for the defendants, said they took due permission from the authorities holding the copyright over the clips of the sporting event. Opposing the plea, it was also clarified that Ganguly was only a "source of inspiration" in their film. On October 23, the high court had asked the makers of the film "Doosra" to respond to Ganguly's plea alleging violation of hsis personality rights in the movie and asked them to also arrange a screening. On October 22, the high court had refused to stop the theatre release of the film "Doosra" on Ganguly's plea. "Doosra: India's Other Freedom Struggle" is a sports drama directed by Abhinay Deo and starring Plabita Borthakur, Ankur Vikal and Samidha Guru.

Bengal govt now free to transfer I-PAC raid obstruction case to CBI : Mamata

NEW DELHI.(AGENCY)

There was a raid as far as I-PAC is concerned. Something happened, police officers were involved, there was a complaint against ED officers

Former West Bengal Chief Minister Mamata Banerjee on Thursday told the Supreme Court that the Suvendu Adhikari government was free to transfer to the CBI the probe into the alleged obstruction of raids by Enforcement Directorate at the office of political consultancy firm I-PAC in Kolkata. The ED urged the top court to pass an order on its plea for free and fair investigation of the case to avoid any party making allegations of mala fide.

A Bench of justices Prashant Kumar Mishra and N V Anjaria reserved its verdict on the ED's plea alleging obstruction by the then Chief Minister Banerjee and other state authorities during its January 8 search of the I-PAC office. Senior advocate Kapil Sibal, appearing for Banerjee, submitted that now the situation has changed in the state and the government was free to send the case for investigation by the CBI. "There was a raid as far as I-PAC is concerned. Something happened, police officers were involved, there was a complaint against ED officers. An Article 32 petition was filed and the prayer was to send it to the CBI. She was a sitting chief minister then. Now, she is not the chief minister. So there is no impediment. Now, the state has another government and the chief minister. Now, they are entitled to send any matter to the CBI. If they wish to do it, no one can stand in their way," he submitted. Sibal said the court should not be burdened by this petition and arguments, as the state very much has the power under the Delhi Special Police Establishment Act of 1946 to send any case to the CBI. The Bench said senior advocate Maneka Guruswamy, also appearing in the matter, earlier made a similar argument but then Solicitor General Tushar Mehta said "mala fide" will be alleged.

Delhi SIR : Only 2.71 lakh Form 6 applications filed after 47.56 lakh voters dropped from draft rolls

NEW DELHI.(AGENCY)

As the claims and objections period under SIR in Delhi nears its end, only 2.71 lakh applications seeking inclusion in the voter list have been filed since the publication of the draft rolls, with West Delhi accounting for the highest number. According to a report released by the office of the Delhi Chief Electoral Officer on Wednesday, 2,71,639 Form 6 applications were received between August 31 and October 27, after the exclusion of 47,56,722 electors from the draft list published on August 31 during the ongoing Special Intensive Revision (SIR) of electoral rolls. BuyMaps West Delhi recorded the highest number of Form 6 applications filed at 33,377, followed by North West Delhi at 27,341, East Delhi at 26,212, South East Delhi at 26,054 and North East Delhi at 25,973. The figures come as the claims and objections period, which began with the publication of the draft electoral rolls for all 70 assembly constituencies, is set to close on October 30. During the same period, Delhi received 20,654 Form 7 applications and 1,02,149 Form 8 applications. South West Delhi recorded the highest number of Form 7 applications at 3,152 and North East Delhi topped the Form 8 category with 13,373 applications. Form 7 is filed for deletion of names and Form 8 for correction or modification of entries.

Nirankari Mass Simple Weddings Adorned with the Divine Spirit of Love, Simplicity and Oneness

NEW DELHI. OPEN SEARCH

126 Newlywed Couples Tied the Knot Make Married Life Blissful Through Mutual Love and Dedication : Nirankari Satguru Mata Sudiksha Ji Maharaj

Where the sacred blessings of Satguru converge with love and spirituality, every auspicious moment becomes a divine experience. The mass marriage ceremony organised in the sacred grounds of Samalkha, following the conclusion of the 79th Nirankari Sant Samagam, in the divine presence of Satguru Mata Sudiksha Ji Maharaj and Nirankari Rajpita Ramit Ji, became a beautiful symbol of this spiritual sentiment. Here, 126 newlywed couples tied the knot, embarked upon their new lives and received the blessings of Satguru for love, dedication and a blissful married life.

The programme commenced with the traditional Jaimala and the Nirankari Sanjha-Haar, which were presented to all the newlywed couples by the respected Rajkumari Ji, President of the Mission, along with other executive committee members, who extended their best wishes for their blissful new lives. This was followed by the singing of devotional Nirankari Laavan in Hindi, which embodied the teachings of a married life filled with faith, respect and complete dedication. Finally, Satguru Mata Ji and Nirankari Rajpita Ji showered flowers upon the newlywed couples and blessed them with a life filled with happiness, peace and joy. In her divine blessings, Satguru Mata Sudiksha Ji Maharaj inspired the newlywed couples by explaining that the essence of mass weddings should not remain limited to a single event but should become a way of life. Husbands and wives should share their responsibilities equally and move forward with love, trust and harmony, becoming two wings for each other and facing every circumstance of life together.

Emphasising the importance of mutual cooperation on the path of Sewa, Simran and Satsang, Satguru Mata Ji inspired the couples to encourage one another to progress in life. Marriage is a sacred relationship that must be nurtured throughout life with love, respect and dedication, and it can be further strengthened through mutual respect and affection between both families. She conveyed the message that newlywed couples should accept each other's shortcomings with ease and maintain a spirit of forgiveness and humility. Additionally, the auspicious wedding of a family member of Satguru Mata Ji was also solemnised as part of these mass simple weddings. The Secretary of Sant Nirankari Mandal, the respected Joginder Sukhija Ji, shared that the ceremony, organised with the support of the Social Welfare Department.

Briefs News

NDMC sets up independent quality control division, makes third-party audits of projects mandatory

NEW DELHI.(AGENCY) The New Delhi Municipal Council (NDMC) on Thursday said it has set up an independent division for quality control and technical audits of its projects and made third-party audits mandatory to ensure adherence to prescribed standards. In a post on X, NDMC Chairman Manoj Kumar said the division will oversee projects across departments, including civil works such as roads, buildings, sewerage and water supply, besides electrical and information technology projects. He said the civic body is also roping in reputed institutions, including the Central Building Research Institute, Central Road Research Institute, Council of Scientific and Industrial Research, Quality Council of India, IITs, NITs and RITES, to strengthen quality checks. The move is aimed at ensuring that projects meet the required quality standards while being completed within the stipulated timelines. "Besides strictly monitoring timelines for our projects, we will have no compromise on quality and standards," Dwivedi said.

IMD issues thunderstorm, hail alert for parts of Delhi as dark clouds obscure capital sky

NEW DELHI.(AGENCY) Dark clouds hung over the capital since Thursday morning, with the India Meteorological Department issuing 'red' and 'orange' alerts for thunderstorms and hail for several parts of the city over the next few hours. The IMD, in its district-level nowcast for the period until 6 pm, said thunderstorms accompanied by lightning and hail, with wind speeds of 40-60 kmph, are likely over parts of central Delhi, New Delhi, south-west Delhi, west Delhi and north Delhi. Thunderstorms accompanied by moderate rain and lightning, with wind speeds of 30-40 kmph, are likely in parts of south-east and east Delhi, Shahdara, north-east Delhi, south Delhi and other areas. BuyMaps Additionally, light rain accompanied by lightning is likely in other parts of south-east, east and south Delhi. Many city residents took to social media to report rainfall in areas including Preet Vihar, Dwarka, Laxmi Nagar, Nirman Vihar and Yamuna Bank during the day as clouds obscured the sky over most parts of the capital. The city recorded trace rainfall in the 24 hours ending 8.30 am Thursday, while the relative humidity stood at 91 per cent at 8.30 am, according to the IMD. The weather department has forecast generally cloudy skies with rainfall for Thursday, with thunderstorms and rain also likely on Friday. As per the IMD's colour-coded weather warning system, an "orange" alert indicates imminent severe weather, and cautions of significant disruptions to transport and power. A "red" alert indicates severe weather conditions that may pose threat to life and property.

Delhi Census 2027 Phase II training to end by early Dec; new PRAMAN framework for enumerators

NEW DELHI.(AGENCY) Training sessions for functionaries at all levels for the second phase of Census 2027, covering population enumeration, have begun in Delhi and are expected to conclude by the first week of December, officials said on Wednesday. A training session for senior officials was held at the Delhi Secretariat last week, briefing district magistrates, additional district magistrates and sub-divisional magistrates on the progress of the first phase and preparations for the next stage, they said. BuyMaps A four-day training programme for master trainers and a three-day exercise for field personnel are also being conducted to prepare officials for the large-scale administrative exercise. Under the operational framework for the second phase, each enumerator will be assigned approximately 800 people to survey, officials said. Guest teachers in Delhi have also been included in the enumerator workforce for the door-to-door data collection exercise. The second phase of Census 2027 in Delhi is likely to begin on January 10, 2027, with a 15-day window for self-enumeration ahead of the house-to-house exercise scheduled to start on January 25, officials said. The self-enumeration window will run from January 10 to 24, followed by field operations from January 25 to February 28.

Open Search
EDITORIAL

Cyclonic crisis and the challenges to public life

Natural disasters periodically pose challenges to human life that require preparedness, foresight and collective efforts to overcome. The impact of Cyclone Arnab is significant in this context. Cyclones and similar weather events are not limited to changes in weather conditions; they can also affect public life, agriculture, transportation, electricity supply, trade and the local economy. During such situations, the safety of citizens and the uninterrupted functioning of essential services must remain the top priorities. During a cyclone, strong winds, heavy rainfall, waterlogging and high sea waves can create serious problems. People living in coastal areas may face greater risks, while low-lying regions remain vulnerable to flooding. Disruptions to road and rail transport, falling trees, power outages and interruptions in communication services can bring normal life to a standstill. Farmers' crops, the livelihoods of fishermen and the operations of small businesses may also suffer significant losses.

However, timely preparedness plays a crucial role in minimising the damage caused by any cyclone. Weather department warnings must be taken seriously, administrative guidelines should be followed, and people living in vulnerable areas must be moved to safer locations when necessary. Effective coordination among rescue teams, healthcare services, fire departments and local authorities can ensure prompt assistance during a crisis.

The responsibility of the government and administration should not be limited to issuing warnings. Ensuring the availability of relief camps, drinking water, food, medicines and essential services such as electricity in affected areas is equally important. Special attention must be given to the needs of children, senior citizens, persons with disabilities and those who are ill. After a disaster, repairing damaged roads, houses, electricity poles and other infrastructure, along with providing financial assistance to affected families, must also be prioritised.

Long-term measures to deal with cyclones require serious consideration. Concerns about the intensity and unpredictability of extreme weather events are growing in the context of climate change. Strengthening coastal embankments, improving drainage systems, ensuring the availability of safe shelters and modernising disaster management mechanisms are therefore essential. Training people at the local level in appropriate safety measures during emergencies can also prove beneficial.

The role of ordinary citizens is equally important. Avoiding rumours, relying only on official information, refraining from unnecessary travel and helping those in need are all part of our collective social responsibility. Ignoring official warnings can endanger not only individuals but also the lives of personnel engaged in rescue and relief operations. The impact of Cyclone Arnab serves as a reminder that natural disasters cannot be prevented entirely, but their damage can be reduced considerably through better preparedness and effective management. Along with swift action during emergencies, it is essential to develop sustainable solutions to address future challenges. Coordinated efforts by the government, administration, scientific institutions and citizens can provide a strong foundation for safety and resilience.

Clio's sisters

UDDALAK MUKHERJEE

The question from a young lady seemed to take the tourist guide, also a woman, with decades of experience of taking tourists around Chittorgarh near Udaipur, by surprise. In the interregnum, the pause between the visitor's query and the local's response, the rest of us, standing in a semi-circle around the jauhar kund, remained immersed in the ambient soundscape. A rock pigeon cooed rhythmically in a crevice on a stone wall; drumbeats Dussehra was approaching could be heard from the town that spread out, like a Byzantine carpet, from the foot of the ancient fort; a gentle wind rustled through the ruins, scooping up dust, dry leaves and discarded plastic bottles.

Snehlata Sukhwal (picture), the veteran, government-approved guide, had been asked what she felt about the medieval custom of jauhar the act of self-immolation by Rajput women to save their honour from victorious 'infidels' a ritual that is still spoken of with evident pride by Rajasthan's mostly male guides. Snehaji's response, like the question, was informative and intelligent. She made two essential points. First, the debris of feudal honour notwithstanding, it is important, she said, to view the custom from the point of view of the women who were willing to be consumed by the flames: history, popular and scholarly, must provide that answer such a complex issue, she added, cannot be addressed by tourist guides insufficiently trained as scholars. Second, guides are often under subterranean pressure to peddle popular and performative narratives over all that is authentic. The pressure of and extraction by pop culture must be acknowledged while judging a tourist guide's often colourful reconstruction of a past event.

This is the season of the Great Recreational Migration that sees countless visitors throng invade India's historical sites. Yet, this is also a season laced with an anomaly that has been illuminated by research. A multi-nation Pew Research Center survey had found that Indians associate history, and the arts, with national pride and, yet, a 16-city-based study by another organisation revealed that most Indians confess to being ignorant of both history and culture. This gap is not filled by curriculum and pedagogy alone. The guide is a critical instrument of disseminating historical information, albeit contested information.

But that may not be the consequence of individual chicanery. The training manuals of certified tourist guides need to be pored over. Interestingly, even as battles rage to tailor history according to a certain ideological bent the outcome of Haldighati, a little over 100 km from Chittorgarh, being a case in point the world of tourist guides is witnessing its own tremors.

Traditionally, in India, the guide, bona fide or not, is a male figure who is quick with words and wit but, quite often, chooses embellishment to mask the lack of factual fidelity. The consequences can be comic. In Agra, a man who claimed to have a degree in history from a university got the Mughal lineage muddled repeatedly, identifying what is ostensibly described as Jahangir's bathtub inside the majestic Agra fort as that of Aurangzeb.

Why Nov 1 rally raises questions about INDIA Bloc's Priorities

BHARTI MISHRA NATH

The reason is simple: the national capital's traders are preparing for one of the busiest shopping periods of the year, with Dhanteras falling on November 6 and Diwali on November 8.

In a democracy, political parties have the right to protest, mobilise public opinion and hold governments accountable. But democracy also demands that political leaders remain sensitive to the everyday struggles of the very citizens whose interests they claim to represent. It is this equilibrium between political confrontation and public responsibility that lies at the heart of the controversy surrounding the Congress-led INDIA bloc's November 1 rally at Delhi's Ramlila Maidan. The CTI (Chamber of Trade and Industry) and local market associations, representing over 20 major wholesale and retail markets such as Chandni Chowk, Sadar Bazaar and Khari Baoli, have appealed to Congress leader and Leader of Opposition Rahul Gandhi to postpone the rally until after November 10, when the festive period culminating in Bhai Dooj will have passed. The reason is simple: the national capital's traders are preparing for one of the busiest shopping periods of the year, with Dhanteras falling on November 6 and Diwali on November 8.

However, Rahul Gandhi is adamant about proceeding with the November 1 rally, 'Vote Bachao, Desh Bachao', despite the traders' concerns. When festive shoppers, traders and ordinary citizens fear disruption from political protests, should a party fighting to protect democracy be unwilling to accommodate their concerns? Further, have the ECI's (Election Commission of India) recent SIR (Special Intensive Revision) measures and rollbacks given fresh fuel to Opposition protests? According to local market associations and the CTI, Delhi's Dhanteras-Diwali period business worth approximately Rs 10,000-25,000 crore could be at risk due to the proposed rally. The organisation has also alleged that earlier rallies, marches and road closures disrupted commercial activity in central Delhi. These figures are estimates made by the traders' body, not independently established losses that can automatically be attributed to the proposed demonstration. However, the underlying concern deserves serious consideration. When major wholesale and retail markets, transport routes and railway stations are potentially affected by crowd management and traffic diversions, the consequences can extend well beyond the immediate vicinity of a political gathering.

For a small trader, a rally can mean fewer customers, delayed deliveries and a day of uncertainty at precisely the moment when sales matter most. The markets around Ramlila Maidan, including Chandni Chowk, Sadar Bazaar, Chawri Bazaar and Bhagirath Palace, serve thousands of businesses and customers. Festive shopping is not merely a matter of consumer choice; it sustains livelihoods across a network of wholesalers, shopkeepers, transport operators, delivery workers and small suppliers. Unlike large corporations, many small businesses have limited capacity to absorb a sudden loss of revenue. Their earnings during the festive period can help them meet rent, wages, supplier payments and household expenses. A disruption that appears temporary to a political organiser can therefore have a disproportionate impact on those operating on thin margins.

There is also the inconvenience faced by ordinary citizens. Families planning their festive purchases, people travelling into Delhi from neighbouring towns, employees commuting to work and customers visiting crowded commercial districts could all be affected by road restrictions and congestion. These concerns of ordinary citizens cannot outweigh the right of political parties to protest. However, Opposition parties cannot treat them as irrelevant simply because their rally has an important political objective. The issue is not whether the Congress should abandon its protest. It is whether postponing a rally by a few days would materially undermine its political message while reducing the risk of disruption to thousands of livelihoods.

A democratic party must surely be capable of distinguishing between a cause that demands persistence and a date that can be reconsidered. Rahul Gandhi has responded directly to the business community, expressing solidarity with traders while linking the disruption they describe to his allegations of electoral wrongdoing.

His argument reflects the Opposition's position that alleged electoral irregularities are not an ordinary political disagreement but a threat to democratic accountability. This position of the Opposition deserves to be understood rather than dismissed, particularly when continuing political protests have yielded positive results for the Opposition, with the ECI announcing a slew of measures on September 26. Among the measures were doorstep collection of documents from voters facing discrepancies, relaxed hearing procedures, extended deadlines in Delhi and Maharashtra, and a review of its ECINET software. The ECI also maintained that its decisions had been unanimous.

The ECI's statement was intended to address mounting concerns over the SIR of electoral rolls. Instead, it has become another flashpoint in the confrontation between the poll panel and the Opposition, with the Congress-led INDIA bloc pressing ahead with its campaign against CEC Gyanesh Kumar.

The Opposition dismissed the announcement as inadequate, arguing that it failed to address deeper questions about transparency, institutional functioning and alleged voter exclusions. Therefore, at its September 30 meeting, INDIA bloc leaders agreed on a coordinated campaign, including demonstrations and rallies, keeping the demand for the CEC's removal firmly on the agenda. The November 1 protest therefore reflects a dispute that extends beyond procedural changes to the larger question of public trust in electoral institutions. Yet street mobilisation alone cannot settle questions of institutional accountability. The Opposition must substantiate its allegations, while the ECI must demonstrate that its safeguards work transparently and effectively.

Why high growth is only half the story

AJIT RANADE

An economy can be resilient in aggregate while leaving many people financially insecure

AN Uber driver says he works longer hours than before, yet takes home less money. After fuel, maintenance, loan instalments and the platform's deductions, little remains. His experience cannot establish how the entire economy is performing. But he asks a reasonable question: if India is growing rapidly, why is making a living becoming harder? It brings to mind the title of Erma Bombeck's book: If Life Is a Bowl of Cherries, What Am I Doing in the Pits? India's GDP grew at 7.8% during the April-June quarter, which is impressive. The International Monetary Fund, Reserve Bank of India and other agencies have revised growth estimates upwards for the whole year. Sustaining rapid growth amid international uncertainty is an achievement. This column is not about the controversy over the 7.8% figure, which we can take as acceptable. Does the disappointment therefore reflect excessive pessimism? Expectations rise with prosperity. Every expanding economy contains struggling businesses and disappointed job-seekers. A few conversations cannot provide a representative assessment of a country as large and diverse as India.

Yet the evidence of unease extends beyond anecdotes. The RBI's September urban consumer confidence survey recorded a Current Situation Index of 87.9, the lowest since March 2023, below the neutral level of 100. About 54.5% of respondents believed the general economic situation had worsened over the preceding year, against 25.3% who thought it had improved. Rural responses were also revealing. Only 20.6% reported higher income than a year earlier, while 30.5% reported a decline. Such findings give household discomfort a firmer basis than casual impressions or political commentary.

There is, however, no sweeping pessimism in the RBI surveys. Urban households remained optimistic about the year ahead. Present dissatisfaction thus coexists with expectations of improvement. Describing the economy as uniformly distressed would overlook this evidence. There is no necessary contradiction between rapid GDP growth and household anxiety. GDP measures production across the economy. It does not establish how widely additional income is distributed, whether employment is secure, or how much harder someone must work to maintain the same living standard. Suppose a millionaire enters a room. Average wealth rises immediately, although nobody already there becomes richer. Even per capita GDP, which adjusts output for population, cannot reveal what has happened to the typical household. The composition of growth matters. Capital-intensive activities and specialised services can generate substantial output and income while directly employing relatively few people. Corporate profits can rise much faster than wages, which has indeed happened. Growth concentrated in these activities will feel different from an expansion that creates plentiful jobs across occupations and skill levels. Former RBI Governor Duvvuri Subbarao has drawn attention to precisely these structural concerns, including weak real rural wages and inadequate creation of good jobs. They coexist with achievements in infrastructure, banking and digital payments. Recognising the achievements strengthens the case for examining where their benefits remain insufficient. It points to the fact that growth is not sufficiently inclusive. Employment figures need careful study. Someone driving a cab, doing occasional construction work or helping on a family farm is now counted as employed. But it says little about earnings, volatility, predictable hours or protection against illness. Working 14 hours instead of 10 for the same income represents a deterioration that an employment count will miss. Employment stats don't capture precarity.

Long queues for limited government vacancies reveal this problem. They reflect unemployment, but also the appeal of predictable salaries, benefits and security. Some applicants already have work. Their willingness to spend years preparing for recruitment examinations indicates how unattractive the available alternatives can be.

Youth restlessness must be understood against this background. Families have invested in education, often through considerable sacrifice. Qualifications raise expectations of economic mobility. When stable employment remains elusive, disappointment is understandable. Examination delays and paper leaks compound it. These experiences identify a gap between expanding production and the opportunities available to young people. Household purchasing power provides another explanation. Families judge their circumstances through food bills, rent, school fees, healthcare expenses and transport costs. Low inflation numbers do not reverse earlier price increases. If earnings have failed to keep pace with accumulated costs, even a period of moderate inflation offers limited comfort. For farmers, local conditions can overwhelm national growth. Drought in Maharashtra threatens harvests and earnings while cultivation expenses and repayment obligations remain. Expansion in other sectors provides little immediate protection against a failed crop.

The stock market adds another dimension. Foreign investors have relentlessly pulled out funds for the past two years, even as domestic investors invest systematically more than Rs 30,000 crore every month. There is much talk of the government considering capital-gains tax relief because the index has given very poor returns. These poor returns have compounded poor wage growth. With retail participation having expanded, disappointing investment returns now affect the confidence of a wider section of the middle class. Tax reductions are being discussed mainly to induce foreign investors to come back. Whether the tax cut happens or not, it suggests that the absence of financial comfort is being recognised within the government.

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AI Tech Conclave 2026 concludes with announcement of the next edition in Oct 2027

PANAJI : OPEN SEARCH

Following major technological rollouts on Day 1, featuring five main-stage panels, engaging parallel tracks, exhibits and challenges, Day 2 of Goa's first-ever AI Tech Conclave 2026 concluded with the official announcement that the Goa AI Tech Conclave 2027 will return next October.

The valedictory session was held in the presence of Shri. Bhushan Savaikar, Director, Directorate of Higher Education; Shri. Abhijeet Nikam, DD (Admin), DITE&C; Shri. DS Prashant, CEO, SITPC; Dr. Niyan Machon, Programme Director, DHE and other officials.

Making the announcement, Shri. DS Prashant highlighted the momentum generated over the past two days. He said, "Goa is ready to lead. Building on the energy we witnessed this year, we are officially announcing the return of the Goa AI Tech Conclave in October 2027, making this an annual fixture on India's tech calendar."

Day 2 opened with a panel on 'Harnessing AI for Climate Resilience and Sustainability', where industry experts shared insights on how Goa can adopt artificial intelligence while safeguarding its fragile ecology, drawing from global best practices. This was followed by another session on 'AI for Industrial Transformation: Building the Next-Generation Enterprise'.

Simultaneously, the other enclaves buzzed with activity, featuring startup pitching sessions where over the two days nearly 14 startups spanning SaaS, healthtech, cleantech, tourismtech and AI products presented their ideas to investors and received valuable industry feedback. Skill development sessions by TAWAI Studio conducted hands-on training walking participants through creative workflows, alongside dedicated workshops for students. Attendees continued to flock to the exhibition zone, where technology leaders like Digital India, Bhashini, Google, and Microsoft showcased their latest innovations and digital solutions.

The event concluded with the felicitation of winners across various youth challenges and competitions. Under the Sankalp Setu (hackathon) competition, 12 student teams were felicitated as finalists. The first place was secured for 'Avya: Communicate Without Barriers' from MES Vasant Joshi College of Arts & Commerce, Vasco, the second place project was 'Unified Patient Identity & Emergency Health Record' from Goa College of Architecture and the third place went to 'NUSTE LINK, an AI-powered Decision Support for Goa's Fish Catch' from Sateri Parsva Education Society's Goa Multi-Faculty College.

Additionally, the ceremony felicitated the winners of the Inclusive AI Challenge, with Team Vidyut taking first place and Team MSCW as runners-up. Recognising creative tech talent, certificates were also presented to Tanmay Palyekar (first) and Siddhali Patil (second) in the AI Jingle-Making Competition, and Faizan Akabani (first) and Soniya Modar (second) in the AI Reel-Making Competition. With the conclusion of the first edition, the Department of Information Technology, Electronics & Communications (DITE&C) reaffirmed its commitment to driving the Goa AI Mission 2027 forward. By turning policy into action, nurturing local talent and fostering an innovation-first ecosystem, Goa is firmly establishing itself as an AI testbed and a global hub where human values and cutting-edge innovation seamlessly converge.

IPO Opening Announcement of Vectras Enprocon Limited on BSE SME Platform

AHMEDABAD (AGENCY)

Vectras Enprocon Limited, a Gujarat-based Integrated solution provider in critical midstream and downstream infrastructure for the oil & Gas Industry has filed its Red Herring Prospectus (RHP) in connection with its proposed Initial Public Offering (IPO) of up to 50,52,000 equity shares of face value ?10 each. The proposed IPO comprises a fresh issue of up to 40,56,000 equity shares and an Offer for Sale (OFS) of up to 9,96,000 equity shares. The Company has fixed the price band at ?99 to ?105 per equity share, Issue Size ? 53.05 Cr. (At Upper Price Band) with a lot size of 1,200 equity shares and in multiples thereof. The equity shares are proposed to be listed on the BSE SME platform. Incorporated in 2021, Vectras Enprocon Limited is an Ahmedabad-based Integrated solution provider in critical midstream and downstream infrastructure for the oil & Gas Industry. The Company provides integrated services encompassing design, engineering, procurement, construction, testing, and commissioning of pipeline networks, combined oil and gas station works, and allied infrastructure facilities. Company's core offering is combined station work, midstream & downstream pipeline projects, related facilities and other allied infrastructure services. The Company has developed capabilities in executing cross-country pipelines, spur pipelines, city gas infrastructure and associated civil and mechanical works, serving public-sector and private-sector customers across multiple Indian states. As of September 30, 2026, the Company had an unexecuted order book of 18,327.88 lakh across 34 projects, comprising ?11,629.03 lakh from combined oil and gas station works, ?5,945.72 lakh from pipeline works and ?753.13 lakh from other allied infrastructure services.

Briefs News

Mumbai Hosts SPARK, India's AI Creativity Summit, Showcasing Live AI Filmmaking to 500+ Creative Leaders

Mumbai **(AGENCY)** Weeks of production, compressed into a single evening, in front of the people who greenlight India's films, shows and campaigns. VerSe Innovation, India's largest local language technology platform and the parent of Dailyhunt, Magzter and Josh, tonight hosted SPARK, India's AI Creativity Summit, at the Grand Hyatt with Google Cloud as Title Partner. The invitation-only room of 500+ filmmakers, studio heads, broadcasters, brand and agency leaders and creators saw no stalls and no sales pitches, only work that had to be seen to be believed, all of it produced on Spark Station, VerSe's AI Content generating platform. Two months after Spark Station's beta debut at Film Expo 2026, where Just One Small Change went from idea to final render in three hours, the summit unveiled workflows that take it from generating shots to directing them. Hybrid Filmmaking: Real actors and creators, everything else built with AI. Shoot the performance and Spark Station builds the world around it, from locations, sets, crowds and props to camera moves, with the complete toolkit for capture, character lock, compositing and finishing in one place.

India's economy estimated to grow 7.35% in July-September quarter : Finance Ministry

New Delhi**(AGENCY)** India's economy is estimated to have grown by 7.35 per cent in the July-September quarter of the current financial year (FY27), supported by strong domestic demand, industrial activity and higher consumption, according to the Finance Ministry's October Monthly Economic Review. The estimate, based on the ministry's nowcasting model, comes after the economy recorded growth of 7.8 per cent in the April-June quarter. The ministry had earlier projected growth of around 7.3 per cent for the second quarter in its September review. "Following real GDP growth of 7.8 per cent in Q1 FY27, the Department's nowcasting model, introduced in the Economic Survey 2025-26, nowcasts real GDP growth of 7.35 per cent in Q2 FY27," the report stated. The review highlighted that several key economic indicators, including industrial production, electricity consumption, port traffic, GST collections and automobile sales, recorded stronger growth during the second quarter. "Taken together, these indicators point to sustained growth momentum in Q2 FY27," it said. Gross GST collections grew by around 15 per cent during the July-September quarter, compared with approximately 8.4 per cent in the preceding quarter.

Dot & Key Creates a Star-Studded Immersive Beauty Experience at Nykaaland 4.0

New Delhi **(AGENCY)** Dot & Key, India's fastest-growing D2C skincare brand, transformed its booth at Nykaaland 4.0 into an interactive brand playground designed to drive consumer engagement and product discovery. The three-day experience was anchored by exclusive appearances from brand ambassador Shanaya Kapoor, Bollywood stars Aditya Roy Kapur and Varun Sood, and popular creator Apoorva Makhija aka The Rebel Kid. Built around the brand's playful visual identity, the booth was themed after the fan favourite Strawberry Dew Tinted Sunscreen range, that combines sun protection with a hint of tint to bridge skincare and makeup in one simple step. The space featured an interactive claw game and photo booth, a screen-led visual wall, and larger-than-life character installations for shareable content creation on the spot.

India's oil sourcing driven by national interest : MEA on Shringla's remarks

NEW DELHI (AGENCY)

The MEA's response did not directly address the specific decisions involving Iranian, Venezuelan or Russian crude, but reiterated that India's energy sourcing was determined by companies taking into account national interest, commercial viability, technical requirements and prevailing global conditions. India's energy sourcing decisions are guided by national interest, with oil companies weighing commercial and market conditions rather than any single consideration, the Ministry of External Affairs (MEA) said on Wednesday amid a political row over allegations that New Delhi yielded to US pressure to cut purchases of Iranian, Venezuelan and Russian crude.

MEA spokesperson Randhir Jaiswal said Indian companies independently assessed market conditions, technical requirements and the global situation while deciding their energy imports.

"Our energy sourcing is done by our companies. Obviously, it is based on national interest," Jaiswal said when asked about comments by former Foreign Secretary Harsh Vardhan Shringla on the impact of US pressure on India's oil purchases. "The companies take into consideration commercial conditions that are available, market conditions that are there at that point in time, technical specificities, as also the global situation when they are sourcing or importing energy from abroad," he added. The remarks came after Shringla, now a BJP Rajya Sabha MP, recounted how the US had pressed India to reduce its purchases of Iranian oil, followed by Venezuelan crude and, later, Russian oil. His comments, made during a conversation with former Australian Prime Minister and Asia Society president Kevin Rudd, triggered a political confrontation after Congress leader Supriya Shrinate alleged that Prime Minister Narendra Modi had compromised India's strategic autonomy under American pressure.

In the discussion on Asia's geopolitical future, Shringla recalled that India had previously received exemptions from US sanctions on Iranian oil because of its dependence on Iranian crude and the technical requirements of several Indian refineries. He said India had been assured that Washington understood the economic rationale for the exemptions and their importance for global oil prices. However, the exemptions were eventually withdrawn. Recalling his tenure as Foreign Secretary during the Biden administration, Shringla said a US official had subsequently asked India to slow down purchases of Russian oil.

Inkle, the U.S. CPA Firm Built in Bengaluru, Acquires Finally's Bookkeeping Division

NEW DELHI (AGENCY)

Inkle, the AI-powered CPA and bookkeeping firm for U.S. companies, today announced that it has acquired the bookkeeping division of Finally, the financial operations platform for small businesses. Headquartered in San Francisco, Inkle builds its software and runs a core part of its delivery from Bengaluru (India), where its 60-member team of engineers, product designers, tax professionals, and bookkeepers is based.

Inkle was founded in 2022 by Indian-origin founders Anand Krishna, who leads the company from San Francisco, and Ranvir Singh, who leads technology from Bengaluru. Their model pairs a U.S.-licensed CPA practice with product, engineering, and AI built in India. Inkle Books, the company's general ledger, its tax and compliance platform, and the AI that now handles much of the routine work are all designed and built by the Bengaluru team, which works alongside the accountants who use them every day.

The timing reflects a structural shift in American accounting. The U.S. faces a growing shortage of CPAs and bookkeepers as a large share of the profession approaches retirement and fewer people enter it: accounting degrees awarded fell to 55,152 in 2023-24, down 6.6% from the prior year, according to the AICPA's 2025 Trends Report. Millions of small businesses still need their books, taxes, and compliance done. Inkle's view is that this gap will be filled not by more traditional firms but by technology-led platforms, and that India's engineering and finance talent will build a large part of them. Inkle also sits on one of the busiest corridors in global entrepreneurship. Every year it helps hundreds of companies incorporate in the United States, many of them started by Indian founders setting up Delaware C-Corps to raise capital and sell to American customers, and then manages their ongoing U.S. tax and compliance, from federal returns and Delaware franchise tax to cross-border filings such as Form 5472 and FBAR. Inkle is also the cross-border compliance partner for Stripe Atlas for Indian founders.

KPR CAS Celebrating Academic Creativity, Sporting Excellence and Environmental Responsibility

COIMBATORE (AGENCY)

KPR College of Arts Science and Research is organising the KPR CAS World Records Festival 2027 to celebrate seven years of its academic journey. Bringing together 210 staff members and 5,328 students, the festival aims to achieve 12 world records across diverse domains. It will be certified by Elite World Records, Asian Book of Records and Indian Book of Records. The festival is being organised under the leadership of Dr. K.P. Ramasamy, Chairman, KPR Group, the mentorship of Ms. Gayathri Anandakrishnan, Secretary, KPR Institutions, and the guidance of Dr. P. Geetha, Principal. Speaking at a press meet held on October 26, 2026, the organisers said that the programme comprises two phases. The first phase, held from October 24 to 26, 2026, featured three world record attempts. The second phase, scheduled for January 4 to 8, 2027, will feature nine further attempts, followed by the World Record Citation Ceremony on January 9, 2027.

Ms. Gayathri Anandakrishnan, Secretary, KPR Institutions, stated that the college opened the festival on October 24, 2026, with a sporting achievement. A team of 464 participants, comprising student athletes, National Cadet Corps (NCC) cadets and other students of the college, completed a 200-kilometre running relay in 11 hours and 28 minutes, surpassing the previous record of 11 hours and 50 minutes set in Germany in 2019. Carrying the message "Say No to Drugs! Say Yes to Sports!", the participants demonstrated endurance, discipline and teamwork while promoting healthy and active lifestyles. They

also took an anti-drug pledge, affirming their commitment to staying away from drugs and embracing sports, she concluded.

Dr. K.P. Ramasamy, Chairman, KPR Group, stated that the second attempt, "Most Books Compiled, Authored and Published Simultaneously by a Higher Education Institution," brought together 864 students and staff members from 27 departments, who prepared books in their respective fields. A team of deans, led by the Principal, evaluated the submissions and shortlisted 699 books for adjudication by the world record authorities.

Twenty-one adjudicators from four states conducted individual interviews with the authors to assess the authenticity of their work and verify their contributions. The assessment also included a review of AI-generated content detection reports, plagiarism and text similarity reports, ISBN allotment documents and other supporting records.

Following the verification process, 648 authors met the prescribed assessment criteria, qualifying their books for publication. The approved books will undergo the necessary copyright-related formalities and publication process, with KPR College of Arts Science and Research serving as the publisher. The college also plans to make the books available through e-commerce platforms. Dr. Ramasamy described the initiative as a first-of-its-kind world record attempt in publishing by a higher education institution, highlighting the college's commitment to nurturing authorship, strengthening subject knowledge and promoting academic creativity among students and staff.Dr. P. Geetha, Principal, stated that the third attempt, "Most Seed Balls Made by a Team in 2 Hours," was held on October 26, 2026, with 1,022 participants. and the support of 405 NSS volunteers. The attempt began at 11:10 a.m. and concluded at 1:10 p.m., with participants preparing 1,25,254 seed balls using five varieties of seeds. Their enthusiasm, care and teamwork reflected a shared commitment to environmental protection and increasing green cover. With this achievement, KPR College of Arts Science and Research set the world record for the "Most Seed Balls Made by a Team in 2 Hours," certified by Elite World Records, Asian Book of Records and Indian Book of Records. Dr. Geetha added that the initiative would extend beyond the record achievement. A portion of the seed balls will be sown along Avinashi Road, while the remainder will be handed over to the Tamil Nadu Forest Department for sowing in forest areas.

Scouts and Guides should come forward for environmental protection : Governor Deka

RAIPUR: OPEN SEARCH

Governor Ramen Deka said that environmental protection is one of the biggest challenges facing us today. Collective efforts are needed to save water and forests. Scouts and Guides can play a vital role in environmental conservation, water harvesting, and forest protection. He praised the "One Tree in the Name of Mother" campaign, saying that such initiatives are proving effective in environmental protection.

Governor Shri Ramen Deka attended the State Awards Investiture Ceremony organized by the Bharat Scouts and Guides, Chhattisgarh, at the Chhattisgarh Mandapam in Lok Bhavan today as the chief guest. On this occasion, he honored 1,122 selected Scouts, Guides, Rovers, and Rangers from across the state by presenting them State Awards. The ceremony was presided over by Education Minister and President of the Bharat Scouts and Guides, Chhattisgarh, Gajendra Yadav. Congratulating and wishing all the award-winning participants, the Governor said that the Scouts and Guides' motto, "Be Prepared," inspires us to always be ready to face difficult situations and fulfill our responsibilities. He said that receiving an award is a matter of pride, but it also brings increased responsibility. He urged all participants to actively contribute to social service activities and be an inspiration to others through their conduct.

Governor Mr. Deka expressed his pleasure at the presence of Scouts and Guides from the Bastar region to receive the State Award. He said that peace has been established in Bastar since the eradication of Naxalism, and the region is rapidly progressing towards development. Inspiring the youth, he said that to advance in life, it is essential to recognize the time and continue to struggle. Only through hard work and determination can goals be achieved.

Education Minister Gajendra Yadav said that the rules and pledges of the Bharat Scouts and Guides provide a unique identity for its members. The Scouting uniform symbolizes the values ??of discipline, service, and dedication. He said that a person associated with Scouting works with a spirit of service throughout his life. The honor received from the Governor is an unforgettable achievement for the participants and will continue to inspire them to further social service. He wished that more Scouts and Guides from the state receive the President's Award.

The Governor presented State Awards to 1122 Scouts and Guides at Lok Bhavan; Scouters and Guides were also honored for their outstanding services

On this occasion, for their outstanding contribution in the field of scouting, Best Scouter Yogeshwar Prasad Ganguly (Balod), Best Guide Tanuja Banjare and Lata Vaishnav (Mahasamund), Best Rover Rajmani Banjare and Chandrashekhar Pankaj, Best Ranger Kumari Vibhuti Verma and Kumari Kriti Bijour, Best Scout Ish Sahu, Harish Kumar Khote and Rajveer Bhatt and Best Guide Divya Patel and Deepti Patel were honoured.

Shailendra Mishra, Anand Ram Baghel, Pawan Kumar Nayak, Vinod Kumar Hathel, Shashi Banchhor, and Rajni Reddy were honored with certificates and prizes for their long-term service in the field of scouting. A piping ceremony was also held during the event. Mr. Udit Pushkar (IPS), ADC posted at Lok Bhavan, was honored with a rank badge. The Secretary to the Governor, Dr. C.R. Prasanna, Secretary of Education Department, Dr. Kamalpreet Singh, State Chief Commissioner of Bharat Scouts and Guides, Chhattisgarh, Inderjeet Singh Khalsa, State Secretary Amit Kumar Kshatriya, Programme Incharge Shailendra Mishra, State Training Commissioner Dr. Poonam Singh Sahu, State Organisation Commissioner (Guide) Jalwati Sahu, State Training Commissioner (Guide) Sarita Pandey along with office bearers and officials of the organisation were present in the programme.

Tamil Nadu Prisons Chief Transferred Days After Jailbreak By 17 Undertrials

CHENNAI (AGENCY)

The Tamil Nadu government on Thursday transferred DGP Prisons Sandeep Rai Rathore following the brazen and planned escape of 17 undertrial prisoners from the Thekkampatti sub-jail in Theni district on Monday night and their recapture. Rathore, Director General of Police Prisons and Correctional Services, has been transferred and posted as Director General of Police / Chief Vigilance Officer, TANGEDCO, Chennai.

Additional Director General of Police, Enforcement Bureau CID, Chennai, K Shankar, has been appointed as Additional Director General of Police / DG of Prisons and Correctional Services, Chennai, in Rathore's place, as per an order signed by the Principal Secretary to the Government, A Karthik.

The relentless police efforts ensured all 17 prisoners who escaped after staging a fake medical emergency and overpowering prison guards, were back behind bars within 43 hours. Following the major security breach, the Tamil Nadu prison department authorised its personnel to use firearms if necessary to prevent prisoners from escaping.

The relentless police efforts ensured all 17 prisoners who escaped after staging a fake medical emergency and overpowering prison guards, were back behind bars within 43 hours

Steps were initiated to transfer the recaptured convicts to high-security correctional facilities across Tamil Nadu. Once all legal formalities were completed, they will be relocated from local jails to central prisons in Salem, Vellore, Cuddalore, and Puzhal, officials said.

Cyclone Arnab effect : Drizzle, chill set in MP, 9 districts on alert for heavy rain, gusty winds

BHOPAL (AGENCY)

Drizzle and a chill swept large parts of Madhya Pradesh on Thursday, with nine districts in the eastern part of the state likely to receive heavy to very heavy rainfall accompanied by gusty winds of 40-50 kmph later in the day due to cyclone Arnab, an official said. The cyclone has weakened and moved over Jagdalpur in neighbouring Chhattisgarh, he said.

The nine districts of eastern Madhya Pradesh Sidhi, Singrauli, Rewa, Mauganj, Satna, Maihar, Shahdol, Umaria and Anuppur are likely to receive heavy to very heavy rainfall in the next couple of hours, India Meteorological Department's (IMD) Bhopal centre meteorologist VS Yadav said. These districts may also experience gusty winds of 40-50 kmph, he said. Yadav said the weakening cyclone would not enter Madhya Pradesh and would move towards Bihar from neighbouring Chhattisgarh. The weather in eastern Madhya Pradesh is expected to clear on Saturday, while the effects of the weather system will persist on Friday, he said. The system is unlikely to affect the Malwa region of the state, he added. Amarkantak in eastern Madhya Pradesh recorded the highest rainfall of 59 mm by 8.30 am on Thursday, while Chourai in Chhindwara district received 28 mm during the same period, Yadav said. The cyclone was located over Jagdalpur in Chhattisgarh at the time of the update. It had entered Andhra Pradesh after originating over the Bay of Bengal and weakened after moving over land, he said. The system had weakened into a deep depression and subsequently into a depression, Yadav explained.

He said Arnab was a severe cyclonic storm when it reached Visakhapatnam on October 27. At 5.30 pm on October 28, it weakened from a severe cyclonic storm to a cyclonic storm, with wind speeds of 85 kmph. By 11.30 pm, it had weakened into a deep depression, with wind speeds dropping to 58 kmph. At 5.30 am on Thursday, it weakened further into a depression, with wind speeds of 45 kmph. The system is expected to weaken into a well-marked low- pressure area by Thursday evening, the meteorologist added.

'It Doesn't Mean Father': Adhir Chowdhury Defends Mallikarjuna Kharge's 'Baap' Jibe at PM

SHILLONG (AGENCY)

Amidst the uproar over Congress chief Mallikarjun Kharge's "baap" jibe at Prime Minister Narendra Modi, senior Congress leader Adhir Ranjan Chowdhury has jumped to his party president's defence, calling the controversy a case of making a mountain out of a molehill. Chowdhury argued that Kharge's remark was metaphorical, rooted in local jargon, and not meant to be taken literally. He said the expression meant that even someone stronger than Modi could be defeated.

"The government of our country, they always try to find a little hole anywhere. They know the art of making a mountain out of a molehill. What our president said, it was metaphorically meant that even someone stronger than Modi will be defeated," he said. "This is a local jargon. That means someone may be stronger than Modi. It was used in a metaphorical manner; it does not mean father," Chowdhury added. The controversy erupted on Sunday at an event in Patna, when Kharge, responding to an audience member who said the Prime Minister would not go anywhere, remarked, "Modi ka baap bhi jayega." The comment triggered a political row, with Chowdhury now insisting that the remark was a figure of speech rather than a literal reference to the word "father.

Briefs News

Teacher arrested for alleging worms found in food served at state sports meet

KOZHIKODE (AGENCY) A physical education teacher was arrested on Thursday for allegedly making a false claim that worms were found in food served to students attending the State Sports Meet being held, police said. The arrested person was identified as Jijo James, a teacher at a vocational higher secondary school in Ernakulam district. The State Sports Meet is being held at the NIT Kozhikode ground, with students from all schools under the General Education Department taking part. On Wednesday, James alleged that worms were found in the food served to students attending the event. Police said the teacher made a Facebook post alleging the misconduct. Later, student organisation SFI held a protest march, officials said. Following the allegation, the organisers conducted an inspection and found it to be false, police said. Based on a complaint lodged by Sports Meet Convenor P K Aravindan, the Kunnamangalam police registered a case against James on Thursday under the Bharatiya Nyaya Sanhita for allegedly giving provocation with intent to cause a riot. By evening, the teacher deleted the social media post, officials said. Kunnamangalam police took him into custody and later recorded his arrest. As the case is registered under a bailable charge, the teacher would be released on bail, officials said.

Rs 35 crore PNB fraud in Greater Noida: Farmer had Rs 88 lakh savings, left with just Rs 1 lakh

NOIDA(AGENCY) Account holders of Punjab National Bank in Greater Noida alleged that nearly Rs 35 crore went missing from their savings accounts and fixed deposits, with several customers claiming they neither authorised fund transfers nor received alerts about the transactions, officials said on Wednesday. Police said the management suspended several bank employees, including the branch manager, and registered a case at the Beta-2 police station, which has jurisdiction over the bank branch. The bank management assured authorities that it would address the account holders' complaints, they said. Vijendra Singh, one of the affected customers, told reporters that his savings account, which earlier had around Rs 87 lakh-88 lakh, now showed a balance of only Rs 1 lakh. Singh said he was a farmer and had received compensation from the authority. Another account holder, Haneef Khan, said he maintained a savings account at the Punjab National Bank branch at Aichhar in Greater Noida. "My savings account had Rs 39 lakh, but now nothing is showing in it. I neither received any message nor signed any document authorising the transfer of funds," he said. Zakir, another account holder who claimed to have had Rs 9.5 lakh in his account, alleged that he had not received any text message from the bank regarding the transactions. He said he learnt about the alleged fraud only after visiting the bank.

'Aa gye ghaint munde!' Punjab CM to Indian Hockey team as he hosts gala dinner at Jalandhar home

JALANDHAR(AGENCY) Punjab Chief Minister Bhagwant Mann hosted a gala dinner for players and officials of the six participating teams in the Asian Champions Trophy at his residence in Old Baradari on Wednesday evening. The CM's house was illuminated with decorative lights and chandeliers adorned the garden area. Floral decorations added to the ambience, while an elaborate spread was laid out for the guests. Players and officials from Malaysia, China, South Korea, Bangladesh and Japan visited the CM's residence for the dinner. Mann welcomed the Indian squad, dressed in blue T-shirts, with handshakes and the greeting, "Aa gye ghaint munde!" He also asked the players, "How are you finding all arrangements? We have finally hosted an international tournament in Jalandhar. You really played well last evening. We will try to get a chance to host the World Cup too. There is an altogether a different charm in playing on the home turf." As a token of appreciation, Team India presented Mann with a signed Indian team jersey and a hockey stick. Hockey India Secretary General Bhola Nath Singh, veteran hockey players Balwinder Shammi and others, along with Jalandhar Deputy Commissioner Varjeet Walia, were among those present.

Theni jailbreak : 17 recaptured inmates to be moved to high-security central prisons

CHENNAI (AGENCY)

A day after securing all 17 inmates who broke out of the Theni district prison, authorities have initiated steps to transfer the recaptured convicts to high-security correctional facilities across Tamil Nadu, police on Thursday said. The extensive operation concluded after the final two fugitives, Tirupathi and Meenakshisundaram, were captured on Wednesday. According to police, after fleeing from the Aranjanaipudur area on a motorcycle toward Uthamapalayam, the escapees borrowed a stranger's phone in Ammachipuram to contact their associates who provided them funds, clothing, and vehicles. The intensive search mobilised 17 specialised teams, five Special Task Force units, and four Tamil Nadu Special Police battalions, deploying specialised drones during daylight hours to scan the dense canopy and pinpoint suspect locations, police added. Legal proceedings are moving swiftly as the judicial system processes the captured individuals. Five escapees were produced before a judicial magistrate on Tuesday evening and remanded to judicial custody until November 10, while another group of eight appeared on Wednesday with custody extended through November 11.

Omar Abdullah's Cabinet reshuffle has hurt sentiments of Jammu, says BJP

JAMMU (AGENCY)

Jammu and Kashmir BJP on Wednesday criticised Chief Minister Omar Abdullah and the National Conference over the recent Cabinet reshuffle, alleging that it has retained Jammu's representation at two, hurt sentiments of the region and exposed growing discontent within the ruling party. Chief spokesperson of Jammu and Kashmir BJP, Sunil Sethi, said resentment among National Conference leaders was becoming increasingly visible, while asserting that the BJP was not in touch with any of them. Addressing a press conference, Sethi said the BJP had anticipated divisions within the National Conference following the Cabinet reshuffle, as personal ambitions of party leaders have taken precedence over public service.

He said the Cabinet has been brought to its full strength, but representation of the Jammu region remains a major concern. "The Cabinet had fewer ministers: Jammu had two representatives while four were from Kashmir," he said, adding that with three ministerial positions vacant, Jammu was expected to get at least one additional position. "The region should have had three or four representatives out of the nine ministers. Similarly, there was an expectation that Hindu representation would increase," he said. Pointing out that eight of the nine ministers belonged to the Muslim community and only one belonged to the Hindu community, Sethi questioned the decision to drop Satish Sharma from the Cabinet.

"We are not giving anyone a certificate of integrity, but Satish Sharma faced comparatively fewer allegations of wrongdoing or corruption. Those against whom corruption allegations had been raised have been retained, while someone with a relatively clean public image has been dropped," he alleged. The party could have considered other Hindu MLAs if it had decided to drop Sharma, he said.

No UP Government Jobs For those Seeking 'Violent Regime Change', Samajwadi Slams Order

LUCKNOW (AGENCY)

The Uttar Pradesh government has decided to shut the doors of government jobs for those who call for a "violent regime change." Amid ongoing controversy over the calls for a "regime change" during the recent protest, the Yogi Adityanath government has tightened rules for character verification of candidates selected for direct recruitment to government jobs drawing strong criticism from the Opposition Samajwadi Party and the Congress.

The government order has made it clear that individuals found involved in violent activities aimed at "regime change" could be barred from public employment. However, the government has clarified that no candidate can be declared ineligible solely on the basis of their political ideology. The mere registration of an FIR or the pendency of an investigation will also not automatically disqualify an applicant. The new guidelines were issued by M Devaraj, Principal Secretary, Appointment and Personnel Department, in compliance with directions from the Allahabad High Court. The policy will apply to candidates selected through direct recruitment in various state government departments, corporations, councils and local bodies. The government order states that individuals who are members of organisations whose stated objective is to change the existing order through violent means will be considered ineligible for appointment under the government.

However, the government has clarified that no candidate can be declared ineligible solely on the basis of their political ideology

It further states that participation in such activities within three years preceding the date of verification, after the individual has attained the age of 21, may be treated as evidence that the person remains actively involved in such activities.

However, this presumption may be reconsidered if there is concrete evidence of a positive change in the individual's conduct during the intervening period. The order reiterates that political ideology, by itself, cannot be a ground for denying government employment. The Oppsitino Samajwadi Party slammed the Yogi government order calling it reminiscent of British Raj.

"Such orders were issued during the British colonial era, when the British ruled India. In independent India, however, the right to protest is a constitutional guarantee. A change in regime occurs through legal, established processes- it happens after every election, and anyone is free to participate.

4th T20I : New Zealand look to avoid whitewash as India look to maintain unbeaten run in Auckland

AUCKLAND (AGENCY)

India will look to experiment with their team combination and assess their spin options when they face New Zealand in the fourth T20 International on Friday, having already taken an unassailable 3-0 lead in the five-match series. With the series secured, the remaining two matches offer India an opportunity to test alternatives, particularly in the spin department. Kuldeep Yadav and Varun Chakaravarthy could be considered for selection after receiving limited opportunities in recent months.

India have largely relied on a batting-heavy combination, with batting options extending to number eight, an approach that has helped them dominate the high-scoring series. However, the team management now has room to explore a different balance. Chakaravarthy has struggled to find rhythm over the past six months and has not featured in the ongoing T20I series against New Zealand. Kuldeep, meanwhile, has repeatedly demonstrated his ability to take wickets during the middle overs.

Kuldeep featured in two matches in India's home T20I series against the West Indies but was left out of the first three games against New Zealand. A return to the playing XI could provide him with an opportunity to make an impact, although it would require India to move away from their batting-heavy combination.

For New Zealand, India's aggressive top order has been a major challenge. Sanju Samson, Abhishek Sharma and Sooryavanshi have all produced attacking spells, putting the hosts' bowlers under sustained pressure. India's batting firepower was on full display in Wellington, where they smashed a record 118 runs in the first six overs, underlining the pressure New Zealand have faced throughout the series. New Zealand captain Mitchell Santner has been a bright spot with the ball, bowling effectively with his left-arm spin, but has received limited support from the other end. India's left-handers, who had struggled against off-spinner Michael Bracewell in the first two matches, attacked him in Wellington, adding to New Zealand's bowling concerns. The toss could again prove significant, with Santner still waiting for his first toss win in the series. Bowling first has appeared to be the preferred option in the prevailing conditions. New Zealand will also need to adjust their bowling plans after Matt Henry and Lockie Ferguson were ruled out of the series due to calf injuries.

India have largely relied on a batting-heavy combination, with batting options extending to number eight, an approach that has helped them dominate the high-scoring series

According to CricViz stats, India head into the fourth T20I at Eden Park in Auckland having already sealed the series 3-0, with a 5-0 whitewash in sight. India have won 22 of their 34 T20I meetings against New Zealand, while the hosts have won 11, with one match tied. India have also won 10 of their last 11 meetings against New Zealand and are on a five-match winning streak against them.

Bengaluru FC, NorthEast United look to extend unbeaten starts in ISL

GUWAHATI (AGENCY)

NorthEast United FC and Bengaluru FCwil put their unbeaten starts to the Indian Super League (ISL) 2026-27 on the line when they meet at the Indira Gandhi Athletic Stadium in Guwahati on Friday. The Highlanders were held to a goalless draw by Odisha FC in their most recent outing, when Alaaeddine Ajaraie struck the post from the penalty spot deep into stoppage time. Bengaluru, meanwhile, secured a 2-0 victory over Chennaiyin FC through goals from Ryan Williams and Mihailo Perovic, according to a release. Highlanders Head Coach Juan Pedro Benali remains firm in his belief that his side must approach games with the ambition to win rather than focus solely on defensive numbers, while also backing his Moroccan striker to brush off his error from the spot.

"I prefer to win 4-3. I don't want 0-0. I want to win. If there is a penalty tomorrow, Alaaeddine Ajaraie will take it. There is no doubt about it," said Benali, speaking to the media on the eve of the fixture. Goalkeeper Gurmeet Singh will also be important against a Bengaluru side that has scored five goals in its opening two matches. Having conceded just once in NorthEast's first three games, Gurmeet stressed the need to remain composed in possession against the visitors' press. Bengaluru boss Pep Muñoz praised NorthEast's identity and tactical flexibility, but believes his side can exploit spaces while maintaining control of the game. "They have an identity, some patterns that they like to create and a clear style of play," Muñoz said, adding that his team was prepared to face both back-four and back-five systems. Midfielder Lalremtluanga Fanai, meanwhile, stressed the importance of maintaining focus despite the team's unbeaten start to the season. "We need to focus on the next game. It's not about losing or winning; we want to keep going and show what we can do," Fanai said.

Harry Kane receives Guard of Honour from Bayern teammates after maiden Ballon d'Or win

MUNICH [(AGENCY)

The newly-crowned Ballon d'Or winner Harry Kane was given a guard of honour by his Bayern Munich teammates ahead of his side's German Cup clash against FC Magdeburg on Wednesday. Kane became the first English player to win the Ballon d'Or since Michael Owen in 2001, overcoming competition from Kylian Mbappe and Lamine Yamal to claim the prestigious individual football award for the first time in his career. The official X handle of Bayern Munich posted a video of Harry getting a guard of honour from his team. Kane enjoyed a prolific campaign, scoring 73 goals and providing eight assists, contributing to 81 goal involvements across the 2025-26 season. He also helped Bayern Munich win the Bundesliga, German Cup and German Super Cup. Kane dominated the Bundesliga, scoring 36 goals in 31 matches to help Bayern Munich to the 2025-26 German league title. Bayern fell in the semifinals of the UEFA Champions League to eventual winner Paris Saint-Germain, but Kane also had 14 goals in 13 matches - including at least one goal in both legs of the quarterfinals against Real Madrid and the semifinals against PSG. The England captain also scored six goals and chipped in an assist for England as the Three Lions earned a third-place finish at the 2026 World Cup.

1st Test : Jomel Warrican's five-wicket haul helps West Indies bowl out Bangladesh for 272

MIRPUR (AGENCY)

Bangladesh suffered a dramatic batting collapse on the second morning of the first ICC World Test Championship Test against the West Indies, losing their last seven wickets for just 59 runs to be bowled out for 272. Resuming the day at 213/3, Bangladesh were undone by the West Indies' left-arm spin duo of Jomel Warrican and debutant Joshua Bishop, who combined to claim seven wickets between them. Bishop triggered the collapse by dismissing Shadman Islam shortly after the opener completed his third Test century.

Shadman scored 105 runs before departing, while Towhid Hridoy, who had retired hurt on the opening evening, managed to add little after returning to the crease, falling to Bishop for 42. Warrican breached Mehidy Hasan Miraz's defence, while Shamar Joseph removed Nayeem Hasan and Hasan Mahmud in quick succession. Warrican then wrapped up the Bangladesh innings by dismissing Taijul Islam and Shoriful Islam off consecutive deliveries, finishing with figures of 5/53. In reply, the West Indies made a positive start despite Brandon King falling after edging a delivery from Hasan Mahmud through to substitute wicketkeeper Jaker Ali. John Campbell and Tagenarine Chanderpaul steadied the innings, adding 61 runs for the second wicket. Campbell took an attacking approach and found the boundary regularly, benefiting from two dropped chances early in his innings.

'Got 95-97% of players we targeted': MI mentor Jhulan Goswami on WPL 2027 auction

MUMBAI (AGENCY)

Mumbai Indians (MI) Bowling Coach and Mentor Jhulan Goswami said the franchise secured 95 to 97 per cent of its targeted players at the Women's Premier League (WPL) 2027 mini-auction, while expressing disappointment over missing out on Kiran Navgire. Speaking on JioStar's 'Match Centre Live Auction Special', Goswami reflected on MI's efforts to sign Navgire during the auction held in Kochi on Wednesday, acknowledging that the franchise could not go beyond its budget. "We tried our best and went as far as we could for Kiran Navgire, but unfortunately, we didn't get her. And that's how the auction dynamics work. She is an impactful player. So, we definitely expected quite a few teams to go after her. But at the same time, we had other options. Thankfully, we got most of the players we wanted. So, yeah, the auction was very good, and we are all very happy," Goswami said. She also highlighted the importance of scouting young domestic players based on their consistent performances, ability to win matches and mindset.

"Our job as a coach is to look at young players who score runs on a regular basis in domestic cricket, take wickets, bat at a good strike rate, and win matches for their team. The most important thing is: do they have that winning mindset? Because performances can be up and down, but you must have that mindset with which you can take the team ahead and make the team win," she said.

Goswami said the players MI secured at their base prices had demonstrated their abilities through consistent performances for their respective state teams. She credited the franchise's scouting team for identifying talent and following matches around the clock, both in India and abroad. "Whatever players we picked at their base price this time, they have that ability, and they have been performing quite well consistently for their state teams. Picking several players at base prices shows how hard our scouting team is working. And scouting is a round-the-clock process since you have to follow matches, irrespective of whether they are happening in India or outside India. And because of them, it becomes easy for us when we come to the auction table, knowing who our targets are," she added.

Assessing MI's overall auction performance, Goswami said the franchise managed to sign nearly all its targeted players, with Navgire and Shweta Sehrawat being the exceptions. She reiterated that the team's limited purse required careful planning and the consideration of multiple options. "I think, more or less, 95 to 97 per cent of the players we had targeted, we got them, except Kiran Navgire.

Coach Jonathan Batty hails delhi Capitals' WPL 2027 auction strategy

NEW DELHI (AGENCY)

Delhi Capitals strengthened their squad for the upcoming Women's Premier League (WPL) 2027 season, securing four players at the auction in Kochi on Wednesday. With a strong core of 13 retained players, the franchise added explosive Indian batter Kiran Navgire, promising 15-year-old all-rounder Uma Kashvi, Indian all-rounder Nazma Khan and Scotland spinner Kirstie Gordon to complete its 17-member squad. Delhi Capitals spent Rs 1.05 crore at the auction, taking their total squad expenditure to Rs 14.95 crore, including Rs 13.9 crore spent on retentions. Navgire was the franchise's marquee acquisition at Rs 75 lakh, while Kashvi, Khan and Gordon were secured for Rs 10 lakh each.

Speaking after the auction, the team's Head Coach Jonathan Batty expressed satisfaction with the franchise's acquisitions, highlighting the additional firepower in the batting department, the depth of the squad and the potential of its newest young recruit.

"Kiran was a high-value target for us. She is probably the most dynamic and powerful batter in the auction. With Shafali at the top of the order and power further down the lineup with players like Chinelle Henry, Kiran gives us another dimension to consider in our batting order. It has the potential to make our batting lineup absolutely staggering," Batty said as per a press release.

One of Delhi Capitals' most exciting acquisitions was Uma Kashvi, the 15-year-old Karnataka all-rounder who became the youngest player to be sold in WPL auction history. A right-arm spin-bowling all-rounder, Kashvi has represented India Under-19 in a series against Sri Lanka Under-19, gaining valuable exposure to the international junior circuit at an early stage of her career.

Batty credited the franchise's scouting network for tracking Kashvi's progress and emphasised that her signing was a long-term investment in her development. "She has been on our radar for a little while. Our scouts have watched her play extensively and shared some incredible feedback, and I have seen her play as well. We believe she could become an absolute superstar in the future," said Batty.

At 15, she is very much a work in progress, and we are not expecting her to be the finished article just yet. This is a long-term project for Delhi Capitals." "It is a wonderful opportunity for her to be part of this setup, learn from our top coaches and work alongside international stars. Hopefully, she will learn a huge amount from the players around her. This is the first step on a journey that we hope will lead to Indian recognition in the future, and we're excited to see her progress," Batty continued.

Delhi Capitals retained a formidable core ahead of the auction, featuring captain Jemimah Rodrigues, explosive opener Shafali Verma, experienced all-rounders Marizanne Kapp and Annabel Sutherland, and South African batter Laura Wolvaardt.

Briefs News

Carabao Cup : Liverpool, Manchester City reach QFs after thrilling wins on penalties

LIVERPOOL (AGENCY) 10-time champions Liverpool and defending champions Manchester City recorded sensational wins on penalties in their fourth-round Carabao Cup clashes at their respective home venues on Wednesday. Coming to the Liverpool-Chelsea clash, the match ended in a 1-1 draw at regulation time, with The Reds edging out the Xabi Alonso-managed side 6-5 on penalties. On the other hand, Vitor Reis helped Manchester City escape a loss, ending the match on a 2-2 draw at regular time, followed by a 4-3 win on penalties. At Anfield, it was a penalty fest, as a penalty conversion from Morgan Rogers in the 40th minute put Chelsea ahead. It was followed by another goal via penalty from Cody Gakpo just three minutes later. Both spot kicks were needlessly conceded, with Ryan Gravenberch fouling Moises Caicedo while he was running away from the goal and later Chelsea's Wesley Fofana giving away Liverpool a chance to score after a handball. During the penalty shootout, the scoreline stood at 3-all, with Florian Wirtz firing the fourth goal for Liverpool but Valentin Barco missing his. Later, Konstantinos Tsimikas missed for Liverpool, but Jordan Henderson scored for Chelsea, making it 4-4. Bradley Barcola and Levi Colwill scored for their respective sides, making it 5-5. With Gravenberch and Emmanuel missing their spot kicks, Joe Gomez put Liverpool ahead. But Fofana missed the decisive penalty, becoming the ultimate villain of the day for Chelsea.

Steve Smith faces cervical facet joint injury in neck, unavailable for selection before NZ Tests

CAPE TOWN (AGENCY) Australian batter Steve Smith has sustained a cervical facet joint injury in his neck and will not be considered for selection untill the home Test series against New Zealand in December this year. Following Smith's ruling out from the series decider against South Africa at Cape Town, Cricket Australia has revealed the extent of the seriousness of his injury and set a timeline for his return to international cricket. Smith hurt his neck during the second Test contest against South Africa and was a late withdrawal from the series decider in Cape Town that commenced on Tuesday. Scans have since found that Smith has developed a cervical facet joint injury and the right-hander will not be considered for selection until Australia's next Test series commences at home against New Zealand in December. "Steve Smith developed neck pain on day four of the second Test in Gqeberha last week," Cricket Australia confirmed via a statement as quoted by ICC. "Subsequent MRI imaging confirmed a cervical facet joint injury. Due to this and his limited range of motion, he was unfit to participate in the current Test." "Steve will continue to receive treatment and rehabilitation, with a full return to availability anticipated for the upcoming home Test series against New Zealand," the statement concluded.

Lesser balls per six, more hard-hitting intent: Evolution of Indian T20I batting in 2020s

NEW DELHI (AGENCY) The Indian six-hitting intent in T20I cricket stands at an all-time high, with a new generation of ultra-aggressive batters upping the ante to make the back-to-back champions one of the deadliest units in world cricket. The three-time T20I champions secured the series in New Zealand, currently leading 3-0 in the five-match series under Shreyas Iyer's captaincy, with the fourth T20I set for Auckland on Friday. As per Cricinfo, India's T20I strike rate in 2021 was 130.2, with a six coming every 20.5 balls. In 2022, which was Suryakumar Yadav's peak (1,164 runs), India's strike rate rose to 144.6, with a six coming every 15.4 balls. After India's 2022 T20 World Cup semifinal ouster, which saw England thrashing them by 10 wickets, India's T20I strike rate went up to 145.1 in 2023, with a six coming every 13.4 overs. In 2024, which saw India end their trophy drought with a T20 World Cup triumph under the captaincy of Rohit Sharma, India's T20 SR rose to 150.8, with a six every 12.2 balls. In 2025, India's T20I SR dipped back to 144.8, with a six every 14.4 balls. However, this year, India's six-hitting has been incredible, with a six every 10.7 balls and the strike rate at an all-time high of 165.7. During home T20Is against West Indies before this T20I series against Kiwis, India became just the second T20I team to reach the landmark of 2,000 T20I sixes. Now, during this series, India (2,052 sixes in 301 T20Is) surpassed West Indies (2,026 in 260 T20Is) to become the leading six-hitting team in T20Is. New Zealand Squad: Tim Seifert(w), Finn Allen, Daryl Mitchell, Glenn Phillips.

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