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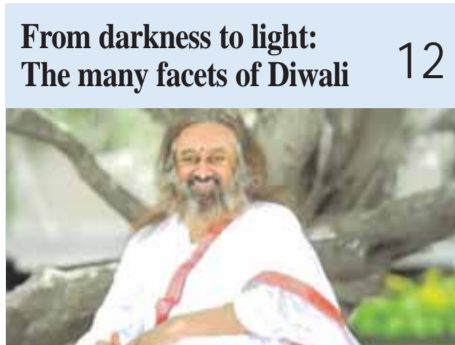
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**PIONEER IN SHORT**

**BJP COMMITTED TO WELFARE OF NAYEE BRAHMINS: MADHAV**  
 It is not correct to associate the BJP party with any one religion, said BJP state president PVN Madhav. Speaking to the media today in Tirupati, he clarified that BJP's motto is equal respect for all religions and that Sanatana Dharma is ever-evolving. Later speaking at Dhanvantari Jayanti Sabha, he said that the western powers conspired for over 200 years to dismantle the Hindu Dharma. The event was presided over by OBC Morcha State President Rongala Gopi Srinivas...

FULL REPORT ON P2

**MP GOVT REINSTATES OFFICIAL LINKED TO COUGH SYRUP DEATHS**  
 The Madhya Pradesh Government has provoked fury and disbelief by quietly reinstating a deputy controller of the State's Drug Administration, Shobhit Koshta, just four days after he was suspended in connection with the Chhindwara cough syrup disaster that claimed the lives of 24 children. The reinstatement order, signed by Additional Chief Secretary (Health and Medical Education), returns the very official accused of oversight failures...

FULL REPORT ON P5

**FESTIVAL OF EXPRESSIONS**  
 Organised by REACH and supported by ONGC, Virasat 2025 marked three decades of celebrating India's cultural traditions. The festival, inaugurated by the Governor of Uttarakhand at Dr BR Ambedkar Stadium, Kaulagarh Road, was a visual delight. The opening night set the tone with a mesmerising sanioor recital by Abhay Sopori, whose music, rooted in Kashmiri tradition, seemed to weave the audience into a state of quiet reflection. His performance flowed...

FULL REPORT ON P7

**QUOTE OF THE DAY**



IT IS RIDICULOUS THAT THE PARTIES THAT GIVE RESERVATIONS ARE ANNOUNCING SUPPORT FOR THE BANDH. THEY WERE ANGRY THAT THE CONGRESS, WHICH GAVE FAKE VOTES, AND THE BJP, WHICH SHOULD HAVE PASSED THE BC BILL, WERE DOING DRAMAS IN THE NAME OF SUPPORTING THE BANDH

— KALVAKUNTALA KAVITHA, TELANGANA JAGRUTI PRESIDENT

**OBTUSE ANGLE**



## AP govt grants one DA to employees

■ Chief Minister Chandrababu Naidu has announces 'Deepavali gift' after holding talks with employees representatives

**PNS n Amaravati**  
 Chief Minister N Chandrababu Naidu on Saturday said that employees have been playing a key role in the development of the state. He held a meeting with leaders of employee unions and Ministers at his residence in Undavalli. Later, speaking to the media, the Chief Minister said, "We have decided to grant one Dearness Allowance (DA) to employees. It will be credited into their accounts on November 1. This will put an additional burden of Rs 160 crore per month on the exchequer. He further said that the government would pay Rs 105 crore as one installment of earned leave (EL) encash-

ment to police personnel now, and another Rs 105 crore in January. "We will streamline the health system for employees within 60 days," he assured the employees union leaders. A pending promotion for RTC employees would be cleared before Diwali. He promised to hold discussions and resolve the issue of Contributory Pension Scheme (CPS). He said, "We are transparently explaining the state's situation without hiding anything. All employees should celebrate Diwali happily. I hope employees will work with more enthusiasm from tomorrow. I am happy that the state has reached the second position in wealth creation."

CONTINUED ON >> P2



Chief Minister N Chandrababu Naidu holding talks with government employees unions representatives in Undavalli on Saturday

### Counter Jagan's attack against govt: CM to leaders

Chief Minister N Chandrababu Naidu on Saturday made it clear that party leaders, along with the government, must work in coordination to counter the "conspiracies being hatched by former chief minister YS Jagan Mohan Reddy." He emphasised that it is not good for party leaders to remain silent thinking that only the Ministers should respond.

CONTINUED ON >> P2

## 'Every inch of Pak territory within BrahMos range'

■ Rajnath asserts Operation Sindoor was only a trailer

**PNS n Lucknow**  
 Every inch of Pakistan's territory lies within range of BrahMos and what happened during Operation Sindoor was just a trailer, Defence Minister Rajnath Singh said here on Saturday, in a stern warning to Pakistan. The operation proved that victory has become a habit for India, he said. The Union minister, along with Uttar Pradesh Chief Minister Yogi Adityanath, flagged off the first batch of BrahMos missiles manufactured at the BrahMos Aerospace unit in Sarojini Nagar here. Singh described BrahMos as a symbol of India's rising strength. "BrahMos is not just a missile, it is proof of India's strategic confidence. From the Army to the Navy and the Air Force, it has become a key



pillar of our defence forces," he said. Singh asserted that India's defence capabilities now serve as a powerful deterrent. "Every inch of Pakistan's territory lies within range of BrahMos. What happened during Operation Sindoor was just a trailer. It made Pakistan realise that if India could create Pakistan, then if the time comes... I need not say more, you all are wise enough," he said. Operation Sindoor proved that "victory is not just a small incident for us but it has become a habit," he added. Hailing Operation Sindoor, Singh said it instilled a new confidence among Indians and proved BrahMos' effectiveness to the world.

CONTINUED ON >> P2

### CRDA office fully functional:CM



**PNS n Amaravati**  
 Chief Minister N Chandrababu Naidu on Friday said the Capital Region Development Authority (CRDA) office is fully functional and all capital planning, construction, and urban development will be managed from the new facility. The Chief Minister inaugurated the seven-storey CRDA building on October 13 in Amaravati, the green-field capital city. "The AP CRDA office is now functional. From this state-of-the-art, seven-floor complex, all capital planning, construction, and urban development will be driven under one roof," Naidu said in a post on X. He added, "Your capital region authority, CRDA, will operate with efficiency, accountability, and in a time-bound manner. Amaravati's engine room is now live."

## Lokesh begins Australia tour to attract investments

**PNS n Amaravati**  
 Information Technology Minister Nara Lokesh on Saturday embarked on a seven-day tour of Australia under the 'Special Visitors Programme', to promote the state as an investment destination. Describing the programme as a "learning and partnership tour", the Minister noted that he will meet university leaders, top CEOs and skills ministers to explore opportunities for the youth of Andhra. "I've departed to Australia today for a 7-day learning and partnership tour under the 'Special Visitors Program'. I'll be meeting university leaders, top CEOs, and skills ministers to unlock opportunities for Andhra Pradesh's youth," said Lokesh in a post on X. The TDP general secretary added that he would also hold talks with the Australian Seafood Association to help the southern state's exporters find new markets amid US tariffs. Further, the IT Minister said he would interact with the Australian Telugu community, calling them a source of 'incredible strength and ideas'. "It's Diwali on the move again this year with the CII roadshow - and if a few Aussie companies choose Andhra Pradesh, that will be the best festive gift for our people," he added.



Information Technology Minister Nara Lokesh

### Government to monitor paddy procurement through RTGS

**PNS n Amaravati**  
 Andhra Pradesh Civil Supplies Minister Nadendla Manohar on Saturday said paddy procurement will be monitored through the state's real-time governance system. He said every aspect of the procurement process would be accessible through a central dashboard and urged officials to ensure complete transparency. "Paddy procurement will be monitored on a real-time basis through the real-time governance system (RTGS)."

CONTINUED ON >> P2

### YSRCP is spreading falsehood: Parthasarathy

**PNS n Vijayawada**  
 Minister for Information and Public Relations K Parthasarathy criticised the YSRCP, saying the party is spreading lies that the public is finding disgusting. He remarked that while the entire world is looking towards Andhra Pradesh with interest, YSRCP continued to make false statements. He stated that the coalition government has been taking strict action against those responsible for manufacturing spurious liquor and made it clear that no one involved in the racket would be spared. He accused leaders of the previous government of endangering people's lives and looting thousands of crores of rupees. Speaking at a press conference here, the Minister said that industries are coming to Andhra Pradesh impressed by N Chandrababu Naidu's efficient governance. He accused YSRCP leaders of inciting social divisions for political gain. "It is laughable that YSRCP leaders are speaking about adulterated liquor," he said, adding that during the previous regime, people suffered health problems due to substandard liquor. "Our government is cracking down on fake liquor with an iron fist. Further actions will follow based on the Special Investigation Team (SIT) report," he added. Parthasarathy stated that the government has already suspended TDP leaders who were found involved. He also mentioned the introduction of a government security app aimed at curbing fake liquor. Through this app, people can verify information using a hologram, but some are spreading misinformation about it, he alleged. He ridiculed the YSRCP leaders by saying that during their rule, liquor was delivered to homes using scooters, and now they are making hypocritical statements.

CONTINUED ON >> P2



Minister for Information and Public Relations K Parthasarathy

## Hammerhead worms spotted in Annamayya dist

**PNS n Rayachoti**  
 A strange worm has caused a stir in Annamayya district. Farmers working in the fields at Tamballapalle spotted it and were frightened. Because there is a coil-like shape on its head, they were surprised and a little scared. It looked somewhat like a rain snake and is completely black. Since the head has a coil-like shape, forest department officials said it is called a hammerhead worm. They say hammerhead worms are usually black or brownish in color. They grow to lengths of about 20 to 30 centimetres. On the other hand, hammerhead worm is a flat-worm, and it is poisonous. It is generally very rarely seen.

CONTINUED ON >> P2



Hammerhead worm is a flat-worm, and it is poisonous. It is generally very rarely seen.

### CRUCIAL LINK TO KAKINADA PORT

# Samarlakota-Achampeta-Kakinada Port NH to be operation by next May

**PNS n Rajamahendravaram**  
 A crucial new road connecting Samarlakota-Achampeta-Kakinada Port is nearing completion in the erstwhile East Godavari district. This Asian Development Bank (ADB)-funded four-lane highway is expected to be operational by May next year. Construction is progressing rapidly. In 2023, the Central government awarded the 26-kilometre road expansion project to contractors at an estimated cost of Rs 548 crore. The structural works and flyovers have already been completed. Once the project is finished, transportation between Samarlakota, Achampeta, and Kakinada Port will improve significantly. The expansion of the existing ADB road from NH-16 near Rajanagaram to Kakinada Port is being carried out under the Bharatmala Project. The current narrow road between Samarlakota and Kakinada Port is being upgraded to a four-lane highway. The proposal was prepared by the National



Highways Authority in 2023 and later approved by the Central government. This ADB road, connecting NH-16 at Rajanagaram to Kakinada Port, is a key transport route. Hundreds of lorries carrying rice, granite, fertilisers, and other goods travel from states like Andhra Pradesh, Telangana, Odisha, West Bengal, and Kerala to Kakinada Anchorage and Deepwater Ports daily. However, the current road is narrow and filled with potholes, causing major problems for both port-bound and local traffic. Accidents at night have become frequent due to poor road conditions. To resolve this, the road is being upgraded to four lanes under the Bharatmala project. A 12.5 km stretch from Samarlakota to Achampeta is being built at a cost of Rs 408 crore. Initially, the old route would have required demolishing hundreds of houses in Samarlakota and dealing with obstructions like railway tracks and a Rail Over Bridge (ROB), which would have drastically increased costs.

CONTINUED ON >> P2

## BJP committed to welfare of Naye Brahmins: Madhav

PNS n Tirupati

It is not correct to associate the BJP party with any one religion, said BJP state president PVN Madhav. Speaking to the media today in Tirupati, he clarified that BJP's motto is equal respect for all religions and that Sanatana Dharma is ever-evolving.

Later speaking at Dhanvantari Jayanti Sabha, he said that the western powers conspired for over 200 years to dismantle the Hindu Dharma. The event was presided over by OBC Morcha State President Rongala Gopi Srinivas, and was attended by Naye Brahmins from across the state.

As the chief guest, Madhav emphasised that the the



Naye Brahmins, must be protected from being taken over by corporate forces. He stated that Naye Brahmins were play a key role in safeguarding Sanatana Dharma. He criticised Western influences for introducing caste-based dis-

crimination against such Dharma-protecting communities.

He stressed the need to protect the rights of Naye Brahmins and ensure they receive due recognition. On the occasion of Dhanvantari Jayanti, Madhav gave a clear assurance, "We will protect the rights of Naye Brahmins."

He reiterated that the BJP is committed to safeguarding the rights of Naye Brahmins, who are instrumental in preserving Sanatana Dharma.

The meeting was attended by TTD Board Members Suresh, B Prakash Reddy, BJP state general secretaries Nagothu Ramesh Naidu, Sannareddy Dayakar Reddy, Srilakha, Rajendra Prasad, District President Samanchi Srinivas, and others.

# Minister moots measures to improve accountability in health services

PNS n Amaravati

To improve accountability and progress in public health services, Health Minister Satya Kumar Yadav has launched a new initiative aimed at evaluating performance across all departments of the Health and Family Welfare Department.

The Minister instructed departmental officials to conduct a self-assessment for the first six months of the current financial year (April-September 2025) and to provide insights based on 20 crucial parameters. These parameters revolve around key areas such as health-care delivery improvements,



problem-solving efforts, infrastructure development, and recruitment of medical professionals, advancements

in outpatient and inpatient services, availability of diagnostic facilities, staff attendance, budget utilization,

**SATYA KUMAR STRESSES THAT HAVING CLEAR PERFORMANCE METRICS IS VITAL FOR EVALUATING OUTCOMES, AND THAT FEEDBACK FROM DEPARTMENTAL HEADS WILL FOSTER TRANSPARENCY**

and the introduction of new health services.

The Minister emphasises that it was important for every department to self-assess its performance—whether it has excelled, met

expectations, or requires enhancements—and to highlight both achievements and challenges faced. The information gathered will contribute to a thorough mid-year assessment of the Health Department's operations.

satya Kumar stresses that having clear performance metrics is vital for evaluating outcomes, and that feedback from departmental heads will foster transparency. A review meeting based on these reports will be held soon.

It may recalled that health services have improved in the State. The Minister said he was determined to improve the services further.

## Beware of brokers and, unauthorised agents: TTD

PNS n Tirumala

TTD chairman BR Naidu has urged devotees to be cautious and avoid relying on brokers for obtaining darshan of Sri Venkateswara Swamy, as well as for Arjitha sevas and accommodation. He emphasised that there have been reports of brokers and middlemen deceiving devotees in their efforts to facilitate these services.

He said that there have been complaints from devotees that certain individuals are falsely claiming to be senior officials working in various departments of TTD and are luring people by promising them break darshan, Arjitha Sevas, and accommodation. There have also been incidents where these fake individuals collected large amounts of money from devotees.

For official information, devotees are advised to contact the TTD toll-free number 155257. If there is any suspicion about a broker, devotees can report it to TTD Vigilance Officers, who are available at all times, by calling 0877-2263828.

Meanwhile, scams related to Tirumala Sri Venkateswara Swamy's darshan are on the rise. Middlemen are falsely promising VIP break darshan and Arjitha Seva tickets, collecting lakhs of rupees from

devotees and then switching off their phones.

Thousands of devotees visit Tirumala daily for darshan. While some book tickets in advance or obtain Sarva Darshan tokens, others aspire for VIP break darshan or Arjitha Sevas. Exploiting it, some fraudsters are deceiving innocent devotees by making false promises in the name of the Lord's darshan.

These scammers collect money under the pretense of arranging darshan tickets and then disappear. Victims are left helpless and eventually approach the police for help.

In a recent scam, a middleman cheated devotees in the name of Tirumala darshan and went absconding. He collected Rs 4 lakh from devotees from Telangana, promising them seva tickets. After receiving the payment online, he switched off his phone. The victim lodged a complaint with vigilance officials, who informed the Tirumala police. The police registered a case and began an investigation.

Despite several warnings from TTD in the past not to trust unauthorised agents, some devotees still fall into the trap and get cheated. TTD officials continue to advise devotees to stay vigilant regarding such middlemen.

## JNTUK students take out 'clean air' awareness rally

PNS n Kakinada

NSS volunteers from the campus colleges of Jawaharlal Nehru Technological University, Kakinada (JNTUK), organised a rally on Saturday within the university premises, focusing on the theme 'Clean Air'.

Flagging off the rally, Dr N Mohanrao, principal of the University College of Engineering, emphasised that the initiative aimed to raise public awareness about the importance of clean air. He highlighted the need to protect the environment, reduce air pollution, and maintain ecological balance.

NSS programme officers N Ramanaji, MVSU Kiranmayi,



JNTUK students take out 'clean air' awareness rally in Kakinada on Saturday

and Dr P Viralakshmi addressed the volunteers, stressing that pollution-free air is essential for healthy living. They identified industrial emissions and the burning of garbage as major contributors to air pollution, which they said is a leading

cause of respiratory illnesses and cardiac problems.

The speakers also highlighted the crucial role of increasing green cover in combating air pollution and urged collective efforts toward a cleaner and healthier environment.

## 'Privatisation' of medical colleges opposed

PNS n Kakinada

Jai Bhimrao Bharath Party founder-president Jhada Sraavan Kumar has strongly criticised the state government's move to privatise medical colleges under the guise of the Public-Private Partnership (PPP) model, calling it a "sinister plan" designed to benefit the benamis of those in power.

Speaking at an Intellectuals' Seminar held at Ambedkar Bhavan on Saturday, Sraavan Kumar accused the ruling alliance of prioritising private interests over public welfare. "Constructing a hospital requires an investment between Rs 5 crore and Rs 6

crore. By pushing privatisation, the government is creating barriers that will keep Bahujans away from medical education," he said.

He targeted Chief Minister N. Chandrababu Naidu, Deputy CM Pawan Kalyan, and Minister N Lokesh, alleging that they were promoting the PPP model to benefit their close associates operating through Benami fronts. "Privatising government medical colleges will deny students from poor and middle-class backgrounds the opportunity to pursue medical education," he warned.

Sraavan Kumar contrasted the current government's actions with the previous

YSRCP regime, under which 17 new medical colleges were sanctioned with a budget allocation of Rs 5,600 crore. He pointed out that the current government is unwilling to spend even Rs 3,000 crore to complete these institutions. "If the government allocates Rs 1,000 crore annually, all 17 colleges can be completed in three years. Instead, they are opting for 33-year leases under the PPP model, clearly aimed at helping Benamis," he alleged.

He also raised concerns about the quality of education, stating that the privatisation policy could result in the production of substandard doctors.

# Will launch Telangana-like movement for BC reservations, warns Kavitha

■ Holds rally, slams Cong, BJP for false promises

PNS n Hyderabad

Telangana Jagruti President Kalvakuntla Kavitha warned that another BC movement will be launched like the Telangana movement. She took out a rally in autos in support of the BC bandh and held a human chain at Khairatabad intersection in Hyderabad. Speaking at the rally, Kavitha demanded

that BC reservations be implemented.

"It is ridiculous that the parties that give reservations are announcing support for the bandh. They were angry that the Congress, which gave fake votes, and the BJP, which should have passed the BC bill, were doing dramas in the name of supporting the bandh." Kavitha said

Kavitha criticized the state governments for not technically making the right arguments to implement the BC reservations, adding that this is the reason for the courts rejecting the government's arguments. She also alleged that the census was not conducted properly. He said that Congress was not sincere in the matter of GO 9 as well. Because of this, the court

struck down the GO. She expressed her anger that the Congress and the BJP were not sincere in the matter of BC reservations. What is the urgency to hold elections now? She questioned the government. and demanded that elections be held after the issue of BC reservations is clarified, as elections have not been held in Maharashtra and Tamil Nadu for 5 years.



## FROM PAGE - 1

### AP govt grants...

Earlier, the Group of Ministers (GoM), consisting of Ministers Payyavula Keshav, Nadendla Manohar and Y Satya Kumar, engaged in constructive discussions with representatives from various government employees' unions at the Secretariat. The talks primarily centred on outstanding issues such as Dearness Allowances (DAs) and related concerns, as mentioned in an official release. Keshav informed the employees that Chief Minister N Chandrababu Naidu had understood their concerns with a "positive and compassionate" mindset.

He emphasised that the Chief Minister valued the employees as vital members of the administration and strives to address their requests to the best of his ability, despite existing constraints. Satya Kumar stated that the Chief Minister is particularly focused on finding solutions to the problems faced by employees. Chief Secretary K Vijayanand noted that the government is actively taking measures to address the concerns raised by employees. He mentioned that an earlier meeting of the Joint Consultative Committee had taken place, which set the stage for this recent engagement with the GoM. The meeting also included other senior officials such as Special Chief Secretary (Services) S.S. Rawat, Principal Secretary (Finance) Piyush Kumar, Principal Secretary (PR & RD) Shashi Bhushan Kumar, APSRTC Managing Director Ch

Dwarka Tirumala Rao, Secretary (IT) Katamneni Bhaskar, Finance Secretary Vinay Chand, Health Commissioner G Veerapandian, and Director of Municipal Administration G Sampath Kumar. Employee representatives included A Vidyasagar (president, AP Non-Gazetted Officers' Association), U Manohar (general secretary, AP Secretariat Employees' Association), and Bopparaju Venkateswarlu (president, Revenue Services Association), among others.

### Counter Jagan's...

He stated that it is the responsibility of everyone to counter the "malicious propaganda" being spread by Jagan Mohan Reddy against the coalition government. He advised party leaders to expose Jagan's false claims to the public through the media.

On the fake liquor scam, Naidu reportedly said that the Special Investigation Team (SIT) is investigating. Action would be taken after the SIT submitted its findings.

Senior leaders also congratulated the Chief Minister for bringing the Google Data Centre project to Visakhapatnam. A meeting was held at the TDP central office (NTR Bhavan) where party state president Palla Srinivas and other key leaders met the Chief Minister.

### 'Every inch of...

"Maintaining this confidence is now our collective

responsibility," he said. "The entire world now recognises India's capability. BrahMos has strengthened our belief that India can turn its dreams into reality," he said.

Under Operation Sindoor, Indian defence forces targeted terror infrastructure and defence installations in Pakistan in May, following an attack in Jammu and Kashmir's Pahalgam on April 22 that claimed 26 lives.

Indigenously developed BrahMos supersonic cruise missiles were used by India to destroy Pakistan's air bases during the operation.

On the manufacturing of BrahMos at the Lucknow unit, Singh said the project symbolises India's growing confidence and capability in defence manufacturing.

"Lucknow is not just my parliamentary constituency, it resides in my soul. Today, it has become a city of technology and industry, apart from culture and tradition."

"The successful production of BrahMos missiles here shows that what was once a dream has now become a reality. The project represents patience, hard work and determination," he said.

Assuring direct employment to hundreds of people, Singh said that it is estimated that around 100 missile systems will be provided annually to the Army, Air Force and Navy from here. In the next financial year, the turnover of this unit will reach Rs 3,000 crore, which will generate GST revenue of Rs 500 crore.

Highlighting the capabilities of BrahMos, he said that BrahMos is not just a missile, but a symbol of India's growing indigenous strength.

While appreciating Adityanath, he said that "We all know that Uttar Pradesh was once identified with gangsterism and broken law and order. People lived in an atmosphere of fear and investors were afraid to come here. But today, under the leadership of Chief Minister Yogi Adityanath, this situation has changed. His firm leadership and policy decisions have restored confidence in the state."

Singh said that today we are all celebrating the festival of Dhanteras and on this auspicious day four BrahMos missiles are also being delivered. In a way we can say that today the grace of Lakshmi ji is showering not only on the security sector but also on the economy equally.

said that in the last one month, the BrahMos team has signed contracts worth around Rs 4,000 crore with two countries.

Adityanath said under the Defence Industrial Corridor, "Uttar Pradesh is emerging as a major hub of indigenous defence manufacturing. The BrahMos unit is a shining example of that." With a missile like BrahMos, India is now not only able to meet its own security needs but also those of its allies in the world, he said.

Adityanath said his government is committed to supporting projects which strengthen national security

and create new employment opportunities and technical expertise in the region.

Inaugurated on May 11, the state-of-the-art BrahMos Aerospace unit houses all modern facilities for missile integration, testing and final quality checks. After successful testing, the missiles are prepared for deployment by the Indian armed forces.

### Government to...

Every aspect of the process will be accessible through a dashboard," Manohar said in a press release issued after a workshop for officials.

The statement comes as the state targets the procurement of 51 lakh tonnes of paddy during the Kharif season of fiscal 2025-26.

Manohar said the process should take place in a "festive atmosphere" without any inconvenience to farmers. He directed officials to address issues identified during the previous procurement season through planning.

He instructed them to make prior arrangements for gunny bags, labourers, and transport facilities, and urged joint collectors to prevent middlemen from intervening in gunny bag supply.

The minister also called for strict enforcement of rice millers' commitment not to recycle Public Distribution System (PDS) rice, and said this condition must be clearly included in agreements.

Officials were told to prioritise rice millers who can deliver rice to the Food Corporation of India (FCI)

within 60 days. Recalling that 30,000 tarpaulin sheets were distributed last year due to unseasonal rains, Manohar directed officials to keep them ready in advance as required.

Highlighting that the NDA government is pursuing a "farmer-friendly approach," he said cultivators are free to sell their produce to any mill at their preferred price.

He added that farmers can join the paddy procurement process by sending a "hi" message on WhatsApp and assured that payments would be credited to their accounts within 48 hours of the sale.

### YSRCP is spreading...

He asserted that priority is being given to digital payments and clarified that the government is not directly involved in selling liquor through officials.

The Minister mentioned that quality liquor is being provided at lower prices across all constituencies. He said a committee would be formed to investigate the sale of liquor in bars.

He challenged YSRCP to discuss Private Partnership (PPP) policy in the Assembly. He claimed that governance under Chandrababu Naidu's leadership is free from corruption. "We are providing quality liquor," he reiterated.

He criticised YSRCP for demoralising sincere government officials and promised that the government would support officers working within the law. He

mocked YSRCP for dreaming about returning to power and accused them of targeting Dalit and backward community officials.

### Hammerhead...

They are warning people to be careful because it is a poisonous creature. Although they do not bite humans, hammerhead worms contain a toxin called a neurotoxin in their bodies. Officials said they use this poison to kill soil pests and rain snakes. The forest officials also warned not to touch these hammerhead worms with bare hands. Another important characteristic of these worms is that if their body is cut into two pieces, each piece can regrow into a new worm.

### Samarlakota-Achampeta...

To avoid this, a new bypass was proposed. An agreement was signed with the Highway Authority last August. Even at the start of construction, these challenges became evident. Demolishing houses and removing railway infrastructure would be expensive. As a result, officials proposed a new four-lane bypass road via Raksiceramics, passing under the FCI godown and behind the sugar factory. After crossing the ROB near the railway station and the Godavari canal, the new highway will merge with the existing road at Samarlakota, continuing through Unduru to Achampeta. This alignment reduces costs and simplifies

construction.

As of now, 70 per cent of the 12.5 km four-lane road from Raksiceramic to Unduru has been completed. However, the remaining 30 per cent is delayed due to a shortage of fly ash. The project includes 6 km of entirely new road and widening the rest. Changes to the alignment also caused delays. A total of 54 hectares of land was acquired for this, including 21 hectares of government land and 33 hectares of private land, for which 240 crore was paid as compensation. Work intensified about 1.5 years ago, completing 70 per cent so far. A ROB near the old flyover at Samarlakota towards Achampeta and another flyover at Achampeta have been completed. Construction of culverts at 23 locations is also finished.

Originally, the highway work between Samarlakota-Achampeta-Kakinada Port was scheduled to be completed by December, but the lack of fly ash has caused delays. Officials said work will resume quickly once the supply resumes.

Under Package-2, the 13.2 km four-lane road from Achampeta Junction to Kakinada Anchorage Port has reached its final phase. However, naval-owned lands near drain connections and road junctions have created hurdles, and discussions are ongoing with Navy authorities. Previously, NTPC's thermal power station in Visakhapatnam supplied the required fly ash.

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## PROSPECT



The Barpeta District Sports Association (BDSA) today extended a warm felicitation to BCCI Honorary Secretary Devajit Saikia

## HAVEUS AEROTECH ENTERS INDIA'S DEFENCE SECTOR



Aircraft MRO services operator Haveus Aerotech announced its entry into the defence manufacturing sector and its listing as a subcontractor with a leading defence public sector enterprise.

Under the new operational scope, Haveus Aerotech will undertake Assembly and Testing of Line Replaceable Units (LRUs) and Non-Destructive Testing (NDT) through insourcing and critical functions that play a key role in ensuring aerospace reliability, performance and safety, the statement said.

The Gurugram-based MRO services firm currently has its presence in New Delhi and Bengaluru well while Kolkata and Mumbai are in the pipeline. This milestone collaboration reflects Haveus Aerotech's unwavering commitment to the Prime Minister Narendra Modi's 'Make in India' and 'Atmanirbhar Bharat' initiatives, which have been empowering indigenous capabilities, creating skilled employment and bolstering the country's defence readiness.

## Steel Ministry to host Bharat Steel Summit in April 2026

PIONEER NEWS SERVICE  
n New Delhi

Aligning with the strong pull of the Indian market as a growth engine for the steel sector, Union Ministry of Steel will be organising Bharat Steel, an important multi-stakeholder industry summit in New Delhi in April 2026.

The industry leaders at the two-day summit will deliberate on championing the cause of green steel, sustainable steelmaking and the future of steel, in tune with the shifting demand towards

cleaner and greener steel across geographies.

According to a Press release, The summit is expected to be attended by leaders of the global steel industry, technology providers, innovators, investors, financial institutions and policy makers whose insights will play a vital role in shaping the future of the steel value chain, amidst trade and tariffs protectionism high on the geo-economics agenda.

Jharkhand, Odisha, Chhattisgarh, Andhra Pradesh

and Maharashtra known for their steel manufacturing and mining & raw material legacy are the partner states of Bharat Steel summit. The two-day event will take place in New Delhi from April 16 to 17, 2026.

Against the global headwinds of trade barriers and tariffs, India has emerged as a bright spot for strengthening and stabilizing equitable global trade.

The resilience of the Indian economy is strongly reflected in growth of its steel and allied sector.

According to the World Steel Association (WSA), India is likely to log the highest growth in steel demand, around 9 per cent, among the world's major consuming nations in both 2025 and 2026.

The growth is enabled by factors like National Steel Policy and Production Linked Incentive scheme to boost production and exports, increased investment in infrastructure projects and rising demands from sectors like construction, automotive and renewable energy.

## Neeraj Semwal takes over as MD – Delhi Transco Ltd



PIONEER NEWS SERVICE  
n New Delhi

Neeraj Semwal, an IAS officer of AGMUT cadre (2003 batch) has taken over as Managing Director of Delhi Transco Limited recently.

Semwal is an alumnus of prestigious Garhwal University where he studied Commerce and Law. Besides Semwal has earned Post Graduate Diploma in Management from IMT Gaziabad.

A dynamic and result oriented bureaucrat Semwal has held many challenging postings during his illustrious administrative career.

He has served in various capacities in Daman, Diu, Dadra and Nagar Haveli, Goa, Uttarakhand, Arunachal Pradesh, GNCT of Delhi and Government of India.

Semwal has vast experi-

ence of managing diverse fields which ranges from Industrial development, land, revenue, finance and taxation to tourism.

He is not new to the Government of Delhi and his previous stint include as Managing Director of Delhi State Civil Supplies Corporation Limited, Additional CEO – Delhi Jal Board, Commissioner – Excise and Trade Tax etc.

In addition to his responsibilities in Delhi Transco Limited, he is also serving as Secretary Revenue – cum - Divisional Commissioner, Secretary (Power), Secretary (Land and Building), Chairman of Indraprastha Power Generation Company Limited, Pragati Power Corporation and DVB Employees Terminal Benefit Fund as well as CMD of Delhi Power Company.

## IndusInd Bank swings back into red with ₹437 crore loss in Q2 on MFI stress

PIONEER NEWS SERVICE  
n Mumbai

Private sector lender IndusInd Bank on Saturday reported a loss of ₹437 crore in the September quarter, as it chose to identify and provide for additional stress in the microfinance portfolio.

The Hinduja group-promoted lender had reported a net profit of ₹1,331 crore in year-ago period and ₹604 crore in the preceding June quarter.

In March, it booked a loss of ₹2,329 crore amid a crisis over shoddy corporate governance, wrongful accounting practices and executive malfeasance.

Rajiv Anand, the newly-appointed chief executive and managing director of the lender, explained that it decided to go in for accelerated provisions and also did a ₹1,940-crore write-off in the MFI book during the quarter.

A senior official told



reporters that it had to set aside ₹900 crore in additional provisions as a result of the move. Remaining part of the overall provision of ₹2,631 crore was business as usual, the official added.

Before Anand took over, an interim management had asserted that all the incipient stress has been accounted for and the lender is starting the new fiscal with a clean slate.

When asked if more such moves await, where the bank decides to take additional provision which hits the

profits, Anand did not answer in specific but said that it will continue to take measures to strengthen the balance sheet.

"There are enough levers with us to be able to grow. There is ample scope from a macro perspective as well. It is important for us to set the systems, controls and teams in place before we accelerate," Anand said, while sharing the future outlook.

Meanwhile, the bank also discussed that it has set up a project management group to provide oversight and to ensure that

necessary steps including strengthening of systems, processes, internal controls, minimization of manual accounting entries.

The bank has also initiated steps to assess roles and responsibilities and also "fix accountability", it said, adding that over the next two quarters, it will also initiate disciplinary action against the erring officials as per the code of conduct of the lender.

IndusInd Bank continues to remain cautious on the microfinance lending business, but sees good opportunity to grow in its mainstay of vehicle finance, home loans despite the challenges posed by higher cost of funds and also corporate lending, Anand said.

For the reporting quarter, its core net interest income declined by 18 per cent to ₹4,409 crore as loans contracted by 9 per cent and net interest margin compressed by 0.76 per cent to 3.32 per cent.

## Assam CM reviews birth centenary celebrations Bhupen Hazarika

PIONEER NEWS SERVICE  
n Guwahati

Chief Minister Himanta Biswa Sarma today held a detailed discussion in Dispur today through video conference with the Guardian Ministers of various districts, along with the Chief Secretary, district Commissioners and several senior officials of the state, regarding the state wide observance of the death anniversary of Bharat Ratna Bhupen Hazarika.

The Chief Minister stated that the State Government is celebrating the birth centenary of the legendary singer Bhupen Hazarika with a

yearlong programme through a series of events. Synchronizing with the centenary celebrations, the State Government has also decided to observe the death anniversary of the Bard of the Brahmaputra on 5 November.

During the meeting, Department of Cultural Affairs presented a detailed plan on how the death anniversary of Bhupen Hazarika will be commemorated at the district level. The Chief Minister announced that on November 5, every district will organize a special programme to pay tribute to Hazarika. Eminent personalities, particularly

those associated with the field of music and culture, will be invited to these programmes.

In these district-level events, leading local artists will sing Bhupen Hazarika's songs along with rendition of the song "Manuhe Manuhor Babe". To enable people to participate in the events, Sarma suggested that the programmes be organized at prominent venues in each district.

He further mentioned that larger districts, if necessary, may hold additional events in the co-districts. The Chief Minister asked the District Commissioners to discuss the arrangements with their



respective Guardian Ministers and ensure smooth and successful observance of the death anniversary programme.

Finance Minister Ajanta Neog, Cooperation Minister Jogen Mohan, Public Health Engineering Minister Jayanta Mallabaruah, Power Minister Prasanta Phukan, Labour Welfare, Minister Rupesh Gowala, several Guardian Ministers of the districts, Chief Secretary Ravi Kota, Additional Chief Secretaries Ajay Tewari, B Kalyan Chakravarthy, KK Dwivedi and several other senior officials were also present at the meeting physically and virtually.

## Lower provisions help ICICI Bank post 3.2 per cent rise in Q2 profit as margins compress

PIONEER NEWS SERVICE  
n Mumbai

ICICI Bank on Saturday reported that its consolidated net profit for the September quarter inched up by 3.2 per cent to ₹13,357 crore as a fall in provisions helped overcome the impact of margin compression.

On a standalone basis, the second largest private sector lender reported a 5.2 per cent growth in its post-tax profit at ₹12,359 crore, up from ₹11,746 crore in the year-ago period.

The core net interest income increased 7.4 per cent to ₹21,529 crore on the back of 10.6 per cent growth in advances and the compression in net interest margin to 4.30 per cent from 4.53 per cent in the year-ago period.

Its executive director Sandeep Batra told reporters that NIMs will stay "range-bound" going ahead, but added that another rate cut from the central bank can impact the key number. RBI's cash reserve ratio cut will help the number, while other aspects like competitive intensity can impact it negatively, he added.

Non-interest income, excluding treasury performance, saw a 13.2 per cent



growth at ₹7,356 crore, but the treasury income showed a sharp fall to ₹220 crore as against ₹680 crore in the year-ago period.

The deposit growth for the bank came at 9.1 per cent during the quarter.

From an asset quality perspective, gross slippages came at ₹5,034 crore, marginally down from ₹5,073 crore in the year-ago period. Gross non-performing assets ratio improved to 1.58 per cent as of September 30, down from 1.67 per cent at the end of June this year and 1.97 per cent at the end of the year-ago period.

Overall provisions of the

bank reduced to ₹914 crore from ₹1,233 crore on-year and ₹1,815 crore on-quarter.

Batra explained that shifts in the farm loans book lead to the changes and added that the credit costs will "normalise upwards" going ahead.

On the loan growth front, retail credit grew 6.6 per cent and now constitutes 52.1 per cent of the book, while the business banking portfolio grew by 24.8 per cent year-on-year.

Amid concerns on a possible deterioration in credit quality of small business loans, Batra said loans to the business banking

segment are holding up well due to which it is upping exposure to it and added that such borrowers are "bankable". Corporate loans grew by just 3.5 per cent during the quarter, as per the bank. It expects credit growth to pick up in the second half of the fiscal, including the one in the retail front as well, Batra said.

He also said that domestic corporates have got enough cash, many other avenues to access credit.

The overall capital adequacy for the lender stood at 17.31 per cent as of September 30, with the core buffer at 17.06 per cent.

## HDFC Bank Q2 net profit jumps 10 per cent on non-core income growth

PIONEER NEWS SERVICE  
n Mumbai

A growth in non-core income helped HDFC Bank post a 10 per cent rise in the consolidated net profit for July-September quarter of FY26 at ₹19,610.67 crore.

On a standalone basis, the largest private sector lender's net rose 10.82 per cent to ₹18,641.28 crore for the quarter under review.

Its core net interest income rose 4.8 per cent to ₹31,550 crore, helped by a nearly 10 per cent growth in advances, but restricted by a compression in net interest margin to 3.27 per cent, compared to 3.5 per cent in the year-ago period.

About NIMs, a subject of great interest for investors, the bank management said that the number will be stable or may go up over the next one or two years.

Non-interest income grew 25 per cent to ₹21,730 crore during the quarter, helping it deliver the profit growth to a large extent along with the operating expenses, which went up by 6.4 per cent to ₹17,980 crore.

The bank's managing director and chief executive Sashidhar Jagdishan said the lender is on track on its



broad strategy envisaged last year, which includes reducing the credit-deposit ratio to 96 per cent and also upping the loan growth.

He said that from FY27 onward, the bank, which merged its home finance major parent HDFC with itself, will get back to a place where the loan growth will exceed that of the banking system and help it gain market share.

There has been a visible improvement in the economic activity on the ground with recent policy measures including the rationalisation of GST and change in income tax structures by the government and the RBI's rate cuts, he said, adding that this opens up opportunities for HDFC Bank to grow its book.

Retail loans grew 7.4 per

cent, small and mid-market enterprises were up by 17 per cent while the corporate and wholesale loans were up by 6.4 per cent.

The bank's chief financial officer Srinivasan Vaidyanathan told reporters that a bulk of the wholesale lending is about fulfilling requirements and the private capex is "very modest" right now.

The CEO said that the move to allow domestic banks to do acquisition finance is a positive win-win for both the lenders and the borrowers, pointing out that the cost of transactions will go down for the corporates.

It has the capability to undertake acquisition finance and will now be looking for the final guide-

lines on the same. From an asset quality perspective, the bank had gross slippages of ₹7,400 crore, which included ₹1,100 crore of agri advances. Gross non-performing assets ratio improved to 1.24 per cent as of September from 1.40 per cent three months ago and 1.36 per cent in the year-ago period.

Overall provisions increased to ₹3,500 crore from ₹2,700 crore in the year-ago period, but was much lower than the ₹4,441 crore in the quarter-ago period.

The CFO said it has lots of questions on the expected credit loss-based system of provisioning, but added that the bank is comfortable and ready to implement new norms at an overall level.

Meanwhile, the CEO said that the bank does not expect any impact of generative artificial intelligence on jobs and added that people will get moved to the front end from the back end because of new technologies. The bank is conducting a few lighthouse experiments on the technology front, including using generative AI and will be speaking about it in the future, Jagdishan said.

## Vijay's TVK donates 20 lakh each to Karur victims



Actor-politician Vijay's Tamilaga Vettri Kazhagam party on Saturday said 20 lakh each has been credited to the families of those who lost their lives in the Karur stampede on September 27. The sum was directly credited to the bank accounts of the affected families, the party said.

## Chandrayaan-2 observes Sun's impact on Moon: ISRO

The Chandrayaan-2 mission, launched in 2019, has made the first-ever observation of the effects of the Sun's Coronal Mass Ejection (CME) on the Moon using its onboard scientific instruments, ISRO said on Saturday. This observation would help understand the lunar exosphere, very thin atmosphere of the Moon, and the impact of space weather on its surface.



## Union Minister Bandi Sanjay visits flood-hit Gurdaspur



Union minister Bandi Sanjay Kumar on Saturday visited the flood-hit areas in the Gurdaspur district and assured those affected that the Modi Government stands firmly with the people of Punjab.

## J&K CM vows to scrap PSA once statehood restored

Jammu and Kashmir Chief Minister Omar Abdullah on Saturday said his Government will revoke the controversial Public Safety Act as soon as the Union territory gets statehood. "To remove it, we should have a status of the State. Security and law and order should be with the elected Government. The day these powers are vested with us, I will not even wait for the assembly session; we will remove this law through an ordinance," Abdullah said.



## Seema Singh's election papers rejected in Bihar

PIONEER NEWS SERVICE  
New Delhi

In an embarrassment to the ruling NDA in poll-bound Bihar, nomination papers of Seema Singh, one of the candidates of Union minister Chirag Paswan's party, got rejected on Saturday.

Singh, a former Bhojpur actress, had been named by Lok Janshakti Party (Ram Vilas) as its candidate from Marhaura seat in Saran district, where her nomination papers got rejected during scrutiny on "technical grounds".

When Paswan was asked about the development, he said, "We have submitted a representation before the Election Commission. The situation has arisen because of a small lapse. Hopefully, it will be resolved."

Another candidate whose papers got rejected from the seat was Altaf Alam Raju, a former JD(U) leader who had entered the fray as an independent candidate.

The seat is now likely to witness a direct contest between sitting RID MLA Jitendra Kumar Rai, who is also a former minister, and Jan Suraj Party's Abhay Singh. The seat goes to polls in the first phase on November 6 and, as of now, is left with nine candidates in the fray, since nomination papers of four have been



rejected. The last date for withdrawal of nomination papers is October 20.

Meanwhile, former Rajya Sabha MP Sabir Ali, who was expelled from the JD(U) 11 years ago for praising Prime Minister Narendra Modi, was on Saturday named the party's candidate from Amour Assembly seat in Bihar.

The Nitish Kumar-led party made the sudden announcement through a statement, dropping Saba Zafar, the runner-up in the 2020 Assembly polls, who was named the candidate for the seat two days ago.

Ali re-joined the party in Purnea district, where Amour is situated, in the presence of the CM's confidante Leshi Singh, a State minister who seeks to retain the adjoining Dhamdaha for the fourth time in a row.

It was not known why the party dropped Zafar, who

had won the seat in 2010 on the symbol of the BJP.

Ali, who started off as a Rajya Sabha MP of late Ram Vilas Paswan's LJP, enjoyed his second consecutive term in the Upper House on a JD(U) ticket, but ran afoul of Kumar in 2014 by praising Modi, whose national prominence had driven the Bihar CM to call off the alliance with the BJP.

Subsequently, Ali joined the BJP, but was expelled after some senior party leaders alleged that he had links with Yasin Bhatkai, an Indian Mujahideen terrorist. He was re-inducted in 2015 and made general secretary of the BJP minority cell six years later.

Ali, who is likely to file his nomination papers on Monday, would try to wrest the seat from Akhtarul Iman, the lone MLA in Bihar of Hyderabad MP Asaduddin Owaisi's AIMIM.

## Shah slams Bengal for giving red carpet to infiltrators

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA  
Patna

Union Home Minister Amit Shah on Saturday claimed that while infiltration has stopped in BJP-ruled Assam, it was continuing in adjoining West Bengal because the Government there was giving a "red carpet welcome" to illegal immigrants.

Addressing a media conclave in Patna, he also mocked Congress leader Rahul Gandhi for having given up the diatribe on "vote theft", reiterating that Special Intensive Revision (SIR) of electoral rolls would weed out "infiltrators".

"It is baffling that the Opposition has been getting a bellyache over an exercise launched by the Election Commission, which would weed out infiltrators. I am fully in support of the SIR

exercise, which would eventually take place in the entire country," he said at the conclave organised by ABP News and Hindustan.

Shah, however, bristled when reminded of what the Opposition charge that if there were infiltrators in the country, the blame ought to be on the Narendra Modi Government at the Centre, which has been in power at the Centre for 11 years.

"People sitting in Lutyens Delhi have no idea of what the borders are like. The border with Bangladesh has dense forests and mighty rivers, which are in spate during the monsoons. Fencing is impossible, and so is round-the-clock vigil. Boats for security personnel manning the borders also tend to get washed away," he said.

"My point is, when a

person from the neighbouring country enters our territory, can it not be known to the local police station and the patwari? Why do these officials not raise an alarm? Because they are under orders from above to give a red carpet (lal jaajim) welcome to these infiltrators. This is the reason why infiltration is rampant in West Bengal but has been checked in Assam," he added.

Urging the people of West Bengal to vote out CM Mamata Banerjee in next year's Assembly polls, he promised to "drive out every infiltrator" from the State.

Claiming that Gandhi has forgotten the allegation of "vote chori", Shah said in the last 15 days, "on the very few occasions that he has been seen in public", he has never made the charge.

"Perhaps the people of Bihar have made him give up on the charge. He must have been under advice based on some feedback," he said.

The allusion was to the 'Voter Adhikar Yatra' that Gandhi, the leader of the Opposition in Lok Sabha, took out in Bihar a couple of months ago, in protest against SIR, which, the INDIA bloc has been alleging, aimed at disenfranchising a large number of voters.

The former BJP president also dismissed the Opposition charge that the 130th Constitutional Amendment Bill, which provides for the removal of ministers, including the PM and CMS, if they spent 30 days or more in jail, was aimed at destabilising Governments in States not ruled by the party. "I had stepped down when a case was pending against

me in the court, and did not accept a post until I was acquitted. We have seen, in the recent past, governments being run by people behind bars. That cannot be allowed. Why is the Opposition so scared? The Bill does not stipulate that a minister be removed as soon as his name comes up in an FIR," he said.

Shah also raked up the "insult to the then Prime Minister Sardar Manmohan Singh" by Gandhi, who tore off a copy of an ordinance that would have prevented politicians from automatic disqualification upon conviction.

It was widely believed that the ordinance had been brought to "save" RID president Lalu Prasad, a fodder scam convict, who had served as the railway minister in the UPA 1 Government.

## CPI(ML) Liberation names 20 candidates, nominates all 12 sitting MLAs

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA  
Patna

The CPI(ML) Liberation, a constituent of the INDIA bloc in Bihar, on Saturday released its list of 20 candidates for the upcoming Bihar assembly elections, renominating all its 12 sitting MLAs.

The party fielded new faces in seats which it could not win in the 2020 assembly polls.

The Left party had, in the last assembly elections,

contested 19 seats and won 12 of these.

"We have maintained the spirit of coalition. Although we deserved more seats this time, we finally decided to contest only 20 assembly segments. We wanted to contest at least 24 seats this time, but it could not be materialised.

"I am confident that the 'Mahatgathbandhan' will win the polls with a thumping majority. People are tired of the NDA Government,"

CPI(ML) Liberation general secretary Dipankar Bhattacharya said after releasing the list of candidates.

Prominent party MLAs, who have been re-nominated, are Amarjeet Kushwaha, Satyadeo Ram, Gopal Ravi Das, Sandeep Saurav, Shiv Prakash Ranaj, Ajeet Kumar Singh, Birendra Prasad and Mahboob Alam.

Diya Gautam, Anil Kumar, and Phoolbabu Singh are among others.

All candidates of assembly seats, which will go to the polls in the first phase on November 6, have already filed their nomination papers, he said.

These candidates include Dhananjay from Bhore seat, Amarjeet Kushwaha from Ziradei, Satyadeo Ram from Darauli and Amarnath Yadav from Daraunda.

Ranjeet Kumar Ram has been fielded from Kalyanpur, Phoolbabu Singh from Warisnagar, and Bishwanath

Chaudhry from Rajgir.

The party nominated Diya Gautam from Digha, Gopal Ravi Das from Phulwari, Sandeep Saurav from Paliganj, Quyumuddin Ansari from Ara, Shiv Prakash Ranjan from Agiaim and Madan Singh from Tarari and Ajit Kumar Singh from Dumraon.

The elections to the 243-member assembly will be held on November 6 and 11, and the votes will be counted on November 14.

## Avoid company of sanatanis; remain cautious of RSS, Sangh Parivar: Siddaramaiah

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA  
Mysuru (Karnataka)

Karnataka Chief Minister Siddaramaiah on Saturday urged people to avoid the company of 'sanatanis' and remain cautious of the RSS and Sangh Parivar, saying they had historically opposed BR Ambedkar and the Constitution he framed.

"Keep your company right. Associate with those who stand for society, not with those who oppose social change or with 'sanatanis'," Siddaramaiah said after inaugurating the silver jubilee celebrations of Mysore University and ded-

icating the new Jnana Darshana building.

Referring to the recent incident in which a shoe was hurled at the Chief Justice of India (BR Gavai), the chief minister said, "The fact that a 'sanatani' threw a shoe at the chief justice shows that 'sanatanis' and orthodox elements still exist in society. This act should be condemned not just by Dalits but by everyone. Only then can we say that society is moving on the path of change."

Siddaramaiah also alleged that the RSS and Sangh Parivar had opposed Ambedkar's Constitution



and continue to do so, urging people to remain vigilant.

Calling Ambedkar a visionary who used knowledge

for social transformation, he said, "Ambedkar acquired knowledge to understand society and used it through- out his life to change

society." Accusing the BJP and Sangh Parivar of spreading false propaganda in Ambedkar's name, he said, "They are spreading lies that the Congress defeated Ambedkar in the elections. But the truth is what Ambedkar himself wrote in his own handwriting — 'Savarkar and Dange defeated me.' Such truths must be placed before society to expose the falsehoods of the Sangh Parivar.

Speaking about the Ambedkar School of Economics, Siddaramaiah said, "I established it so that those who study Ambedkar may walk in his path.

Ambedkar is matchless. Another Ambedkar will never be born, but everyone should follow his ideals and walk in his footsteps."

Praising Ambedkar's contribution to the nation, the chief minister said, "He studied and absorbed all the constitutions of the world and gave India the best Constitution suitable for its society."

He added that he believed in the thoughts of Buddha, Basava (12th-century social reformer), and Ambedkar.

"That is why I hope rationality and scientific thinking will grow. Don't be a person who studies

science but still practices blind beliefs," he said.

Siddaramaiah also lauded the Mysore University's Ambedkar Study Centre, which completed 25 years, and the inauguration of the 'Vishwa Jnani Ambedkar Sabha Bhavana,' calling it "a welcome step".

"Unequal opportunities have created inequality. Education is not anyone's ancestral property. What people need is opportunity. Once given, they can become scholars and intellectuals," he said, reiterating, "Ambedkar was a great visionary who used his knowledge for social transformation."

## RSS publicity material removed in Kalaburagi, BJP sees red

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA  
Kalaburagi (Karnataka)

The State BJP on Saturday lashed out at Karnataka minister Priyank Karge over the removal of RSS' publicity material in Chittapur taluk in this district ahead of a major event but the Congress leader alleged the saffron organisation had not taken permission for the programme.

The RSS had scheduled its 'Patha Sanchalana,' a route march seen as its show of strength and came at a time when the Congress Government has decided to implement rules on holding of events in public places and Government spaces. The move is seen as one aimed apparently at checking the RSS, with Karge himself flagging the need for such restrictions with the Chief Minister a few days ago.

On Saturday, RSS flags, flex, banners and posters in Chittapur Taluk were removed. Karge, the IT/BT minister, represents the Chittapur Assembly constituency.

The Minister had recently written to Chief Minister Siddaramaiah asking him to ban RSS activities in Government institutions and public premises and prohibit the Government officers and employees from taking part in its activities.

The Karnataka cabinet on Thursday decided to prohibit private organisations from holding any event in Government schools and colleges and public places without prior permission of the authorities.

Flaying Karge, BJP leader R Ashoka posted on 'X', "Is Chittapur in India or is it the Republic of the Karge family."

## Fake doctor held for illegal sex test in MP's Morena

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA  
Morena

A former peon posing as a doctor was caught red-handed while allegedly conducting illegal fetal sex determination tests in Morena, one of the districts with a low sex ratio in Madhya Pradesh, officials said on Saturday.

The accused Sanju Sharma (30) was arrested in a joint raid by the health department teams from Gwalior and Morena, along with social worker Meena Sharma, near Gadora Pura

on Joura Road in Morena city on Friday, they said.

Talking to reporters, Chief Medical and Health Officer Dr Padmesh Upadhyay said that the raid was conducted under the direction of Morena District Collector Lokesh Jangid following a tip-off.

A decoy woman was sent along with a policewoman in plain clothes to trap the accused, he said.

The team found Sharma with a portable ultrasound machine and caught him red-handed as soon as he started the process, the offi-

cial said. A case was registered at Civil Lines police station, and the machine was seized, he said, adding that the accused was handed over to Morena police for further action.

According to officials, Sharma, who was posing as a doctor, was employed as a peon with the district education department and was posted at Bilgaon Middle School.

He was suspended in November 2024 after being found involved in illegal activities, they said.

Dr Praval Pratap Singh, a

member of the Gwalior health department, said that the accused had been under surveillance for months.

"About six months ago, a man was caught in Jaipur selling a portable ultrasound machine. He had a photograph of Sanju Sharma and told the police that the latter had been conducting illegal fetal sex determination tests. We have been tracking him ever since," he said.

Dr Singh further said that on May 2, 2025, one Pankaj Tiwari and an ASHA worker were arrested for similar offences.

## Mamata writes to PM Modi, seeks revocation of Gorkha interlocutor

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA  
Kolkata

Expressing "surprise and shock" over the appointment of an interlocutor to hold discussions on the issues relating to Gorkhas, West Bengal Chief Minister Mamata Banerjee on Saturday wrote to Prime Minister Narendra Modi and demanded revocation of the decision.

Banerjee claimed her Government was not consulted before retired IPS officer Pankaj Kumar Singh was appointed as an interlocutor to hold discussions on the issues relating to Gorkhas in Darjeeling Hills, Terai and Dooars regions of West Bengal, which she said was "inconsistent with the spirit of cooperative federalism".

"This appointment has been made without any consultation with the Government of West Bengal, even though the issues under reference directly relate to the governance, peace, and administrative stability of the area under the Gorkhaland Territorial



Administration (GTA), an autonomous body under the Government of West Bengal," she said in the two-page letter.

"Such unilateral action is inconsistent with the spirit of cooperative federalism that forms one of the foundational principles of our Constitution," she added. Banerjee stressed that any initiative concerning the Gorkha community must involve the West Bengal Government to ensure sustained peace and harmony in the region.

"It may be recalled that the Gorkhaland Territorial Administration (GTA) was constituted following a Tripartite Agreement signed

on 18th July, 2011 at Darjeeling, between the Government of India, the Government of West Bengal and the Gorkha Janamukti Morcha (GJM) in the presence of the then Hon'ble Union Home Minister and the Chief Minister of West Bengal," she said.

"The Gorkhaland Territorial Administration (GTA) was created to ensure socio-economic, infrastructural, educational, cultural and linguistic developments of the hill areas, while safeguarding the ethnic identity of the Gorkhas and promoting peaceful co-existence among all communities, a hallmark of the unity and harmony of the hills," she noted.

## Telangana police constable stabbed dead by accused

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA  
Hyderabad

A 42-year-old constable was allegedly stabbed to death by a habitual offender while he was being taken to a police station in Nizamabad city, police said on Saturday.

The incident occurred between 8.30 PM and 9 PM on October 17.

E Pramod with a knife on his chest when he was being taken on a two-wheeler by the constable to the police station in Nizamabad city.

The accused fled the scene, a police official said. Pramod, who suffered injuries, subsequently died. One Sub-Inspector, who was following the constable's bike sustained injuries on his fingers when the accused also attacked him, police said.

Expressing grief over the

death of the constable, Telangana Director General of Police (DGP) B Shivadhar Reddy directed Nizamabad Police Commissioner to form special teams to arrest the accused.

The DGP further instructed Inspector General of Police (IGP) Multi Zone-I, S Chandrashekar Reddy to visit Nizamabad and monitor the situation, an official release said.

Reddy also asked the IGP to

console the constable's family members and provide them with necessary assistance.

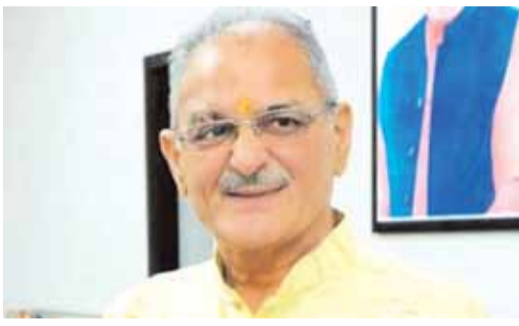
The DGP issued orders to launch a search operation and arrest the accused immediately based on the evidence available, the release said. Nizamabad Police Commissioner P Sai Chaitanya told reporters that efforts were on to nab the accused and eight teams have been formed to track him down.

## States Focus



### JMM TO REVIEW ALLIANCE IN JHARKHAND, GO SOLO IN BIHAR

The JMM on Saturday announced that it will contest the Bihar assembly polls independently, and said the party would "review" its alliance with the Congress and RJD in Jharkhand after the elections in the neighbouring state. Addressing a press conference, JMM general secretary Supriyo Bhattacharya said the party will field candidates in six seats in Bihar. Elections to 243 seats of the Bihar assembly will be held on November 6 and November 11, and the votes will be counted on November 14. "The party has decided to contest the Bihar polls on its own. It will contest six assembly seats — Chakai, Dhamdaha, Katoria (ST), Manihari (ST), Jamui and Pirpainti (SC)," Bhattacharya said.



### LADAKH LG LAUNCHES REWA 2.0 TO AID UPSC ASPIRANTS

Ladakh Lt Governor Kavinder Gupta on Saturday launched REWA 2.0 scheme here, saying this marks a significant milestone in the Union Territory's journey towards youth empowerment and equitable opportunity. He said the scheme reflects his administration's commitment to enabling 80 meritorious yet economically disadvantaged candidates from Leh and Kargil to access quality coaching for the UPSC examination. The Lt Governor stressed the need to make UPSC coaching more accessible for economically disadvantaged students from Ladakh, emphasising the importance of providing merit-based scholarships to attract talented candidates from the region who can crack the examination, secure top Government jobs, and serve the nation.

## MP Govt reinstates official linked to cough syrup deaths

GIRISH SHARMA n Bhopal

The Madhya Pradesh Government has provoked fury and disbelief by quietly reinstating a deputy controller of the State's Drug Administration, Shobhit Koshta, just four days after he was suspended in connection with the Chhindwara cough syrup disaster that claimed the lives of 24 children.

The reinstatement order, signed by Additional Chief Secretary (Health and Medical Education), returns the very official accused of oversight failures to his post at the Food and Drug Administration headquarters in Bhopal — an action many see as a brazen act of protection for an official alleged to have presided over regulatory dereliction that cost young lives.

The chilling facts of the Chhindwara case are straightforward: a cough syrup — later found to be toxic — was administered to children in Chhindwara, Madhya Pradesh, resulting in mass illness and the deaths of two dozen minors.

Laboratory and field investigations point to gross violations of drug quality and manufacturing norms.

Instead of swift, visible



accountability for those whose duties include safeguarding drug quality, the State has chosen to rehabilitate one of the officers singled out for failing to enforce crucial inspections and safety protocols.

That decision has ignited outrage among bereaved families, health professionals and anti-corruption activists.

Officials attempting to justify the reversal have leaned on the stale argument that the reinstated officer's 'experience' is needed at headquarters.

That defence has been universally derided in health and administrative circles as a fig leaf for political interference.

"Experience is not a licence

conditions will only deepen institutional complacency and send a signal that negligence carries no real consequence when it suits power.

The State had announced a probe to trace the supply chain and hold those responsible to account, but the rapid reinstatement has already undermined public confidence in the inquiry's independence.

Families of the deceased, who hoped suspension of officials would be the first step toward justice, now watch in disbelief as the machinery of governance appears to shield its own. "We buried our children and the State brought back the man who should have been investigated," said one mother, her voice raw with loss.

This is not merely an administrative misstep; it is a moral collapse. The decision to restore a suspended official within days of a catastrophe that killed 24 children reduces accountability to a negotiable political convenience.

It tells citizens, loudly and clearly, that in Madhya Pradesh bureaucracy, the lives of the vulnerable can be traded for patronage and preservation of the status quo.

Activists and insiders warn that bringing back a suspended officer under these

## Rajnath Singh to pay homage to fallen personnel at National Police Memorial

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA n New Delhi

Defence Minister Rajnath Singh will lay a wreath at the National Police Memorial here on October 21 and pay homage to the 10 valiant policemen who laid down their lives in an ambush laid by heavily armed Chinese troops at Hot Springs, Ladakh, in 1959, officials said on Saturday.

A joint parade of Central Armed Police Forces (CAPFs) and Delhi Police will be held as part of the event.

Singh will lay a wreath at National New Delhi on October 21, on Police Commemoration Day, the defence ministry said in a Statement.

"On October 21, 1959, 10 valiant policemen laid down their lives in an ambush laid by heavily armed Chinese troops at Hot Springs, Ladakh. Since then, October 21 is observed as Police Commemoration Day every year," it said.

Union Minister of State for Home Affairs, heads of CAPFs or CPOs, among others, will



also lay wreaths. Retired DGs, officers from the police fraternity and other dignitaries will also attend the event. Singh will also address the

## Sensitise airport officers on laws: SC

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA n New Delhi

There is an imminent need for jurisdictional agencies, handling affairs at international airports, to sensitise their officers in the prevailing laws before taking the drastic step of detention and arrest of an international traveller, the Supreme Court has said.

A bench of Justices Vikram Nath and Sandeep Mehta made the observations while quashing the arrest and criminal proceedings against NRI Rocky Abraham, an Indian citizen settled in Italy for over two decades.

He was detained at the Delhi airport in January 2025 for allegedly carrying a deer horn in violation of the Wildlife (Protection) Act, 1972. Abraham was arrested after airport officials found the horn in his baggage and registered an FIR under Sections 39, 49, and 51 of the Act. He remained in custody for nearly two weeks before securing bail with onerous conditions, including a ban on leaving India.

The top court noted that the article recovered from the petitioner upon DNA analysis was a reindeer horn, which does not infringe any provision of law pertaining to forest or wildlife in India.

"This court feels an imminent need to require the jurisdictional agencies concerned, handling affairs at international airports, to sensitise their officers in the prevailing laws before taking the drastic step of detention and arrest of an international traveller."

"Needless to State that any such step should not be taken in haste and must be proceeded by appropriate legal opinion and with a pragmatic approach," the bench said.

The apex court said such ill-advised actions tend to bring the reputation of the country to disrepute in the international fora, in addition to bringing the conduct of the concerned officers into breach of the human rights guarantees.

"Consequently, we hereby declare the arrest of the petitioner and so also the FIR and all proceedings sought to be taken thereunder against the petitioner to be unlawful. The same are hereby quashed."

The writ petition pending before the High Court and the proceedings, if any, pending before the jurisdictional trial court shall also stand closed. The petitioner is given liberty to avail a suitable remedy seeking damages before the appropriate forum," it said.

## Leh administration blocks silent march, suspends internet

PIONEER NEWS SERVICE n Jammu

The Union Territory Administration in Leh foiled a planned silent march, jointly called by the Leh Apex Body (LAB) and Kargil Democratic Alliance (KDA) in Leh on Saturday, after enforcing strict restrictions and suspending mobile internet services to prevent a large assembly of people.

A large number of police personnel and paramilitary forces were deployed on ground zero, and concertina wires were spread in the middle of the roads to prevent the mass assembly of people.

The call for a silent march and a three-hour-long blackout on Saturday was given by the representatives of two local bodies, LAB and KDA, to express solidarity with those who lost their lives in widespread violence on September 24.

The restrictions under Section 163 of the Bharatiya Nagrik Suraksha Sanhita (BNSS) were imposed by the District Magistrate, Leh Romil Singh Donk, on Friday, after the Superintendent of Police, Leh, received a report which claimed there is an apprehension of disturbance to peace and tranquillity, danger to human life and a possibility of law and order problem in Tehsil Leh.



As a preventive measure, the authorities also decided to suspend the mobile internet services and direct the educational institutions to remain closed.

However, Kargil witnessed a peaceful, silent march with KDA leaders condemning the restrictions in Leh, but welcomed the announcement of a judicial probe into the September 24 firing incident that left several people dead and scores of others injured.

"We have called for a silent march to peacefully highlight our demands, but the administration, by using its might, has demonstrated its failure."

"They have deployed forces in strength and did not allow the people to assemble for the march," Anjuman Imamia president and a member of

LAB, Ashraf Ali Barcha, told reporters.

He said the Government should hold talks with the people rather than employing such curbs to browbeat them.

Anjuman Moin ul Islam chief Abdul Qayoom claimed that the co-chairman of the LAB, Chering Dorjay, was also put under house arrest, appealing to people not to make any attempt to reach the venue of the march in view of the stringent security measures.

"We do not want any confrontation and will not allow anyone to fail the talks (with the central Government). We will meet again and decide the future course of action," he said.

In Kargil, hundreds of people led by KDA leaders,

including co-chairman Asgar Ali Karbalai and Sajjad Kargill, held a peaceful march from Hussaini Park to the main bus stand after passing through the main bazaar.

The participants were wearing black bands and carrying placards reiterating their demand for Statehood and safeguards under Sixth Schedule.

"We welcome the centre's decision to order a judicial inquiry into the September 24 violence in Leh and want the Government to announce unconditional release of all detained persons, including climate activist Sonam Wangchuk and adequate compensation for the families of four slain persons and those injured," Sajjad Kargill said, addressing the gathering.

Later, talking to reporters, Karbalai condemned the curbs placed on the LAB leadership and the people in Leh and said, "such oppressive steps are not acceptable to the peace-loving people of Ladakh."

"We welcome the judicial inquiry and want the Government to take two more steps before resuming dialogue. We are always in favour of talks — in the past, today and tomorrow. Let the Government announce compensation for the victims and order the release of detained persons," he said.

## Statehood for J&K will be restored on time: Shah

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA n Patna

Union Home Minister Amit Shah on Saturday promised restoration of Statehood for Jammu and Kashmir at "an appropriate time" and a "good resolution" of demands raised by people of the Union Territory of Ladakh.

Speaking at a media conclave in Patna, he also claimed that after the abrogation of Article 370, terror-infested Jammu and Kashmir has "taken a U-turn" and "no local terrorist has been recruited in the last nine months".

"This is a qualitative change that Jammu and



Kashmir, where separatism had been festering since the 1990s, witnessed. Earlier, Pakistan felt no need to send terrorists from across the border. They used to place arms in the hands of our children. Now the situation has changed. The people of Jammu and Kashmir feel

they belong to the entire country and the entire country belongs to them," Shah said at the conclave organised by ABP News and Hindustan.

"Today, democracy has been restored in Jammu and Kashmir. Panchayat and municipal polls have taken

place, and so have elections for the legislative assembly. Rajya Sabha elections will also take place at some time," the home minister added.

He was asked about a Statement by Chief Minister Omar Abdullah, who spoke of a "gulf" remaining in between Jammu and Kashmir and New Delhi on account of Statehood not being restored even after a year of his swearing in.

Shah replied, "He (Abdullah) may be saying this out of political compulsions. But Statehood will be restored at an appropriate time. And it will be done following discussions with him."

## Cabinet committee report on reservation policy accepted: Omar

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA n Srinagar

Jammu and Kashmir Chief Minister Omar Abdullah on Saturday said the Cabinet sub-committee report on the reservation policy in the Union Territory has been accepted by the Cabinet and will be forwarded to the lieutenant governor for approval.

"There is no point in getting into speculations. The only people who know what has been proposed in this are the members of the Cabinet. And

therefore, to speculate about what is being slashed, what is being cut, would not be correct at this point in time."

"The Cabinet sub-committee's report has been accepted by the Cabinet. The department has been asked to prepare a memo for the Cabinet's approval. This will then go to the LG (for approval) as all Cabinet decisions go," Abdullah told reporters here.

The Chief Minister was responding to questions about Opposition accusing

his Government of slashing the quota of RBA (resident of backward area) category in the reservation policy.

He said it would be inappropriate for him to comment on the contents of the report before it reaches the Raj Bhawan.

"For me now, before the memo has reached the LG, to start discussing the contents of that memo would be incorrect," he said.

He said the reservation report will be announced only after the lieutenant gov-

ernor approves it. Asked about some sections demanding that the report be made public, the Chief Minister said it does not work that way.

"No Government works under pressure, and I am the last person who can pressurise to do something. There is a procedure and that is being followed."

"It is not only improper, it is bordering on illegal to release the information that has not even reached the LG," he added.

## Regulation on deepfakes soon, two semiconductor units operational now: Vaishnaw

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA n New Delhi

The Government is going to bring a regulation on deepfakes soon that will take help of technology for efficient implementation, Union electronics and IT minister Ashwini Vaishnaw said on Saturday.

Speaking at a private event, the minister said that chips are key for building AI infrastructure and two semiconductor units, CG Semi and Keynes, have started produc-

tion in the country. Vaishnaw said that there are six AI models getting developed in the country, out of which two will use around 120 billion parameters and will be free from biases like western models have.

He said that AI in several cases is being used in a positive way and for fun that must be encouraged, but there is need to save the society from the significant harms which can be caused by using deepfakes where

one's voice and face can be presented to give out a message which is absolutely disconnected with the person.

"It's your right to make sure that your face and your voice should not be used in a harmful way for society. That's the thought process by which we are approaching this topic. And we will very soon bring out regulations on the deepfakes," Vaishnaw said.

He said the Government is taking a techno-legal



approach for building the framework.

"We believe that the world of AI cannot be regulated simply by passing a law. There has to be a technical solution to it. So that technical solution plus a regulation combined with it is going to be more effective than, let's say, the European Union where they simply focus on regulating things."

"Our bias is more towards innovation. As a country and as a Government, we are focused more on innova-

tion," Vaishnaw said.

The Ministry of Electronics and IT had earlier in March 2024 issued an advisory to curb potential harm from AI, especially deepfake under IT Rules 2021.

The minister said that the Government's approach is to encourage innovation in AI, which involves several building blocks from AI compute infrastructure to building indigenous chipsets.

He said that the Government has made available 38,000 GPUs (graphics

processing units) for AI development and Google has also committed \$15 billion for setting up a major AI hub.

"We are inviting other large players to come and set up the computer facility in India. Once we have the computer, then the ability to do good research and the ability to develop AI applications will significantly increase. So Google has come with a \$15 billion investment. I think Meta is also working on another investment," Vaishnaw said.

## Trump calls on Ukraine, Russia to end war

ASSOCIATED PRESS  
n Washington

US President Donald Trump on Friday called on Kyiv and Moscow to "stop where they are" and end their brutal war, following a lengthy White House meeting with Ukrainian President Volodymyr Zelenskyy.

Trump's frustration with the conflict has surfaced repeatedly in the nine months since he returned to office, but with his latest comments, he edged back in the direction of pressing Ukraine to give up on retaking land it has lost to Russia.

"Enough blood has been shed, with property lines being defined by War and Guts," Trump said in a Truth Social post not long after hosting Zelenskyy and his team for more than two hours of talks. "They should stop where they are."

Let both claim Victory, let History decide! Later, soon after arriving in Florida, where he is spending the weekend, Trump urged both sides to "stop the war immediately" and implied that Moscow keep territory it has taken from Kyiv.

"You go by the battle line wherever it is — otherwise it is too complicated," Trump told reporters. "You stop at the battle line and both sides should go home, go to their families, stop the killing, and that should be it."

The comments amounted to another shift in position on the war by Trump. In recent weeks, he had shown growing impatience with Russian President Vladimir Putin and expressed greater



President Donald Trump and Ukraine's President Volodymyr Zelenskyy as reporters ask questions before a lunch of the White House

openness to helping Ukraine win the war. After meeting with Zelenskyy in New York on the sidelines of the annual UN General Assembly last month, Trump even said he believed the Ukrainians could win back all the territory they had lost to Russia since Putin launched the February 2022 invasion. That was a dramatic shift for Trump, who had previously insisted that Kyiv would have to concede land lost to Russia to end the war.

Zelenskyy after Friday's meeting said it was time for a ceasefire and negotiations. He sidestepped directly answering a question about Trump nudging Ukraine to give up land. "The president

is right. We have to stop where we are, and then to speak," Zelenskyy said when asked by reporters about Trump's social media post, which he had not seen.

Trump's tone on the war shifted after he held a lengthy phone call with Putin on Thursday and announced that he planned to meet with the Russian leader in Budapest, Hungary, in the coming weeks.

The US president also signalled to Zelenskyy on Friday that he is leaning against

selling him long-range Tomahawk missiles, weaponry that the Ukrainians believe could be a game changer in helping prod Putin to the negotiating

table. Zelenskyy at the start of the White House talks said he had a "proposition" in which Ukraine could provide the United States with its advanced drones, while Washington would sell Kyiv the Tomahawk cruise missiles. But Trump said he was hesitant to tap into the US supply, a turnaround after days of suggesting he was seriously weighing sending the missiles to help Ukraine beat back Russia's invasion.

"I have an obligation also to make sure that we're completely stocked up as a country, because you never know what's going to happen in war and peace," Trump said. "We'd much rather have them not need

Tomahawks. We'd much rather have the war be over to be honest." In an interview with Kirsten Welker of NBC's "Meet the Press", Zelenskyy suggested the door was not closed. "It is good that President Trump did not say no, but for today, did not say yes," he said.

Zelenskyy also said "we need Tomahawks" because "it is very difficult just to operate only with Ukrainian drones". Trump's latest rhetoric on Tomahawks was certainly disappointing to the Ukrainians.

In recent days, Trump had shown an openness to selling Ukraine the Tomahawks, even as Putin warned that such a move

would further strain the US-Russian relationship.

But following Thursday's call with Putin, Trump began downplaying the prospects of Ukraine getting the missiles, which have a range of about 995 miles (1,600 kilometres). Zelenskyy had been seeking the Tomahawks, which would allow Ukrainian forces to strike deep into Russian territory and target key military sites, energy facilities and critical infrastructure.

Zelenskyy has argued that the potential for such strikes would help compel Putin to take Trump's calls for direct negotiations to end the war more seriously. Putin warned Trump during the call that supplying Kyiv with the Tomahawks "won't change the situation on the battlefield, but would cause substantial damage to the relationship between our countries", according to Yuri Ushakov, Putin's foreign policy adviser.

It was the fifth face-to-face meeting for Trump and Zelenskyy since the Republican returned to office in January. The US president said on Friday it was "to be determined" if Zelenskyy would be involved in the upcoming talks in Hungary — suggesting a "double meeting" with the warring countries' leaders was likely the most workable option for productive negotiations.

"These two leaders do not like each other, and we want to make it comfortable for everybody," Trump added. But Zelenskyy told reporters that the animus toward Putin "is not about feelings".

## Koreans linked to alleged online scams arrive home



ASSOCIATED PRESS  
n Seoul

Dozens of South Koreans allegedly involved in online scams in Cambodia arrived in South Korea on a chartered flight on Saturday to face criminal investigations.

The repatriation follows the death of a South Korean student who was reportedly forced to work in a scam centre in Cambodia. His death triggered public outrage in South Korea, prompting the government to send a delegation to the Cambodian capital, Phnom Penh, for talks on joint responses. Cambodian Interior Ministry spokesperson Touch Sokhak said earlier that 64 South Koreans were to be repatriated from Cambodia

late on Friday. After their chartered plane landed at South Korea's Incheon International Airport on Saturday morning, the returnees were seen in handcuffs, each escorted by police officers on both sides, as they were led to a parking area where security vehicles were waiting to transport them.

Most of the repatriated South Koreans were detained in Cambodia during crackdowns on scam centres and will face police investigations at home, Seoul's national security director Wi Sung-lac said. Authorities are likely seeking to determine whether they had willingly joined the organisations or were forced to work after being lured by false job ads.

## Ship ablaze after being struck off coast of Yemen



ASSOCIATED PRESS  
n Dubai

A ship caught fire Saturday in the Gulf of Aden off Yemen after being struck by a projectile, the British military said, with one report suggesting its crew was preparing to abandon the vessel. The incident comes as Yemen's Houthi rebels have been attacking ships through the Red Sea corridor. However, the rebels did not immediately claim the attack, though it can take them hours or even days to do so. The British military's United Kingdom Maritime Trade Operations centre issued an alert about the vessel, describing the incident as

taking place some 210 kilometres (130 miles) east of Aden. "A vessel was hit by an unknown projectile, resulting in a fire," the UKMTO said. "Authorities are investigating."

The maritime security firm Ambrey described the ship as a Cameroon-flagged tanker that was "en route from Sohar, Oman, to Djibouti." It said radio traffic suggested the crew was preparing to abandon ship, and a search-and-rescue effort was underway. The Houthis have gained international prominence during the Israel-Hamas war over their attacks on shipping and Israel, which they said were aimed at forcing Israel to stop fighting.

## Israel identifies remains of one more hostage

ASSOCIATED PRESS  
n Tel Aviv

Israel says the remains of another hostage that Hamas handed over the day before have been identified as Elyahu Margalit, as the Palestinian militant group looks for more bodies under the rubble in the Gaza Strip and urges more aid to be allowed into the embattled enclave.

Israel's Prime Minister's Office said on Saturday Margalit's body was identified after testing by the National Centre for Forensic Medicine, and his family has been notified. The 76-year-old was abducted on October 7, 2023, when Hamas attacked Israel, from the horse stables where he worked in Kibbutz Nir Oz. Margalit is the 10th returned hostage body since the ceasefire went into effect over a week ago. An 11th body this week, but it wasn't that of a hostage.

The effort to find the remains followed a warning from US President Donald Trump that he would green-light Israel to resume the war if Hamas doesn't live up to its end of the deal and return all hostages' bodies, totalling 28. In a statement Saturday, the hostage forum, which supports the families of those abducted, said Margalit's return brings a measure of solace to his family, but that they won't rest until the remaining 18 hostages come home. The forum says it will continue holding weekly rallies until all

MARGALIT IS THE 10TH RETURNED HOSTAGE BODY SINCE THE CEASEFIRE WENT INTO EFFECT OVER A WEEK AGO

remains are returned. The handover of hostages' remains, called for under the ceasefire agreement, has been among the key sticking points — along with aid deliveries, the opening of border crossings into Gaza and hopes for reconstruction — in a process backed by much of the international community to help end two years of devastating war in Gaza.

Hamas has said it is committed to the terms of the ceasefire deal, including the handover of bodies. However, the retrieval of bodies is hampered by the scope of the devastation and the presence of dangerous, unexploded ordnance. The group has also told mediators that some bodies are in areas controlled by Israeli troops. Margalit's body was found after two bulldozers ploughed up pits in the earth in the city of Khan Younis.

Meanwhile, Hamas had also urged mediators to increase the flow of aid into Gaza, expedite the opening of the Rafah border crossing with Egypt and start reconstruction of the battered territory. The flow of aid remains constrained because of continued closures of crossings and restrictions on aid groups.

## Trump repeats claim on India-Russia oil trade

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA  
n Washington

US President Donald Trump reiterated that India will not be buying oil from Russia, saying that New Delhi has already "de-escalated" and "more or less stopped" its oil purchases from Moscow.

While speaking to the media during a bilateral lunch with the President of Ukraine, Volodymyr Zelenskyy, on Friday, "Trump said India will not be buying oil from Russia, they have already de-escalated and they have more or less stopped." "They are pulling back. They have bought

about 38 per cent of the oil, and they won't be doing it anymore," Trump said while replying to a question.

India on Thursday said it is "broad-basing and diversifying" its sourcing of energy to meet market conditions, hours after US President Donald Trump claimed that Prime Minister Narendra Modi assured him that New Delhi will stop procuring Russian crude oil.

Washington has been maintaining that India is helping Putin to finance the war through its purchase of Russian crude oil. The relations between New Delhi and Washington have been reeling under severe stress

after Trump doubled tariffs on Indian goods to a whopping 50 per cent, including a 25 per cent additional duty for India's purchase of Russian crude oil.

India described the US action as "unfair, unjustified and unreasonable". Meanwhile, Trump has once again repeated his claims about resolving the war between India and Pakistan, adding that Prime Minister of Pakistan Shehbaz Sharif has said, "I have saved millions of lives." "The Prime Minister of Pakistan said I saved millions of lives by interceding, you look at Pakistan and India as an example that would have

been a bad one for two nuclear nations," the US President said.

Since May 10, when Trump announced on social media that India and Pakistan had agreed to a "full and immediate" ceasefire after a "long night" of talks mediated by Washington, he has repeated his claim dozens of times that he "helped settle" the conflict between India and Pakistan. India has consistently maintained that the understanding on cessation of hostilities with Pakistan was reached following direct talks between the Directors General of Military Operations (DGMOs) of the two militaries.

## Three Indians killed, one injured in boat mishap

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA  
n Maputo

Three Indian nationals were killed, one was injured, and five others rescued in a boat accident off the coast of Beira in Mozambique, the Indian High Commission here said on Saturday.

The mishap took place on Thursday. In a social media post, the Indian mission conveyed its "heartfelt condolences on the loss of lives, including of three Indian nationals," in the boat accident off Beira port.

It said the mission was in contact with the families of those who lost their lives in the mishap and is extending all possible assistance to them. In another post, the High Commission said a Consular Officer from the mission visited an Indian national who survived the accident and was receiving

medical attention in a hospital in Beira.

"Five other Indian nationals have been rescued," it added. The launch boat carrying crew members of a tanker, including 14 Indian nationals, capsized during crew transfer operations off Beira port in central Mozambique, the High Commission said in a press release on Friday.

Details about the cause of the accident and the total number of people on board were not immediately available. India and Mozambique enjoy close diplomatic and economic relations. According to the High Commission website, almost 20,000 Mozambican nationals trace their ancestry to India.

There are around 3,000 Indian nationals in the country, engaged in various Indian companies or working as professionals in Mozambican companies.

## Fire breaks out at Dhaka international airport, flight operations suspended

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA  
n Dhaka

A massive fire broke out on Saturday at the cargo complex of the international airport in Bangladesh's capital, forcing authorities to suspend all flight operations as thick black smoke engulfed the area. There were no immediate reports of casualties.

Civil Aviation Authority of Bangladesh (CAAB) said the blaze broke out in the afternoon at the Hazrat Shahjalal International Airport, prompting the deployment of over two dozen firefighting units, with additional teams rushing to the scene.

"We received the information at 2.30 pm and immediately dispatched our units to join the ones deployed at the airport," Fire Service spokesman Talha Bin Zazim



Firemen douse a fire as smoke billows from fire breaking out at the cargo complex of the Hazrat Shahjalal International Airport in Dhaka, Bangladesh

said. Thirty-six firefighting units are engaged in the operation, he said.

CAAB officials said the Air Force's fire units also joined the rescue campaign. "Landings and takeoffs of all aircraft have been suspended until further notice.

All our aircraft are confirmed safe," a CAAB spokesperson said. At least nine flights of different airlines scheduled to land in Dhaka were diverted to Shah Amanat International Airport in southeastern Chattogram and Osmani International

Airport in northeastern Sylhet. Eight of them landed in Chattogram and one in Sylhet.

According to local media reports, chemicals stored in the cargo zone posed a major challenge for firefighters.



## United plane tail collision cause no injuries

ASSOCIATED PRESS  
n Chicago

A United Airlines plane heading for its gate clipped the tail of another United aircraft at Chicago's O'Hare Airport, authorities said. No one was hurt in Friday's incident and the 113 passengers on Flight 2652 from Jackson Hole, Wyoming, were able to leave the plane normally after a delay, United officials said in a statement. The second plane had its horizontal stabiliser struck and was not moving when the planes hit, officials said. Bill Marcus, a passenger on the flight, said he didn't even realise anything happened until the pilot said there would be a delay to document something and passengers on the plane saw a number of people gather around the right wing. "I was shocked that I didn't feel something more, although when they separated the planes there was some shuddering," Marcus said.



## Paudel urges officials to enhance people's confidence

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA  
n Kathmandu

Nepal President Ramchandra Paudel on Saturday called Government officials and security chiefs to enhance public confidence that the upcoming elections will be held in a free, fair and fearless atmosphere. Elections are set to take place in the Himalayan nation on March 5, next year. During an interaction programme at the President's Office, Shital Niwas, with interim Prime Minister Sushila Karki and the council of ministers, Paudel urged them to act decisively and effectively to ensure the successful conduct of the House of Representatives election. "On the occasion, he also instructed the chiefs of all four security agencies to perform their duties with confidence and commitment toward the election," according to the President's Press Advisor Kiran Pokharel.



## The Light we Share

From clay lamps to crowded bazaars, the festival of light finds its meaning in human hands and simple joys, says SAKSHI PRIYA

The smell of freshly made laddoos drifts through the streets. A *phooljari* sparks in a child's hand, and colourful rangoli appears at every doorstep. Why do we wait for this one festival all year? Diwali asks us to engage with our surroundings and relationships in a thoughtful way, to bring order and beauty to our homes, to prepare food that nourishes both body and spirit, to connect with others, and to exchange gestures of care.

Traversing the city this week, the scale of Diwali celebrations is both overwhelming and deeply personal. At Dilli Haat, the festival takes the form of a curated showcase of India's diverse artistry. Artisans from across the country display their wares, vibrant bandhani dupattas from Rajasthan, delicate Madhubani paintings from Bihar, and hand-painted idols and terracotta lamps. Each piece carries the imprint of its maker, a story woven into its fabric or painted onto its surface. A short ride away, Lajpat Nagar's Central Market offers a different immersion — a joyous, vibrant chaos.

The narrow lanes are scented with incense and fried kachories, while festive commerce spills into every corner. Piles of shimmering jhumkas, elaborate torans, and endless strings of fairy lights create a dazzling maze for shoppers. Children tug at their



parents' hands, pointing at stalls laden with phooljaris and sparklers, their excitement marking the season's true arrival. This energy is mirrored in the bustling lanes of Sadar Bazar, while markets in Malviya Nagar offer a gentler glow. Handmade candles, organic sweets, and carefully crafted décor reflect a growing consciousness of celebration tempered with care.

The Blind School Diwali Mela offers another lens into the festival. Gifting assumes a quietly aesthetic dimension. Cups, décor, and fashion items are arranged for visual and emotional resonance. People drift from stall to stall, tasting snacks while evaluating handcrafted objects that will harmonise with their homes.

A visit to Bindapur Kumhar Garh Colony, or Kumhar Gram, in Uttam Nagar, brought the craft of Diwali into focus. Hundreds of families

have practised pottery here for generations. Ravi, a diya-maker, sits with palms coated in soft clay, guiding each lamp into existence on his wheel. "For us, Diwali begins months before anyone else," he observes. "Every diya we make carries a wish for someone's happiness." Observing Ravi, one recognises the patient labour behind the lamps that illuminate our homes, the interweaving of craft, tradition, and human intention. Purchasing from these artisans transforms consumption into reciprocity, extending the festival's generosity to the wider community. Small vendors across Sadar Bazar and Lajpat Nagar sell kurtas, jhumkas, décor, and sweets. Everyone wants to look their best, and these vendors help make the festival lively, colourful, and full of craft and joy.

Diwali is as much about care as light. Buying locally, greeting neighbours, or sharing sweets with those who serve quietly deepens the festival's meaning. Even a single diya, lit with intention, spreads warmth. As evening falls, the city glows in golden light. For those far from home, Diwali is quieter, celebrated with small rituals or calls to loved ones. The warmth of the festival reminds us that joy comes with responsibility, even for pets. In this collective light and colour, one wonders, how can every Diwali, no matter where we are, truly feel like home?

PEOPLE DRIFT FROM STALL TO STALL, TASTING SNACKS WHILE EVALUATING HANDCRAFTED OBJECTS THAT WILL HARMONISE WITH THEIR OWN HOMES



## Festival of expressions



### TEAM VIVA

Organised by REACH and supported by ONGC, Viraasat 2025 marked three decades of celebrating India's cultural traditions. The festival, inaugurated by the Governor of Uttarakhand at Dr BR Ambedkar Stadium, Kaulagarh Road, was a visual delight.

The opening night set the tone with a mesmerising santoor recital by Abhay Sopori, whose music, rooted in Kashmiri tradition, seemed to weave the audience into a state of quiet reflection. His performance flowed effortlessly into the resonant beats of tabla and the luminous dance of Manjari Chaturvedi, whose Sufi-Kathak fusion with Ustad Jawad Ali Khan drew thunderous applause. Their presentation, Patiala — A Royal Darbar, was not just a performance but a spiritual dialogue — rhythm meeting poetry, devotion merging with dance.

Viraasat 2025 was a resounding success, seamlessly bridging the traditional with the contemporary, the local with the global. The festival celebrated India's classical and folk heritage while welcoming international troupes from Sri Lanka, Uzbekistan, Kyrgyzstan,

and Belarus, reflecting a shared love for artistic expression. Dehradun's own folk roots shone on stage through colourful Jaunsari dances and Kumaoni music, captivating audiences with raw energy and authenticity.

Beyond performances, Viraasat offered an immersive experience, bustling craft bazaars, live art demonstrations, regional cuisines, and interactive workshops drew people of all ages. A superbike rally, vintage vehicle display, and a vibrant youth corner ensured the festival was as dynamic as it was rooted in tradition. This blend of heritage and modernity made Viraasat more than a cultural fair — it was a celebration of life itself. Perhaps most striking was its spirit of inclusion. Artists, artisans, and audiences shared in a dialogue between generations, elders finding nostalgia in familiar ragas, and youth discovering beauty in traditions once distant. The Governor called Viraasat "a living symbol of India's diversity and traditions," a reminder that culture thrives when embraced by all. Viraasat 2025 proved that art is meant to be experienced, shared, and lived, a true celebration of India's enduring heritage.



## Whispers of light through art



### TEAM VIVA

Beneath the dappled shade of Nehru Park's towering trees, the IMAGINE — The Art & Design Fair 2025 has turned the PSOI Club lawns into a living canvas of creativity. Curated by Uchaan Arts, the fair is a sensory celebration — a place where art, design, and imagination converge under open skies. From vibrant installations to immersive pavilions, IMAGINE 2025 is an experience — one that

invites Delhi's art lovers to wander, wonder, and rediscover beauty in the everyday. Amidst the hum of conversations and the rustle of autumn leaves, one corner draws visitors into an unexpected calm — the booth of artist Meenu Goyal.

Subtle yet striking, her space glows softly, like sunlight filtered through foliage. It's less a display and more a sanctuary — where colour breathes, silence speaks, and nature gently reclaims its voice. For Meenu, nature has always been more than a muse; it has been a healer. Her artistic journey began from a moment of darkness. As a teenager, she suffered a temporary loss of vision due to meningitis — an experience that could have eclipsed her world but instead awakened her inner light. During recovery, she found solace in observing the smallest rhythms of nature — the sway of leaves,

the play of light on water — and began translating that stillness onto paper. With the guidance of a nurturing teacher, she discovered that her brush could express what words could not: resilience, grace, and gratitude.

Her signature style is meditative — landscapes that flow seamlessly between the real and the imagined, rendered in delicate hues of watercolour, graphite, and acrylics. Each painting carries a quiet ecological message — a reminder of humanity's bond with the earth and the need to preserve it. "When I paint," she says, "I listen to nature — its whispers, its silences. Every colour is a conversation." At IMAGINE 2025, Meenu Goyal unveils her latest series, exploring inner and outer harmony. Her fluid, layered works create space for stillness, allowing nature and colour to speak directly to the soul.



## A conversations between form and feeling

Raja Segar's Delhi debut, presented by IndiGalleria, invites viewers into a world where colour breathes, geometry flows, and human emotion becomes rhythm on canvas, says SAKSHI PRIYA



There are moments when art stops being something you look at and becomes something you feel, a pulse, a breath, a movement that enters quietly and stays. *Rhythmic Sagas*, presented by IndiGalleria, held that pulse within its walls. It felt like a dialogue between form and spirit, a conversation that invited viewers to listen through colour and silence. The exhibition, curated by Aakshat Sinha, created a space where stillness met movement. The audience, from seasoned collectors to curious students, experienced Segar's art with quiet curiosity. Each person seemed to find a different



rhythm in the same work, a sign of how alive the paintings are. As one stepped in, the paintings began to speak. Raja Segar, the internationally acclaimed Sri Lankan artist, presented his first solo exhibition in Delhi, revealing a study in rhythm — rhythm of line, rhythm of emotion, and rhythm of existence itself. His visual language blends geometry with grace. His style of figurative cubism is immediately recognisable yet refreshingly personal. The canvases, populated by dancers, musicians, and tea pluckers, draw from daily life and mythology alike. There is a sense of celebration and stillness coexisting in every frame. The figures, fractured yet whole, vibrate with quiet energy. Each angle, curve, and shade seems to hold its own rhythm, creating compositions that feel both spontaneous and deliberate. The core of the collection, as the title suggests, is rhythm.

You see the *Accordion Player* or the *Sitarist*, and feel the oom-pah-pah of the bellows and the soulful thrum of the strings. The *musician series*, from the intimate

*Young Musicians* triptych to the larger-than-life *The Band of Michael Jackson*, demonstrates Segar's genius for visualising sound. He paints the act of making music, where figures bend, sway, and melt into their soundscapes. Segar's subjects inhabit a glorious everyday spiritual theatre. His representations of deities, such as *Dark Ganesha* and *Laxmi*, offer a refreshing departure from conventional iconography. They retain a mythic majesty while being grounded, contemporary, and imbued with playful vitality. Similarly, his depictions of labour, as seen in the various *Tea Pluckers-2* paintings, elevate routine into the epic.

Segar, a celebrated Sri Lankan artist, uses the canvas to create a cross-cultural dialogue. His paintings leave silence where noise once lived, reminding viewers that rhythm exists in colour, gesture, and the unspoken dialogue between artist and observer. *Rhythmic Sagas* affirmed that true art resonates, touching what is deeply human. Segar's debut became an experience of heart and thought.



THE EXHIBITION IS A REVELATION. SEGAR'S MASTERY OF BOTH ACRYLIC AND OIL ON CANVAS ALLOWS HIM TO NAVIGATE SCALE AND TEXTURE WITH REMARKABLE FLUENCY

FOR SUGGESTIONS, FEEDBACK OR ADDITIONAL INFORMATION, PLEASE WRITE TO US AT FEATURES@DAILYPIIONEER.COM

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## FROM THE WORLD

### KENYA

#### Heavy security after violence

Heavy security has been deployed to Kenya's western city of Kisumu ahead of the final public viewing of the body of former PM Raila Odinga, after five people died in the last two public funeral events. Military officers, regular police and air surveillance teams were present Saturday at the soccer stadium where thousands of mourners stayed overnight awaiting the opportunity to view Odinga's body. Odinga was a respected and significant figure in Kenya and beyond, a veteran politician lauded by many. He died at the age of 80 and is expected to be buried Sunday at his rural home in Bondo in western Kenya. Odinga's supporters, known for their passion and resilience, have been turning out by the thousands since his body arrived in the country on Thursday.

### UKRAINE

#### Work begins to restore power

Work has begun to repair the damaged power supply to Ukraine's Zaporizhzhia nuclear power plant, the head of the UN's nuclear watchdog said. The repairs are hoped to end a precarious four-week outage that saw it dependent on backup generators. Russian and Ukrainian forces established special ceasefire zones for repairs to be safely carried out, said the head of the International Atomic Energy Agency, Rafael Grossi. He hailed the restoration of off-site power as "crucial for nuclear safety and security." "Both sides engaged constructively with the IAEA to enable the complex repair plan to proceed," Grossi said in a statement. Ukrainian Energy Minister Svitlana Grynchuk confirmed that Ukrainian specialists were involved in restoring power lines.

## Pak strikes terrorist hideouts in Afghanistan

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA  
n Islamabad

Pakistan launched fresh air strikes targeting terrorist hideouts in Afghanistan, killing several people, including three cricketers, casting a shadow over the expected talks in Doha amid a fragile ceasefire that had temporarily halted hostilities between the two sides.

The strikes followed a gun-and-bomb attack by terrorists at a military installation in North Waziristan, and just hours after Islamabad and Kabul extended their two-day ceasefire, the Dawn reported on Saturday.

There was no statement from Pakistan's military, but the Hafiz Gul Bahadur group of Tehreek-e-Taliban Pakistan (TTP) had claimed responsibility for the early Friday attack on Khaddi Fort in Mir Ali.

The security sources said they foiled the attack by eliminating all four attackers without suffering any loss.

Pakistan late Friday targeted the Angoor Adda region and also hideouts across Afghanistan's Urgan and Barmal districts of Pakhtika province, as security sources claimed that precision strikes were conducted against hideouts of the Hafiz Gul Bahadur group, reportedly killing dozens of fighters, the paper said. The Afghanistan Cricket Board claimed that three cricketers from Urgan District were killed in the strike on Pakhtika Province.

Three players (Kabeer, Sibghatullah and Haroon) alongside five other fellow countrymen from Urgan District were killed in the attacks,



Locals inspecting the site of a cross-border attack by the Pakistani army in Afghanistan's eastern Pakhtika province AP

while seven others were injured, ACB said in a statement issued on Saturday. Following the incident, the Afghanistan Cricket Board has decided to withdraw from participating in the upcoming Tri-Nation T20I Series involving Pakistan, scheduled to be played in late November.

Meanwhile, Pakistani security sources pointed out that the ceasefire agreement between the Afghan Government and Pakistan did not preclude strikes on terror outfits and their hideouts, the Dawn reported.

The fresh strikes followed as representatives from the two countries were expected to meet in Doha, where the Qatari Government was set to make an effort for mediation. The paper reported that the fresh exchanges on Friday night cast a shadow over the ceasefire, which had been extended

just a few hours earlier, as well as the planned Doha talks.

"The ceasefire has been mutually extended by both Pakistan and Afghanistan till the end of the talks in Doha, Qatar. The talks are ready to begin [on Saturday]," a security source said on Friday at the conclusion of the initial 48-hour truce, which had been in effect since Wednesday.

No bilateral initiative for talks emerged during the first phase of the truce. However, Qatar, which, along with Saudi Arabia, had pushed both sides to halt hostilities, offered to host their meeting in Doha.

Reports from Afghanistan suggest that the Taliban delegation would include Defence Minister Mullah Yaquub Mujahid and intelligence chief Mullah Wasiq. Pakistan's Foreign Office did not comment on the matter, but a late evening

meeting between National Security Adviser and ISI chief Lt Gen Asim Malik and Foreign Minister Ishaq Dar suggested that Gen Malik may travel to Doha. In a related development, Afghan authorities on Friday handed over the bodies of seven Pakistani citizens, including two security personnel, who were killed in the Chaman sector of Balochistan on Tuesday.

There was outrage in Pakistan after videos were circulated on social media, showing Afghan soldiers dragging the bodies of security personnel and desecrating them. Foreign Office spokesperson responding to reports that bodies of some Pakistani soldiers had been mutilated said: "This kind of savagery, bestiality, is condemnable, and it needs to be condemned in the strongest words possible. This is beyond the pale."

### CHOOSE BETWEEN PEACE — CHAOS: ASIM

Islamabad: Army chief Field Marshal Syed Asim Munir on Saturday warned Afghanistan to choose between "peace and chaos" as it asked Kabul to take firm and immediate action against terrorists using Afghan soil to launch attacks inside Pakistan.

Munir's statement came amidst Pakistan launching fresh air strikes targeting terrorist hideouts in Afghanistan late Friday, hours after Islamabad and Kabul extended their two-day ceasefire that had temporarily halted hostilities between the two sides. Choose between "peace and chaos", the Chief of Army Staff (COAS) said, referring to Afghanistan while addressing a graduation ceremony of passing out army cadets at the Pakistan Military Academy (PMA) Kakul at Abbottabad in Khyber Pakhtunkhwa province. The Taliban regime, he said, should act decisively against militants operating from its soil for terrorist activities in Pakistan. All proxies using Afghan soil would be met with a response to "raise them to dust", Munir warned. Friday's strikes by Pakistan followed a gun-and-bomb attack by terrorists at a military installation in North Waziristan, claimed by the Hafiz Gul Bahadur group of Tehreek-e-Taliban Pakistan (TTP).

## Pakistan-Afghan war easy to Solve: Trump



Locals digging graves for people killed in a cross-border airstrike by the Pakistani army in Afghanistan's eastern Pakhtika province PTI

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA  
n Washington

### TWO TTP TERRORISTS KILLED IN KPP

Amid escalating hostilities between Afghanistan and Pakistan, US President Donald Trump claimed that the conflict between the two countries will be an "easy" one for him to solve, "if" he had to solve it.

While speaking to the media during a bilateral lunch with the President of Ukraine, Volodymyr Zelenskyy, on Friday, Trump said, "I do understand Pakistan attacked or there is an attack going on with Afghanistan, that's an easy one for me to solve if I have to solve that." Trump once again claimed to have saved millions of lives while assuring that he will have "success" in resolving the conflict between Afghanistan and Pakistan.

"I like stopping people from being killed. I have saved millions and millions of lives, and I think we are going to have success with this war," the US president said. Pakistan launched fresh air strikes targeting terrorist hideouts in Afghanistan, casting a shadow over the expected talks in Doha amid a fragile ceasefire that had temporarily halted hostilities between the two sides. The strikes followed a gun-and-bomb attack by terrorists at a military installation in North Waziristan, and just hours after Islamabad and Kabul extended their two-day ceasefire, the Dawn reported on Saturday.

Meanwhile, Trump has once again expressed dismay at not receiving the Nobel Peace Prize despite resolving "eight wars". "You know we resolved eight others, it's funny how people say this, if you get this one Every time I do one, they forget about that one. I solved eight wars," Trump

**Peshawar:** Pakistani security forces on Saturday killed two terrorists belonging to the banned TTP terror outfit in an intelligence-based operation in the restive Khyber Pakhtunkhwa province (KPP). The operation was conducted in the Mughal Kot sector of the Bannu district, according to security forces. It specifically targeted the network of the Tariq Kachhi group of "Fitna al-Khawarij", they said. The Pakistan government last year notified the banned Tehreek-e-Taliban Pakistan (TTP) as "Fitna al-Khawarij", a reference to a group in earlier Islamic history which was involved in violence. Security officials confirmed that a large cache of arms and ammunition was recovered from the slain terrorists. The Tariq Kachhi group has been actively involved in terrorist activities over the past two years and was also engaged in extortion. The group facilitated cross-border infiltration of terrorists from Afghanistan into Pakistan, according to the sources.

said "Every time I solve one, they say if you solve the next one, you are going to get the Nobel prize," Trump added. However, the US President was quick to add that he did not do it for the Nobel while claiming that he does not know Maria Corina Machado, the Nobel Peace Prize winner for 2025, without naming her. "I did not get the Nobel prize. Somebody got it was a very nice woman, very nice, I don't know who she is, but she was very generous, so I don't care about all that stuff, I just care about saving lives," Trump said.

## Two suspects held for Sikh woman's rape in UK

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA  
n London

Two people, a man and a woman, have been arrested on suspicion of the racially aggravated rape of a British Sikh woman in Oldbury, in the West Midlands region of England last month.

West Midlands Police said on Friday that the arrests were made in connection with a second rape of a woman in her 30s at Halesowen in the same county on Thursday night, which is not being treated as racially aggravated.

The pair were later additionally arrested in connection with the attack on the British Sikh woman in her 20s who reported being sexually assaulted at Tame Road in Oldbury, Sandwell, on September 9.



"A 49-year-old man and a 65-year-old woman from Sandwell were arrested this morning on suspicion of rape," the police said in a statement on Friday. "We were called at around 7pm (local time Thursday) after a woman in her 30s reported she has been attacked in Hurst Green Park. This incident is not being treated as racially aggravated.

The man and woman have this afternoon (Friday) subsequently been arrested in connection with a rape on Tame Road, Oldbury on Tuesday, September 9. They remain in custody for questioning," the statement said.

The sexual assault last month, involving two white male attackers who allegedly told the victim "you don't belong in this country, get out", had sent shockwaves across the

community. UK's crime-fighting charity Crimestoppers offered up 20,000 pounds as reward for information leading to the arrest and conviction of those responsible for the racially aggravated rape.

British Sikh organisations also came together on social media to offer a financial reward of 10,000 pounds for any footage which could lead to the conviction of the perpetrators behind the attack.

The incident went on to be raised in the UK Parliament, with Home Secretary Shabana Mahmood leading condemnation of the attack.

"The horror of a sexual assault motivated by race or ethnicity is absolutely appalling. I am sure that the whole House will join me in condemning such crimes in the strongest possible terms.

## Prince Andrew gives up royal titles

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA  
n London

Britain's Prince Andrew, the younger brother of King Charles III, has relinquished the title of Duke of York and all other royal honours after a "discussion" with the monarch, amid "continued accusations" around his association with American sex offender Jeffrey Epstein.

The scandal-hit 65-year-old had already stopped using the "His Royal Highness (HRH)" title, having stepped back as a working royal earlier. On Friday, he announced that all his other titles will also become inactive, even as he continued to "vigorously" deny all accusations against him.

As a son of the late Queen Elizabeth II, he will retain the title of "Prince" in accordance with Letters Patent issued in 1917 by King George V, which were updated by his mother in 2012. "In discussion with



Britain's Prince Andrew FILE PHOTO

the King, and my immediate and wider family, we have concluded the continued accusations about me distract from the work of His Majesty [Charles] and the royal family," Prince Andrew said in a statement issued by Buckingham Palace.

"I have decided, as I always have, to put my duty to my family and country first. I stand by my decision five years ago to stand back from public life. "With His

Majesty's agreement, we feel I must now go a step further. I will therefore no longer use my title or the honours which have been conferred upon me. As I have said previously, I vigorously deny the accusations against me," he said.

Andrew's ex-wife and close friend, Sarah Ferguson, will also no longer use her title of the Duchess of York, but the titles of their daughters, Princess Beatrice and Eugenie, remain unaffected.

The decision comes amid renewed pressure on Andrew over reports of his relationship with the convicted paedophile financier Epstein and also links with an alleged Chinese spy.

A memoir entitled 'Nobody's Girl' by Virginia Giuffre, who had sued the senior royal back in August 2021 over an alleged sexual assault and died in April, is expected to throw up further allegations when it is released posthumously next week. Prince Andrew, meanwhile, is expected to continue staying at the Royal Lodge in Windsor as part of a private tenancy from the King's Crown Estate until 2078. Following his announcement, Andrew will also give up his knighthood as a Knight Grand Cross of the Royal Victorian Order (GCMVO) and his Garter role as a Royal Knight Companion of the Most Noble Order of the Garter.

## Floods in Mexico another sign of need for improved severe weather warnings

ASSOCIATED PRESS  
n Mexico City

The most recent torrential rains in east-central Mexico, which have left at least 72 dead and dozens more missing, have raised questions again about the Government's ability to alert people to severe weather in time. Authorities continue to describe the days of torrential rain last week that set off landslides and river flooding as unpredictable.

Residents talk about never having seen anything like it. But researchers say what was considered normal before no longer exists because climate change has accelerated these events and made them more frequent. And that requires preparation. "We're being more and more affected by these phenomena and we



can't go on like this, failing by not knowing what to do and not having adequate warning," said Christian Dominguez, a researcher at the Atmosphere and Climate Change Institute at Mexico's National Autonomous University. She recalled that last year's crises were drought-related, and this

year, it's the rain. It is a pending issue for Mexico and for countries with more resources and advanced technology, like the United States, which experienced a devastating flash flood in Texas this year that killed at least 136 people. Experts say society and Governments appear to be

stuck in the past and have not accepted that severe weather is now the norm.

In Mexico's case, its president for the past year, Claudia Sheinbaum, is a trained scientist with a background in climate change. But while she expressed willingness this week to review prevention protocols, she didn't mention climate change and insisted it was impossible to predict with precision how much rain was going to fall in some places.

"The language being used has to be considered" in how to communicate the dangers in an event, according to Carlos Valdés, former head of Mexico's National Disaster Prevention Centre. "The first thing we have to do is recognise that there is a change the atypical is now the most typical."



## US Treasury Dept sanctions Ex-Haitian security head

ASSOCIATED PRESS n New York

The US Treasury Department slapped sanctions on the former head of Haitian presidential security when the leader of the Caribbean nation was assassinated, and the leader of a Haitian gang Friday.

The agency said the two men supported a coalition of gangs that the Trump administration designated as a foreign terrorist organisation earlier this year. The sanctions were placed on Dimitri Herard, a former police officer who was imprisoned in connection with the assassination of former President Jovenel Moïse in 2021.

The Treasury wrote in a statement that since he escaped from prison in 2024, he "colluded" with Haiti's most powerful gang coalition, Viv Ansanm, which has brought the country to its knees in recent years.



## UK condemns violence against religious minorities in Bangladesh

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA n London

The UK Government has "strongly condemned" instances of hate or violence directed towards minority religious communities in Bangladesh and said it is committed to working towards a democratic transition in the country. A statement in the House of Commons in this regard came on Thursday in response to opposition Conservative Party MP Bob Blackman highlighting a recent report by community organisation Insight UK into the persecution faced by Hindus in Bangladesh. Blackman, who chairs the All Party Parliamentary Group for British Hindus, told UK MPs that the report highlights the oppression being faced by the community in the lead up to the festival of Diwali. "We condemn all instances of hate or violence directed towards minority religious communities," responded Alan Campbell.

"GOOD FOOD ENDS WITH  
GOOD TALK"  
— GEOFFREY NEIGHBOR



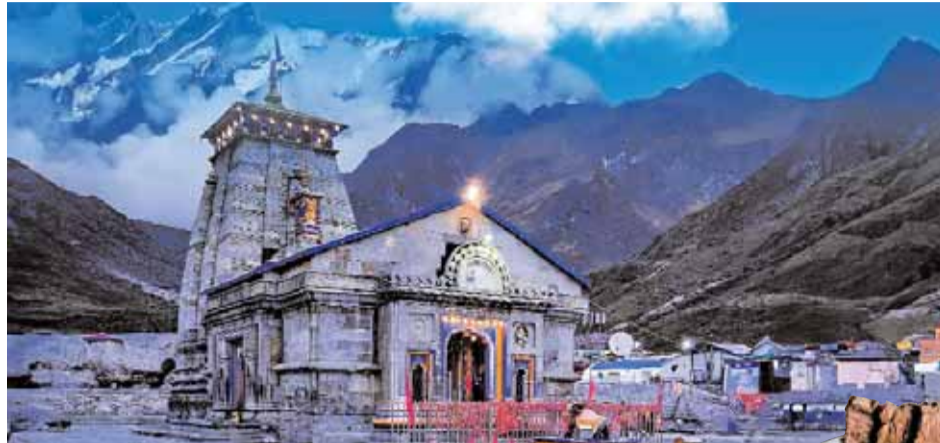
ANIL  
RAJPUT

# Between peaks and plates: The story of Uttarakhand's culinary heritage

Nestled in the lap of the majestic snow peaked Himalayas, Uttarakhand is a land where natural splendor, ancient history, and vibrant culture blend seamlessly. Known as Devbhumi, the Land of the Gods, it is home to sacred shrines in Badrinath and Kedarnath, and is where the holy Ganga and Yamuna rivers originate, whose picturesque routes converge at the revered towns of Haridwar and Rishikesh. From the snow-clad peaks of Nanda Devi to the misty slopes of Mussoorie, from the serene lakes of Nainital to the lush valleys of Kumaon and Garhwal, its geography offers breathtaking views that have long drawn travelers and pilgrims alike. The state's rich heritage is reflected in its traditional wooden architecture, folk music, and festivals that celebrate harmony with nature. Completing the sensory experience is Uttarakhand's simple yet intricate and flavorful cuisine—marked by unique dishes like *kafuli* (made from leafy greens) *bhatt ki churkani* (made with black soybean), and *bal mithai* (made with roasted *khoya* and poppy seeds) — that embodies the simplicity and warmth of its mountain life.

The high ridges, deep green valleys, and glacier — born rivers of Uttarakhand make a landscape fit for picture postcards and dictates a way of life; here the contrasts of its landscape and climate constrains crops, fuel, and mobility, making its cuisine an instrument of survival as well as celebration. The terraces line the mountainside in stepped rows, each season determining what may be sown and what must be stored. In the kitchens of the hills there is an economy of heat and time: slow fires, measured additions of water, roasted grains for longevity, and dairy preserved as *ghee* and *khoya*. Such adaptations refine local technique — roasting to deepen aroma and deter pests, coarse grinding to speed cooking, and tempering with local seeds to lift simple textures. From these constraints rise the state's characteristic tastes — bitter greens are transformed into silky stews, *dal* (lentils) into smoky pastes, millets pressed into dense rotis, sweets that celebrate surplus—tastes that define the region's exotic and unique palette.

The story of the region begins long before Uttarakhand was carved out from Uttar Pradesh and became the 27th State of the Indian Union on 9 November, 2000. In the early centuries, the hills were dotted by tribal polities and small chiefdoms linked across passes by seasonal trade in salt, wool, and metal. Monetary and inscriptional evidence shows that the *Kuninda*, also known as *Kulinda*, was an early Himalayan kingdom that existed from the 2nd century CE to the 3rd century CE. The kingdom finds mention in the *Mahabharata* and its people were known for their hardness and warrior skills. Its coins show Indo-Greek influence and were the earliest that featured symbols of goddess *Lakshmi* and Buddhist stupas. By the early medieval period, a powerful regional polity arose under the *Katyuri* house, which by many accounts exercised sway from roughly the 7th or 8th century until the 11th or early 12th century; the *Katyuri* capitals at *Joshimath* and later *Bajinath* became focal points for temple patronage and valley integration. After the *Katyuri* decline, the polity fragmented into numerous smaller principalities and fortified settlements, a process that over the 12th to 14th centuries produced the political patchwork that would become *Garhwal* and *Kumaon*. In *Garhwal*, *Kanak Pal*, a prince from *Malwa*, is credited in chronicles with establishing what became the *Panwar* dynasty. Born of the ancient *Parmar* clan, the *Panwar* (that belonged to the *Rajput* clan) carried forward a legacy of courage and statecraft that spanned almost a thousand years. Their sovereignty stood firm until 1803, when the *Gorkha* conquest brought a new



chapter only to subsequently come under British influence. The *Chand* dynasty, on the other hand, first established its capital in *Champawat* and later moved to *Almora*, building administrative and cultural institutions that connected the hill trade routes with markets beyond the mountains. These dynastic formations structured agrarian patronage, temple building, and the seasonal flows of pilgrims and traders—and the pattern of conflict and commerce through medieval centuries established methods of production and preservation that were carried into the modern age.

The later 18th and early 19th centuries brought convulsive change across the hills. *Nepali* forces, often referred to broadly as *Gorkha* armies, moved west from the *Kathmandu* valley and by 1791 had annexed large parts of *Kumaon*; by the early years of the 19th century, *Garhwal* too came under *Nepali* control in a period remembered locally for harsh rule and a focus on resource extraction. The *Anglo-Nepalese* conflict of 1814-1816 ended this chapter: *British East India Company* campaigns under generals such as *David Ochterlony* liberated *Garhwal* and *Kumaon* from *Nepali* occupation, and the subsequent *Treaty of Sugauli* (signed 4 March 1816) fixed new boundaries, after which the *British* exercised political authority in the plains and a degree of administrative oversight in the hills. In the decades that followed, colonial governance introduced new revenue regimes, opened certain roads and later rail links in the plains, and altered market access in ways that would shift the economics of hill agriculture and craft. It was during this time that *Haridwar* and *Rishikesh* began to become popular as pilgrimage and trade towns, while the *British* founded hill stations such as *Mussoorie* and *Nainital*, introducing tourism and elite schools and residences to the region as an extension of colonial leisure and health retreat. These changes brought both opportunity and burden: trade in certain com-

modities expanded, but colonial accounting and infrastructural priorities often constrained local autonomy and distorted a fragile ecological system, and the well established seasonal patterns of trade across passes had to adjust to the new political realities.

*Trans-Himalayan* routes connected the *Uttarakhand* valleys to *Tibet* and *Nepal*, carrying salt, borax, wool, and dried meat in one direction and grains, sugar, and metal goods in the other. A network of mule tracks and seasonal passes enabled not only ritual movement to shrines but also commercial flows that enriched towns such as *Almora*, *Champawat*, *Haridwar*, and *Rishikesh*. Markets grew along the rivers and pilgrim towns where merchants exchanged hill produce for plains goods. These market centres served as conduits for culinary exchange. Rice, sugar, and refined ingredients moved upward when conditions permitted, while millets, pulses, and medicinal herbs moved downward. Years and frequent movement and contact of traders and pilgrims, helped shape tastes and enabled the occasional refinement that produced the urban sweets and confectionery distinct to the *Kumaon* towns and the temple towns of the plains.

Religious life is woven into this topography. The hills are called *Devbhumi* for a reason: rivers that originate here are worshipped, and temple circuits move through mountain passes into a sacred geography that draws pilgrims across seasons. The *Char Dham* shrines and innumerable local temples create a seasonal flow: pilgrims ascend in devotional waves, traders and caterers follow, and roadside kitchens and small bakeries evolve to meet their demands. *Haridwar* and *Rishikesh*, at the foothills, form the spiritual thresholds—hosting the *Kumbh Mela*, *Ganga Aarti*, and countless festivals where food becomes an extension of faith. Temple offerings and festival foods follow prescriptions of purity in many instances. *Sattvic* rations without onion

and garlic are common in pilgrim kitchens, and this norm influences local culinary practice because a pilgrim's need for easily digested, portable food creates a demand for such preparations. At the household level, ritual obligations structure the calendar. First grains are boiled and offered to deities before any seasoning is added; harvest festivals distribute both grains and sweets as devotion and thanksgiving; and the act of preserving—drying greens, making lentil powders, storing *ghee*—has a ceremonial as well as practical dimension. The interplay of spiritual practice and caloric necessity produces a cuisine that can be both very plain and nourishingly sustaining.

From that religious and economic terrain the region's kitchen practices arise, and it is built around a small set of resilient crops and techniques. *Mandua* (finger millet) is central because it grows where wheat and rice are unable to. Its dense roti supply calcium and fibre and serve as the backbone of meals in higher altitudes. *Gahat* (horse gram) and *Bhatt* (black soybean) are pulses prized for their ability to be stored over a long period of time and concentrated protein.

*Jhangora* (barnyard millet) augments porridge tradition and *cheer*. Dairy in forms of *dahi* (curd), *mattha* (whey), and *ghee* provide fat, flavor, and preservation. Tempering is characteristically local: *jakhya* seeds and mustard oil give a signature tempering and aroma while demanding little fuel. The techniques that recur across valleys are telling: roasting to extend shelf life and deepen taste, coarse grinding to reduce cooking times, slow simmering to extract maximum calories and gelatinize starches, and preservation methods such as drying and pressing that protect food through winter scarcity. These culinary protocols are not mere tradition but practical methods adapted to steep slopes and short seasons.

In *Uttarakhand* one most often hears of two major regional cuisines, *Garhwali* and *Kumaoni*. But beneath that duality lies an array of regional dishes tied to valleys, tribal groups and local ecologies. *Garhwali* cuisine tends to manifest in rugged, intensely earthy plates: greens and wild herbs dominate, pulses like *gahat* (horse gram) and *urad* (black gram) are roasted or ground, and tempering with *jakhya* seeds (wild mustard) is frequent. The flavor is delicate, the textures coarse yet nourishing. *Kumaoni* cuisine shares the same set of grains, pulses and dairy, but it leans more into sweetness, inventive use of *Bhatt* (black soybean), and rice-based dishes: its lentil stocks (*ras* or *thhatwani*) are lighter, and its sweets like *Bal Mithai* and *Singori* are more popular. In micro-cuisines such as *Jaunsar-Bawar*, *Bajarwali* or in the high *Bhotia* belts, local dishes depart further: mushrooms, stews adapted to carry long on trade routes, and foraged greens or herbs unknown elsewhere appear. These smaller cuisines may use slightly different leaves, spice blends or preservation techniques. What unites them is an economy of fuel, a minimalism in spice, and a focus on texture and nutrition; what distinguishes them is which pulses, grains or herbs each valley can sustain, and which sweets or seasonal tastes that community has developed over time.

In *Garhwali* kitchens you see mornings break into cuisine perfected over generations and time. *Kafuli* is popular when winter arrives: a carefully curated dish of *palak* (spinach) and *methee* (*fenugreek*) mashed, simmered in iron with *ghee*, *lessan* (garlic), *adrak* (ginger) and a bit of rice paste so the curry holds warmth. *Chainsoo* is the

preferred dish at dusk: *urad* (black gram) *dal* roasted till smoky, cracked into coarse powder, then stirred into a velvety paste over low fire until its aroma lingers in the hearth. *Phanu* comes at lunchtime or dinner: pulses like *gahat*, *moong* (*mung bean*) and *urad* soaked overnight, ground gently and stewed with mild tempering into a hearty binding stew. *Aloo ke Gutke* appears in twilight kitchens: potato cubes boiled, then tossed into hot mustard oil with *jeera* (*cumin*) or *jakhya* and red chili until edges gently crisp. *Kandali ka Saag* finds its way to the table when nettle leaves are gathered: boiled, drained, tempered into a green side. *Jhangora ki Kheer* closes cold evenings: *jhangora* millet cooked in milk with *cardamom* and nuts for a sweet, soothing finish.

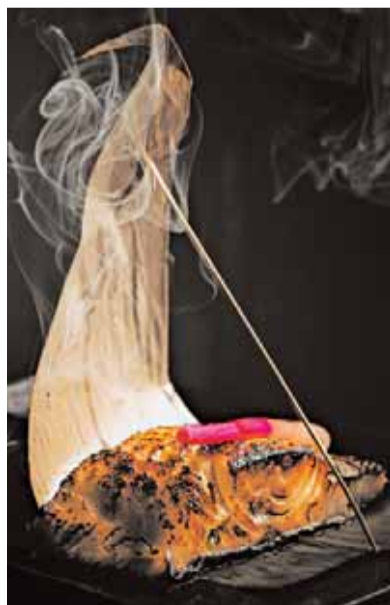
In *Kumaon* the rhythm is gentler but no less bold. *Bhatt ki Churkani* graces family dinners: *Bhatt* mashed with garlic and soft spice into a deeply nutty curry. *Dubuk* (or *Dubke*) is warmth in a bowl on cold nights: *Bhatt* and rice merged into a soft mash that comforts both body and spirit. *Baadi*, made from *mandua* flour and hot water, becomes dumplings or thick porridge eaten for lunch or dinner, carried forward with *ghee* or *curry*. *Rus* or *Thhatwani* is served early: lentil stock lightly thickened with rice paste and poured over rice, light yet sustaining. And sweetness rules its own hours: *Bal Mithai's* caramel *khoya* cubes rolled in sugar beads appear in markets and festivals; *Singori's* *khoya* wrapped in *maalu* leaf cones is a fragrant treat; *Arsa* and *Gulgula* crisp in village kitchens, their sugary crackle echoing laughter and festive air. The *Garhwali* palate leans toward smoky greens and earthy restraint; the *Kumaoni* dish reveals the pulse of sweetness, ever capable of turning scarcity into delight.

Tourism today continues to shape these exchanges. Visitors who arrive for the peace of *Rishikesh's* riverbanks or the mists of *Mussoorie* often encounter the cuisine as both discovery and souvenir: *Kafuli* served in homestays, *Bal Mithai* boxed in hill shops, and *mandua* biscuits reimaged by local entrepreneurs. What began as necessity has evolved into identity—an edible record of endurance and grace.

*Uttarakhand's* food speaks softly but carries centuries of intelligence. It tells of a people who learned to thrive in difficult terrain, transforming modest harvests into meals of remarkable depth and nourishment. Every dish, from *mandua* roti to *chainsoo*, is shaped by patience and precision, with flavours built from necessity and perfected through care. This cuisine is not a remnant of the past. It is a living expression of balance where health, resourcefulness, and flavour coexist in harmony. To safeguard it is to honour a way of life that prized both strength and simplicity. Each seed of *gahat* and each spoon of *ghee* carries lessons that modern diets have forgotten. True sustenance depends as much on wisdom as on taste. As processed foods and quick fixes crowd our tables, *Uttarakhand's* kitchens offer an antidote and a reminder that nourishment begins with respect for soil, season, and craft. The responsibility now lies with us. We must ensure that this inheritance does not fade into nostalgia but flourishes through practice. Let us teach the next generation not only how these dishes are made but why they matter, for their nutrition, their restraint, and their quiet generosity. To pass them on is to pass on a way of thinking that food is still both heritage and health, and that every meal cooked in this spirit keeps the mountain's grace alive. In sum — a civilisation carved in stone, sustained by trade, sanctified by faith and flavoured with simplicity.

(The writer is Secretary, Cuisine India Society)

## Where fire and water redefine fine dining



Naarma is easily Delhi's most audacious new dining destination. More than a restaurant, it is an elemental experience — a fusion of art, flavour, and emotion that redefines the very idea of what dining can be

TEAM AGENDA

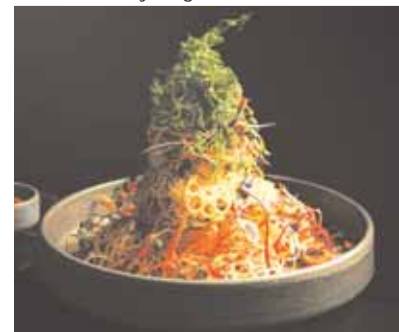
In a city where restaurants open weekly and trends fade just as fast, *Naarma* doesn't simply join the conversation — it changes its language. Conceived as a sensory theatre where fire meets flow, this concept stands apart for its global integration, fearless artistry, and profound attention to elemental balance. Step inside, and boundaries begin to dissolve — between heat and cool, silence and sound, art and appetite.

The genesis of *Naarma* stems from years of reflection and innovation, shaped by its founder, *Akshay Anand*—a former banker turned hospitality trailblazer. Travelling abroad, *Anand* experienced dining spaces that combined culinary brilliance, design sophistication, and warmth, and realised *Delhi* deserved the same. Rather than replicating global

concepts, he reimaged them through an *Indian* lens, crafting spaces that are cosmopolitan in spirit yet deeply rooted in *India's* timeless culture of hospitality. Each corner of *Naarma* feels alive with a distinct rhythm. The *Den's* hand-painted abstractions shift with light, while outdoor graffiti walls rebel against convention. A giant rose installation dominates the main dining room — not as *décor*, but as a living metaphor for transformation. Between flickers of flame and the hush of trickling water, the space moves in perfect tension — charged yet calm, dramatic yet deliberate. Behind this harmony is an extraordinary trio of culinary masters: Executive *Chef Jayson Gubat Cagaon*, blending *Japanese* precision with the poetry of fire; *Chef Amit Singh*, with luxury hotel finesse; and *Chef Sardoma Dumaguig Bienvenido Jr*, a 32-year *Chinese* cuisine veteran.

Together, they craft not just a menu, but a manifesto. The dishes mirror its philosophy: bold, balanced, and boundary-breaking. From the buttery *Otoro Aburi* brushed with *yuzu* kosho, to the vibrant *Naarma Roll* wrapped in *shiso* and *truffle*, every plate is a dialogue between restraint and intensity. *Italian* and *Asian* influences meet in the *Spaghetti Salsa Rossa* and *Kamameshi*, while the seafood and vegetable-led creations showcase technical brilliance and textural play.

At the bar, the artistry continues. Guided by world-class mixologists *Heena Kewalramani* and *Pablo Guidoni*, *Naarma's* cocktail programme mirrors the restaurant's elemental ethos — minimal, balanced, and ever-evolving. Signatures like *Not a Picante*, *Mantequilla y Fresas*, and the whimsical *Apples & Croissant* redefine mixology with textures, infusions, and unexpected pairings. As dusk deepens, minimal techno, Afro rhythms, and deep house pulse through the space, shaping an atmosphere that shifts seamlessly from day to night — sophisticated yet primal, international yet deeply grounded in emotion. For founder *Akshay Anand*, *Naarma* represents a culmination. "A decision to throw the rulebook out," he says. The result is not just a restaurant but an act of artistic rebellion. At *Naarma*, *Delhi* tastes the future of dining, where the extraordinary is ignited.



## Sweet notes of a joyful, sparkling Diwali soirée



TEAM AGENDA

This *Diwali*, elevate your celebrations with a dessert that's as unique as the festival lights. Sweet, aromatic, and indulgent, this treat combines traditional flavors with a modern twist. Perfect for sharing with loved ones, it brings warmth, joy, and a festive sparkle to your *Diwali* spread-making every bite memorable. May your *Diwali* be as sweet as these treats and as bright as the festival lights.

Indulge in the creamy *Saffron Shrikhand* with *Almonds* and *Rose*. Take two cups of hung curd (strained overnight) and whisk it until smooth.

Add a quarter cup of powdered sugar, saffron milk made by soaking saffron strands in warm milk, and a tablespoon of rose water. Mix gently and chill for an hour or two. Before serving, garnish with chopped almonds and pistachios. This dessert is light, fragrant, and effortlessly elegant — an ideal complement to the grandeur of *Diwali* feasts.

ROSE PISTACHIO KESAR BARS

INGREDIENTS:

- 1 cup condensed milk
- 1/2 cup milk
- 2 tbsp ghee
- 1/4 tsp saffron strands
- 1 tsp rose water
- 1 cup gram flour (besan)
- 1/4 cup chopped pistachios

METHOD:

- Heat ghee in a pan, add gram flour, roast lightly until aromatic.
- Stir in condensed milk, milk, saffron, and rose water; cook 3-4 mins.
- Pour mixture into a greased tray, sprinkle pistachios on top.
- Let it set 2-3 hours; cut into bars. Serve and enjoy.





SAMAMVAY club and samamvay bloom club for maheshwari ladies organises 8 events i. A year of which one is a couple event. All the members look forward to this annual meet Backstage siblings have been called from Kolkotta for an evening filled with music ans jamming session, the event was hosted at illusion club at Jubilee Hills . Mahesh Vandana was performed after which founder Poonam gave a welcome address and then Nidhi informed the gathering of the events conducted in bloom and after that president of samanvay Namrata Baldwa addressed the gathering , the comitee consisting of Navneeta mandana, Anju Baldwa, Ankita Kapooriya, and Payal sarda gave a splendid musical performance



Namrata Baldwa



Anju Baldwa



Ankita Kapooriya



Navneeta mandana



Anju Baldwa



Ankita Kapooriya



Navneeta mandana



Payal sarda



Payal sarda

PARTY

Photos by- SV Charly



The Anaesthesiologists of Hyderabad celebrated World Anaesthesia Day at Hotel Plaza, Begumpet, The event was organised jointly by the Indian Society of Anaesthesiologists (ISA), Hyderabad and Telangana Chapters, and was attended by over 200 doctors and their families.



Hyderabad Black Hawks defeated Goa Guardians 15-13, 20-18, 15-17, 15-9 in the RR Kabel Prime Volleyball League powered by Scapia at the Gachibowli Indoor Stadium, Hyderabad Yudi Yamamoto was named the Player of the Match and the Hyderabad Black Hawks climbed up to sixth place on the table with seven points.



### Preity G zinta makes a powerful comeback as the face of swa diamonds

Swa Diamonds, one of India's leading fine jewellery brands, has reached a new milestone by welcoming renowned Indian actress Preity G Zinta as its brand ambassador. With her timeless grace and confident presence, Swa Diamonds takes a bold step forward to strengthen its footprint across India and the UAE. Abdul Catur Anandyan, Managing Director of Swa Diamonds, shared, "In India, jewellery has always been more than just an ornament — it's a way to express emotions and celebrate life's most meaningful moments. That's why at Swa Diamonds, we offer only IG/GIA-certified natural diamonds of VVS clarity and EF colour—

symbols of the genuine love and trust our customers place in every piece. Our new campaign, 'As Real As You,' celebrates this authenticity — because every emotion you express deserves something just as real." Preity G Zinta, the new face of Swa Diamonds, expressed her excitement about the association, saying, "I'm truly delighted to partner with Swa Diamonds — a brand that represents authenticity, elegance, and timeless beauty. For me, jewellery has always been about celebrating life's real moments, and Swa's philosophy 'As Real As You' deeply resonates with who I am. I believe every woman deserves jewellery that reflects her real self — confident, graceful, and strong."



### vivo india announces origin Os6 india roll-out timeline

Vivo India today has announced the roll-out timeline of Origin OS6 (Based on Android 16) for its product portfolio in the country. Origin OS 6, the company's most advanced operating system, is available for upgrade, in batches starting early November on the X Series (X200 Pro, X200, X200 FE & XFold 5) and V60, followed by X100 Pro, X100 & XFold 3 Pro by mid-November 2025. Devices under V Series (V60e, V50 & V50e) and Series T (T4 Ultra, T4 Pro & T4R 5G) will receive the update by mid-December 2025. Furthermore, devices across series such as X90, X90 Pro, V40, T4 5G, T3 Ultra, Y400 5G, among others, will receive the update starting first half of 2026, alongside other vivo smartphones.

### 1-gram gold to 1-kg silver bricks, get your precious metals on instamart this dhanteras

On the upcoming occasion of Dhanteras, the auspicious start of the five-day Diwali festival across India, Instamart, India's pioneering quick commerce platform, will deliver 1 kg silver bricks, along with a wide array of gold and silver coins across key metros. The platform has collaborated with trusted brands like Kalyan Jewellers, Malabar Gold & Diamonds, Mulhoo Exim, MMTTC-PAMP, MIA by Tanishq, Voylla, and new entrants like Gullak to offer certified gold and silver coins. It will also deliver other items like silver jewelry and utensils for the occasion. Consumers can order gold in weights ranging from 0.1 g to 10 g, offering flexibility for every budget. And, for the first time in quick commerce, they can now have a 1 kg silver brick delivered right to their doorsteps. Adding to the festive cheer, Instamart is rolling out an exclusive early bird offer: the first 10,000 customers purchasing gold coins of 1 gm or above on Dhanteras will receive a Rs 100 discount. The offer will go live at 7:00 AM on October 18.

L I S T I N G S

## FUN

### ARCHIE



### CALVIN AND HOBBS



### GARFIELD



### NANCY



### GINGER MEGGS



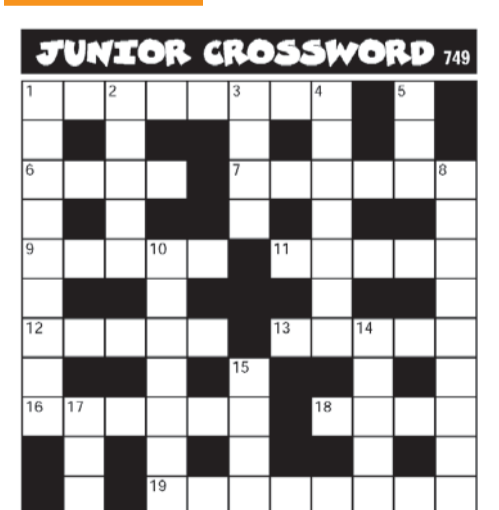
### REALITY CHECK



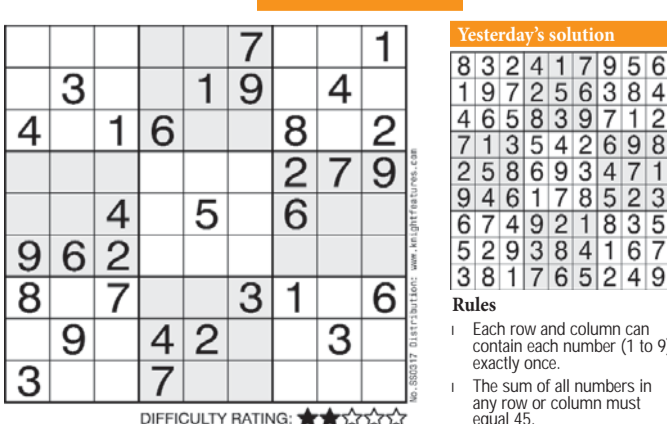
### SPEED BUMP



### CROSSWORD



### SUDOKU





The world watches with growing concern as conflicts flare across multiple fronts, from the densely populated streets of Gaza to the rugged terrains of Afghanistan and Pakistan. Each region bears the scars of deep-seated political tensions, historical grievances, and humanitarian crises, leaving millions caught in the crossfire. While the causes differ, the consequences are the same — displacement, death, destruction, and misery

## Oct 7 attack: A crime against humanity

In a powerful and moving tribute to lives lost, families shattered, and the enduring spirit of survival, the Embassy of Israel in India commemorated the second anniversary of the October 7, 2023, terror attacks with a heartfelt event in New Delhi. The ceremony brought together Indian dignitaries, members of the diplomatic corps, military veterans, media, and members of the Israel-Indian community to mark one of the darkest days in recent Israeli history and to reaffirm the shared values of resilience, unity, and the unrelenting fight against terrorism.



**ASHOKE RAJ**  
Associate Editor (Foreign Affairs),  
The Pioneer

profound support shown by the Indian government and people, emphasising the strong bond between the two nations united by shared histories of suffering from terrorism.

"We are grateful for the support we received from Prime Minister Modi, the Indian government, and the Indian people. Both countries have suffered from terrorism, and we share the conviction and determination required to confront and defeat it," he added.

The attacks, carried out by Hamas militants who infiltrated southern Israel from the Gaza Strip, resulted in the brutal killing of over 1,200 Israeli civilians and security personnel, widespread destruction, and the abduction of hundreds — a tragedy that deeply wounded the nation and sent shockwaves across the world.

Speaking at the event, Israel's Ambassador to India, HE Mr Reuven Azar, reflected on the enduring pain of October 7 and the path Israel has walked in the two years since.

"Two years have now passed since the brutal terrorist massacre on October 7 — an attack that shook the very fabric of our nation," said Ambassador Azar. "For 18 years, since the Gaza takeover by Hamas, the terrorist organisation dreamed and planned that moment. They recruited the entire population of Gaza into their diabolical project. Their intention was not only killing but sending a message to every Israeli that there's no future for us in our homeland."

Ambassador Azar acknowledged the

He further stressed that both India and Israel, nations with democratic ideals rooted in ancient civilisations,

have learned from each other and continue to strengthen their strategic, military, and moral alliance.

"Existential threat is something which is common to India and Israel," he said. "And that is where we both share a common desire — not only to survive but to prosper and become stronger."

Perhaps the most emotional and harrowing moment of the evening was the presence and testimony of Mr. Avihay Brodutch, a survivor of the October 7 attacks from Kibbutz Kfar Aza in southern Israel. His story brought the raw reality of the attack to the forefront. During the assault, his wife Hagar and their three children — Ofri, Yuval, and Oriya — were abducted by Hamas and taken into Gaza.

His voice trembled as he recalled the scene: "I saw a motorized parachute flying over the Kibbutz, almost above my head. There were terrorists on them holding AK-47s, and my heart just dropped. Over 250 Hamas terrorists swarmed into our Kibbutz... I found myself alone. Some of my friends were killed — some right beside me."

The world came to know Brodutch through an image that became iconic: him standing silently outside Israel's Ministry of Defense with a sign that read, "My family is in Gaza." His quiet plea became a rallying cry for hostage families around the world. After 51 excruciating days, his family was released during a temporary ceasefire. But the physical and emotional scars remained.

"They were starved. They were full of lice. They looked really bad... kept in a closed, locked room," he said. "After all this, my message for the world is: 'You should concentrate on healing.' We wish for the healing of everybody — in Israel, in the world. Peace and quiet. Maybe one day I can go and hug and ask for peace."

His words, filled with heartbreak and hope, resonated deeply with the audience, reminding everyone that behind every headline is a human story — of pain, survival, and yearning for peace. The emotional weight of the evening was softened — but not diminished — by a special cultural tribute from the Israeli music group "Trio4", who performed evocative songs that captured the spirit of national mourning and hope. Their renditions of "Keshetavo" (When You Come), "Halev Sheli" (My Heart), and "Shir LaMa'alot" (A Song of Ascents) were more than music: they were laments, prayers, and declarations of faith in the future.

CONTINUED ON >> P11

## Af-Pak clashes: A point of no return

A sudden flare-up along the Pakistan-Afghanistan border, marked by cross-border firing, expulsions and diplomatic recriminations, is rarely an isolated incident. Rather, such episodes are symptomatic of deeper structural tensions that have accumulated since 2021 — when the Taliban returned to power after the abrupt withdrawal of US forces and the abandonment of vast quantities of materiel. The current skirmish therefore speaks to historical grievances, domestic politics, regional competition, and competing strategic visions for South and Central Asia.



**DR WAEEL AWWAD**  
International award winning senior  
journalist and political analyst

The Afg-Pak clashes have now reached a tipping point, especially after the killing of civilians — including members of a cricket team — in strikes attributed to Pakistan. Such incidents drastically raise the likelihood of renewed bloodshed and retaliation. Kabul's government, facing intense domestic pressure and grieving popular sentiment, is unlikely to bow to Islamabad's provocations or to accept further infringements on Afghan sovereignty. Unless both capitals pursue urgent de-escalation, the cycle of reprisal and violence risks spiraling into a more prolonged and destructive confrontation.

Kabul views the strikes as a blatant violation of its sovereignty and an attempt by Islamabad to exert pressure on the Taliban-led government. However, rather than succumbing to these provocations, Afghan authorities are expected to respond with firmness, driven by mounting internal anger and nationalist sentiment. The Afghan government has already signalled that it will not tolerate further aggression and may retaliate in kind, escalating tensions along one of the most volatile frontiers in South Asia. For Pakistan, the renewed hostilities come at a time of deep internal political instability and economic distress, further complicating its regional posture. The clashes also risk undermining Pakistan's efforts to present itself as a key regional stabilizer and counterterrorism partner.

Militancy and proxy dynamics. The post-2021 landscape saw a proliferation of armed groups, shifting loyalties, and command changes. Pakistan's security services historically cultivated relationships with Afghan Islamist actors for strategic depth; the Taliban's return altered but did not erase these ties. Militant factions (some opposed to the Taliban, others aligned) use porous border areas as sanctuaries, drawing Pakistani military responses that bleed into Afghan territory and trigger public outrage in Kabul.

Security paranoia and state fragility. Pakistan's security establishment views instability in Afghanistan as an existential threat — both because it can produce waves of militancy inside Pakistan and because it affects Islamabad's leverage in Washington and with regional partners. Conversely, the Taliban prioritises the survival of its regime and the attainment of external legitimacy, which often translates into uncompromising stances toward any alleged incursions or support for anti-regime elements, including those referred to as "anti-Khalq" or opposition groups. Such policies generate tit-for-tat dynamics, where accusations and retaliatory measures are exchanged,

heightening tensions along the borders and with neighboring states. In a broader context, this approach poses a significant challenge to regional stability, particularly given the overlapping interests of Pakistan, Iran, and India, as well as growing concerns over the resurgence of terrorist activities in South Asia. These uncompromising stances can also limit the Afghan government's ability to engage constructively with its neighbors, complicating regional efforts to establish coordinated mechanisms for border management, security cooperation, and humanitarian response.

Great-power and regional competition. The Afghanistan-Pakistan tension cannot be viewed in isolation. Iran, sharing borders and security concerns with both countries, is wary of instability spilling over into its territory, especially amid tensions with the West. China, a key investor in Pakistan under the Belt and Road Initiative, is increasingly uneasy about the security risks to its regional projects. India, on the other hand, sees the rift as a potential opportunity to expand its outreach to Kabul and counter Pakistan's influence. This was evidence after the visit of Taliban foreign minister to India during the peak of the clashes between Taliban and Pakistani forces.

Russia and the Central Asian republics, too, are watching closely, fearing a resurgence of militancy along their southern borders. The United States, despite its withdrawal from Afghanistan, retains strategic interests in containing extremism and monitoring the shifting balance of power in South Asia.

CONTINUED ON >> P11



## No intention to hold Gaza land: Reuven Azar, Israeli envoy to India

After two years of Hamas's barbaric attack on Israel, the scars of October 7, 2023, remain deeply etched in Israeli society. Speaking exclusively to *The Pioneer*, Ambassador of Israel to India Reuven Azar, opened up about the current ground realities, diplomatic efforts, reconstruction plans, and the humanitarian crisis that followed the attack.

In this in-depth conversation with Ashoke Raj, Ambassador Azar confirmed that 19 hostages are still missing and emphasised that Israel has no intention of holding the acquired Gaza land. He also highlighted India's role in rebuilding efforts, especially through infrastructure development and skilled workforce support. Excerpts of the interview:

**The world is closely watching for developments on the ground between Israel and Hamas. Do you believe the situation is now under control?**  
We are at a turning point — one that we hope

will be lasting. Right now, we're giving the ceasefire a genuine opportunity to succeed.

Our goal is to ensure that diplomacy is given space to produce the results we seek: the removal of Hamas from power and guarantees that an atrocity like October 7 can never happen again. To achieve this, we need strong international support to apply pressure on Hamas and hold them to their commitments.

**What is the status of the hostages? How many remain unaccounted for?**  
There are still 19 murdered hostages whose bodies have not yet been returned. We are working tirelessly to bring them back home and to provide closure to their families. This remains one of our highest national priorities.



Reuven Azar,  
Ambassador of  
Israel to India

**What kind of pressure is being used to facilitate their return?**

First, we continue to maintain control over 50 per cent of Gaza's territory, which provides significant leverage.

More importantly, we are relying on diplomatic pressure — both from regional players and the broader international community. The more diplomacy is allowed to work, the less need there is for unilateral military action.

**On the reconstruction front, Israel has reportedly called for over 15,000 skilled Indian workers. What is the status of this initiative, and what kind of infrastructure is planned?**  
That's correct. Over the next 10

years, Israel will be launching infrastructure projects worth more than \$200 billion. We are inviting not only skilled Indian workers but also Indian infrastructure companies to participate in international tenders. This collaboration will be mutually beneficial — a major opportunity for Indian companies and an essential contribution to Israel's development.

**Regarding Gaza, what are Israel's long-term plans for the territory it currently holds?**

Let me be clear — Israel has no intention of permanently governing Gaza. Our objective is to transfer control to a responsible Palestinian authority, under international supervision, that is committed to building a peaceful and secure future. This future must be free from the destructive intentions of Hamas and instead focused on rebuilding Palestinian society and prosperity.

"PEOPLE WHO ARE CONTENT USUALLY DON'T ACT. IT'S EASY TO ACT OUT OF FRUSTRATION. THE REAL SKILL IS TO BE CONTENT AND STILL ACT"  
— SRI SRI RAVI SHANKAR

# From darkness to light: The many facets of Diwali

GURUDEV SRI SRI RAVI SHANKAR

Diwali means being in the present by dropping the regrets of the past and the worries of the future. It is time to forget the bickering and negativity you have encountered in the past one year. When true wisdom dawns, celebration arises naturally. Celebration is the nature of the spirit. The ancient sages made every celebration sacred so that we don't lose focus in the hustle and bustle of activity. Performing puja and rituals is simply showing gratitude to the Divine, and this brings depth to celebration. There are many stories and spiritual underpinnings to the festival of Diwali that vary from state to state, and each has something for us to learn from.

### The Vastness You See in the Dark

The second day of Diwali is celebrated as *Kali Chaudas* or *Naraka Chaturdashi* in many parts of the country. Kali symbolises knowledge. She awakens you in knowledge; awakens you to the vastness of creation. It is only in the night that you can see thousands of stars. If there were no nights, we would never have known the magnitude of our universe, and the many planets and galaxies.

What you see in the daytime are the relatively smaller things: what you see in the night is *brahmand* — the whole universe, the Milky Way, the infinite glory of existence. Kali is the mother of wisdom, who opens you up to this sense of wonder.

When you close your eyes to small things, you open yourself up to see something much bigger. The pupil in your eyes is also dark — that is also called *Kali*. If that dark pupil is not there in your eyes, you will not be able to see anything.

Kali is beyond description, intellect, and speech; that is why she is depicted with her tongue out. She is not someone sitting somewhere; hers is an energy that can be felt and experienced. She stands on Shiva - the silent, infinite principle. When you experience that deep silence, that non-dual principle of Shiva which is your very Self, then the energy that you experience is the energy of Kali, opening you to higher knowledge.

### The Story of Satyabhama

Another story associated with Diwali is about the wicked king *Narakasura* who made life miserable for everyone. He was so powerful that no one could defeat or destroy him. But one of Krishna's consorts, Satyabhama, fought him, and she destroyed him.

It is said Narakasura had a boon that he could be killed only by a woman. *Narakasura* thought, "What can this woman do to me? When great kings and warriors with so much power could not harm me, what can a woman possibly do?" That was his arrogance. Krishna stood beside Satyabhama in the chariot, and from next to him, she shot an arrow that eventually killed Narakasura.

There is great symbolism even in the name: Satya means truth and bhama means the beloved; and narak is hell. Asuras were those who did not think about the spirit. They were only bound by the body or material pleasures.

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— GURUDEV

Untruth or lack of love cannot conquer hell. It cannot be removed by aggression. Hell can only be erased by truth, love, and surrender. Non-aggression, love, and surrender are the inherent qualities of a woman.

Hence, only Satyabhama — the true beloved, embodying truth and love — could destroy Narakasura and bring the light back.

At the time of his death, Narakasura was asked, "What is your last wish?" He said, "Now that I am dying, I want everyone to celebrate my departure by lighting lamps and distributing sweets. I caused so much suffering; now that I am gone, there should be no more suffering for anyone. Everyone should rejoice in my departure."

That was his last wish — that people should celebrate, not mourn. It is said, in the end, he saw the light.

### The Lamp of Wisdom

If you are drowned in materialism, you cannot bring joy and knowledge into your life. By

being in the world yet not drowned in it, you can be the light of joy and knowledge.

For an oil lamp to burn, the wick has to be partially immersed in the oil. If it is completely drowned in oil, it cannot be lit. Life is like the wick of the lamp; you have to be in the world and yet remain untouched by it. Lamps are lit on this day not just to decorate homes but also to communicate this profound truth of life.

### Light a Thousand Lamps

Every human being has some good qualities. And every lamp that you light is symbolic of this. Some people have forbearance, some love, strength, generosity, or the ability to unite people. The latent goodness in you is like a lamp. Don't be satisfied with lighting just one lamp; light a thousand and rekindle the goodness in everyone around. By lighting the lamp of wisdom in yourself and acquiring knowledge, you awaken all facets of your being. When they are awakened, that is true Diwali.

### Feeling the Abundance

A day prior to Diwali, Dhanteras is celebrated to remind you about the abundance in your life and that whatever you need will come to you. Remember all the blessings you have received in life and feel grateful — that's the purpose of Dhanteras.

The tradition is to put all the wealth you have earned in front of you and feel abundant. When you feel a lack, the lack grows; when you put your attention on abundance, abundance grows.

### The Transience of Wealth

In Srimad Bhagavatam, there is a mention of an incident when Goddess Lakshmi left the body of King Bali and wanted to go with Lord Indra. On being asked, she mentioned that she resides only where there is satya (truth), daan (charity), vrat (abstinence), tapa (penance), parakram (courage), and dharma (righteousness).

She comes only where there is cleanliness within and outside.

The thought of getting wealth brings thrill (pukit) in people. The light that comes with her is not harsh but like moonlight — pleasant, gentle, and beautiful. When knowledge remains limited to just concepts and is not integrated with life, there is no Lakshmi there. She likes simplicity and



YOU NEED TO KINDLE THE LIGHT OF WISDOM IN EVERY MEMBER OF YOUR FAMILY. EXTEND IT TO EVERY MEMBER OF SOCIETY, EVERY PERSON ON THE PLANET. SO, THIS DIWALI, LET US PRAY AND FEEL GRATEFUL FOR ALL THAT WE HAVE RECEIVED. LET US WISH FOR PROSPERITY IN EVERY CORNER OF THE WORLD. LET ALL PEOPLE EXPERIENCE LOVE, JOY, AND ABUNDANCE IN THEIR LIVES.

clarity. There is a beautiful story from Adi Shankaracharya's life. Once, when he went to seek alms, a poor lady offered him only one gooseberry. Moved by her devotion, he composed and sang the *Kanakadhara Stotra* — a hymn to Goddess Lakshmi. And the story goes, golden gooseberries rained from the skies.

Lakshmi loves one-pointed devotion. The verse says *Anga hareh pulakabhusanam asrayanti*, meaning, she adorns herself with the thrill (pukit) of devotion.

Though there are many legends about the festival, Diwali is essentially celebrated to light wisdom in every heart, and to bring a smile on every face. Life has many facets and stages to it. It is important that you throw light on all of them. For if one aspect of your life is in darkness, there can be no complete expression of life. That's why rows of lights are lit on Deepavali — to remind you that every aspect of life needs your attention and light of knowledge. Wisdom is needed everywhere. Even if one member of the family is shrouded in darkness or negativity, you cannot be happy.

So, you need to kindle the light of wisdom in every member of your family. Extend it to every member of society, every person on the planet. So, this Diwali, let us pray and feel grateful for all that we have received. Let us wish for prosperity in every corner of the world. Let all people experience love, joy, and abundance in their lives.

## Bridging policy, community & sustainability

TEAM AGENDA

The need for harmony in through synergistic efforts of the State and Central forest management practices involving local forest stakeholders is profoundly discussed in this book as an honour to readers, scholars, foresters, and policy planners.

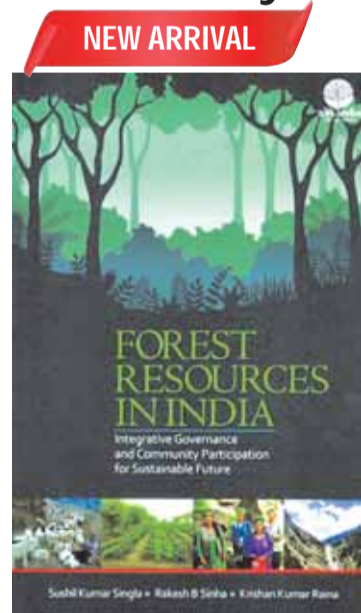
Describing *Integrative Governance and Community Participation for a Sustainable Future*, the book emphasises the visionary paths of action where dedicated forest officers from the State and Central levels must come together through the involvement of local forest dwellers in an orchestrated endeavour to safeguard our natural heritage.

Harmony in conservation is a testament to the spirit of unity, shared purpose, and symbiotic coexistence that defines the everlasting relationship between the people and the forests. The book invites readers on a journey of collaboration, empathy, and stewardship, advocating for peaceful coexistence through mindful forest management. It signifies a starting point rather than a final destination, signalling a future of unity, innovation, and collective effort.

The aim is a world where nature thrives, communities prosper, and harmonious cooperation between State and Central entities defines our collective heritage. It encourages readers to embrace collaboration, synchronise with nature's rhythms, and champion harmony for our shared home, Earth.

The book, which seems to be the first in its category as authored by incumbent civil servants, further delves into the fact that forests and humanity are intricately linked, shaping life on Earth through their coexistence. Forests hold the secrets of history, cultures, and land scapes, sharing wisdom with indigenous forest dwellers.

Preserving and sustainably managing these precious forest treasures is a collective responsibility, especially in today's world marked by global warming, climate change, and environmental degradation. The book also talks about understanding and deciphering the current laws and governance models for forest management at both State and Central levels, which are essential for addressing critical issues and preparing for future challenges.



**Title:** Forest Resources in India  
**Co Author:** Sushil Kumar Singla, Rakesh B Sinha, Krishan Kumar Raina  
**MRP:** ₹ 550  
**Publisher:** National Book Trust

In an era marked by the challenges of climate change, deforestation, and declining biodiversity, the importance of this publication cannot be overstated. It aims to recognise the necessity of a united vision and shared objectives. Across India's different States and Union Territories, diverse laws, rules, and regulations govern their forests, while aligning with national laws to address the livelihood needs of local communities. Successful forest constition and management models have emerged in various ecosystems, guided by State policies.

Central-level forest officers, in their role of fostering harmony, must possess a deep understanding of these State-specific laws and provisions to facilitate optimal practices. There are certain national-level programmes like Joint Forest Management, Green India Mission, Agroforestry, etc, along with crucial concepts of CSR and Green investments through the ESG framework, which need synergistic efforts at both the State and Central levels.

Therefore, the new book asserts there must be a complete knowledge

base about State policies, rules/regulations, and the endeavours initiated at the State levels so that officers at the Central level benefit through convergence of national policies as per the legal framework and the prioritised needs of the forest stakeholders at the State level, where real action takes place.

### About the Authors

Sushil Kumar Singla, India Forest Service officer of the Himachal Pradesh cadre, holds a PhD (Agriculture), M Phil (Strategic Studies), NDC Graduate, MSc (Forestry), PG Diploma, and B Tech, with over three decades of field experience in community mobilisation, particularly of women, with a focus on management of natural resources, rural development, environment, and climate change. While working in three Union Ministries — Agriculture, Water Resources, and Rural Development — at policy level, he had the opportunity to work for the holistic development of the agriculture sector encompassing agriculture, co-operation, horticulture, beekeeping, fisheries, water resources, and forestry. Besides holding copyright for the Design of Micro Irrigation Systems (DOMIS) software, Singla has authored books namely *Forest and Allied Laws* and *Yamuna Religio-Botanical Garden*.

Rakesh Bhushan Sinha, IFS, served as Senior Policy Adviser of FAO. He was Senior Consultant for diversified thematic areas at the national and international levels, such as agroforestry, natural resource management, national biodiversity action plan, and national biodiversity targets. He was a pioneer in drafting the National Agroforestry Policy, 2014, which was first in the world. He is engaged with UN organisations for policy formulation on natural resource management, climate change, and global warming.

Krishan Kumar Raina is a retired Professor (Agribusiness Management) from Dr YS Parmar University of Horticulture and Forestry, Nauni-Solan, Himachal Pradesh.

He has a specialisation in the management of crop, animal, and forest-based production systems of hilly areas. He has contributed to the study of nomadic and semi-nomadic pastoral-based agriculture systems in hilly regions.

## Corporate circus: Lessons and reflection

This book is not just for those navigating the corporate maze, but also for leaders who have the power to shape cultures

**FOLDED  
Corner**

SAURABH NIGAM

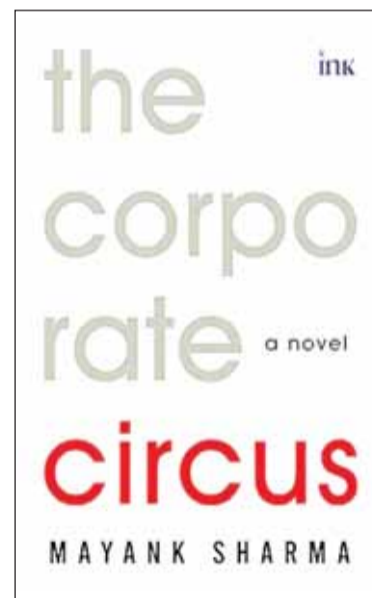
Every once in a while, a book comes along that feels less like a story on paper and more like a mirror being held up to our lives. *The Corporate Circus* by Mayank Sharma is exactly that. As I turned its pages, I found myself smiling knowingly, nodding in recognition, and at times pausing to reflect on just how much of my own professional journey was captured within its circus tent of characters, politics, and drama.

Mayank and I have been connected on LinkedIn for a long time. We finally met in January this year when I had launched my own book, *People Powered Startups*. By this time, both of us had quit our full-time jobs and ventured into HR consulting. We connected on a call a few days later, and I was surprised to see we share so much in common: a career in HR, small-town upbringing, the urge to leave metro city life, cultural issues in corporate.

He took some suggestions from me on book writing and publishing, and I am glad he has been able to achieve his lifelong dream now, with *The Corporate Circus* in my hands.

What struck me first was the honesty of the writing. Mayank doesn't try to sugarcoat the modern workplace. He paints it in its full spectrum — ambition, power, manipulation, but also vulnerability, resilience, and camaraderie. The metaphor of the circus is not just clever; it's painfully accurate. Anyone who has spent even a few years in a corporate setup will recognise the ringmasters who call the shots, the jugglers who are always multitasking, the gymnasts taking unnecessary risks, and yes, the clowns who lighten the mood, often unintentionally.

For me, reading this book was more than literary enjoyment. It was an emotional experience. Having worked across startups and large organisations for over two decades, I could instantly map these characters to real-



**Title:** The Corporate Circus  
**Author:** Mayank Sharma  
**MRP:** ₹ 499  
**Publisher:** Blume Ink Pvt Ltd



**SAURABH NIGAM**  
Founder & CEO of ProGrowth

life individuals I have encountered. There were moments when I laughed out loud at the absurdity of certain scenes — because I had been in rooms just like that. There were also moments when I felt a twinge of discomfort, because the book doesn't shy away from showing how corrosive unchecked politics or blind ambition can be, both for individuals and for the culture of an organisation.

The brilliance of *The Corporate Circus* lies in its balance. While it is satirical in tone, it never tips into cynicism. Mayank manages to critique the corporate world while still maintaining empathy for the people who inhabit it. His characters are flawed, yes, but they are also deeply human. Their insecurities, aspirations, and compromises make them believable. In many ways, the book

reminds us that behind every designation or title is a person simply trying to find meaning, security, and maybe a little joy. One of my favourite aspects of the book was how effortlessly it blended humour with hard truths. For example, a seemingly lighthearted bit of gossip during a tea break might turn into sharp sarcasm on everyone's hypocrisy.

Similarly, the playful descriptions of office rituals — the endless meetings, the carefully staged appraisals, the performative town halls — are written with such keen observation that you can't help but chuckle, even as you feel the weight of their truth. As someone who has devoted his professional life to building people practices, I found the book especially resonant.

The narrative highlights the very real tension between organisational ambition and employee wellbeing. It forces us to confront questions we often avoid: Are we designing workplaces that bring out the best in people, or are we unconsciously perpetuating systems that drain them? Do leaders truly recognise their responsibility, or are they just playing to the gallery like circus showmen? Another element that stood out was how relatable the book is to readers outside the corporate bubble too. Anyone who is going to pick this up will know what they are signing up for.

What elevates *The Corporate Circus* beyond a satire is its underlying hope. While it exposes the absurdities of the system, it also nudges us towards reflection. By the time I reached the final chapters, I wasn't just entertained; I was asking myself: What kind of colleague am I? What kind of leader? What would I do differently if I could step outside the circus ring and redesign the show? The language of the book is simple yet powerful. Mayank doesn't rely on jargon; instead, he uses crisp prose and vivid metaphors.

For the complete story please see our website [www.dailypioneer.com](http://www.dailypioneer.com)

(Saurabh Nigam is the Founder & CEO of ProGrowth People Solutions, a seasoned HR leader, author of "People Powered Startups," and a passionate advocate for building world-class organisations in India)