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# The Researchers'

## NEWS BOX

### Johnson & Johnson to pay \$15 million to man who blamed baby powder for cancer

**Connecticut.** Johnson & Johnson (J&J) must pay \$15 million to a Connecticut man who alleges that he developed mesothelioma, a rare form of cancer, as a result of using the company's talc powder for decades, a jury found on Tuesday. Plaintiff Evan Plotkin sued the company in 2021 soon after his diagnosis, saying he was sickened by inhaling J&J's baby powder. The jury in Fairfield County, Connecticut Superior Court also found that the company should pay additional punitive damages, which will be determined later by the judge overseeing the case. Evan Plotkin and his trial team are thrilled that a jury once again decided to hold Johnson & Johnson accountable for their marketing and sale of a baby powder product that they knew contained asbestos. Ben Braly, a lawyer for Plotkin, said in an email. Erik Haas, J&J's worldwide vice president of litigation, said in a statement that the company would appeal "erroneous" rulings by the trial judge that kept the jury from hearing critical facts about the case. "Those facts show that the verdict is irreconcilable with the decades of independent scientific evaluations confirming talc is safe, does not contain asbestos and does not cause cancer," Haas said. Tuesday's verdict comes as J&J seeks to resolve claims by more than 62,000 people who say that they got ovarian and other



gynaecological cancers from talc through a nearly \$9 billion settlement in bankruptcy. The bankruptcy deal, which faces legal challenges from some plaintiffs' lawyers, has put the lawsuits over gynaecological cancers on hold, but does not affect the much smaller number of mesothelioma claims like Plotkin's. The company has previously settled some of those claims but has not proposed a nationwide settlement. Plaintiffs in all of the lawsuits say that J&J's talc products, like its once iconic baby powder, were tainted with asbestos, a carcinogen known to cause mesothelioma and other cancers.

### Several families in Punjab worried over India, Canada diplomatic fallout

**CHANDIGARH.** As relations between India and Canada have hit an all time low, after the diplomatic fallout now the parents and families of students and others from Punjab who have gone to Canada on study visas or currently working there are apprehensive on getting PR while those who got permanent residency or citizenship are anxious on how this might cause hindrance in travelling back to India.

Talking with this newspaper, the parents and others expressed lot of apprehension and were worried about the outcome of this diplomatic row between countries and how it will be effect their families and children, as they expressed the feared that they will face difficulties in securing visas to meet families, children and relatives in Canada. Reacting to the fresh development, DP Singh who lives in Mohali has sent his children to Canada he is apprehensive that this deteriorating relationship should not have a negative effect on the permanent residency and citizenship of the children. "After spending so much the children have gone to Canada for higher studies and once they complete their studies they look to settle down there, but this present diplomatic row should not become hindrance in their permanent residency and afterwards citizenship," he says.

Canadian Prime Minister Justin Trudeau (L) and PM Narendra Modi (R). Canada-Another parent Jaswant Singh whose son and daughter are studying in Canada, says that the day by day the Canadian Government is tightening the grip on intentional students as they have changed the rules and regulations and not only that the students will now face more difficulties in getting permanent residency (PR) and thus they fear they might be deported back and students will then be forced to apply for refugee status.

### US warns Israel to boost humanitarian aid into Gaza or risk losing weapons funding

**WASHINGTON.** The Biden administration has warned Israel that it must increase the amount of humanitarian aid it is allowing into Gaza within the next 30 days or it could risk losing access to U.S. weapons funding.

Secretary of State Antony Blinken and Defense Secretary Lloyd Austin warned their Israeli counterparts in a letter dated Sunday that the changes must occur.

The letter, which restates U.S. policy toward humanitarian aid and arms transfers, was sent amid deteriorating conditions in northern Gaza and an Israeli airstrike on a hospital tent site in central Gaza that killed at least four people and burned others. A similar letter that Blinken sent to Israeli officials in April led to more humanitarian assistance getting to the Palestinian territory, State Department spokesman Matthew Miller said Tuesday. But that has not lasted. "In fact, it's fallen by over 50% from where it was at its peak," Miller said at a briefing. Blinken and Austin "thought it was appropriate to make clear to the government of Israel that there are changes that they need to make again, to see that the level of assistance making it into Gaza comes back up from the very, very low levels that it is at today." For Israel to continue qualifying for foreign military financing, the level of aid getting into Gaza must increase to at least 350 trucks a day, Israel must institute additional humanitarian pauses and provide increased security for humanitarian sites, Austin and Blinken said in their letter. They said Israel had 30 days to respond to the requirements. "The letter was not meant as a threat," White House national security spokesman John Kirby told reporters. "The letter was simply meant to reiterate the sense of urgency we feel and the seriousness with which we feel it, about the need for an increase, a dramatic increase in humanitarian assistance." An Israeli official confirmed a letter had been delivered but did not discuss the contents. That official, speaking on condition of anonymity to discuss a diplomatic matter, confirmed the U.S. had raised "humanitarian concerns" and was putting pressure on Israel to speed up the flow of aid into Gaza.

## Pakistan PM Shehbaz urges SCO members to strengthen framework for regional challenges

Sharif mentioned the Belt and Road Initiative, the China-Pakistan Economic Corridor, and the North-South Initiative as critical for enhancing connectivity in the region.

**ISLAMABAD.** Pakistan Prime Minister Shehbaz Sharif on Wednesday urged Shanghai Cooperation Organisation (SCO) member states to strengthen the organisation's framework to address multiple regional challenges and foster closer cooperation. Sharif made these remarks while addressing the opening session of the 23rd meeting of the Council of the Heads of Government (CHG) of the SCO member states. "From the esteemed platform of the Shanghai Cooperation Organisation, a beacon of multilateralism, I believe we not only have the potential but also the will to create a future that is more prosperous and secure for our

people a future that is inclusive and reflective of the shared aspirations of all member states," he said. Prime Minister Shehbaz highlighted, "We are at a historic moment of transition where sweeping transformations are reshaping the global social, political, economic, and security landscape." He reaffirmed Pakistan's "commitment to regional peace, stability, enhanced connectivity, and sustainable socio-economic development." He also emphasized that the SCO "embodies the collective voice and wishes of over 40 percent of the global population, anchored in the Shanghai spirit." "Your presence here today underscores our shared commitment to fulfilling the aspirations of our people by ensuring collective security and enhancing mutually beneficial cooperation for the sustainable development and prosperity of the SCO region," he stated. He called the summit a testament to the strength of ties and collaboration among the SCO's diverse nations. "Together, we have the potential to drive socio-economic progress, enhance regional peace and stability, and improve the quality of life for our



citizens," the premier said. Prime Minister Shehbaz urged the leaders to use the SCO meeting to "exchange ideas, share best practices, and forge concrete action plans that will benefit our economies and societies." He expressed hope for "wonderful outcomes" from the in-depth deliberations. "Our collaboration and joint efforts to expand academic and tourism linkages, alleviate poverty, and empower women and youth across the SCO region reflect our commitment to promoting prosperity through unity," he noted. He recounted the successes achieved during Pakistan's chairmanship and urged for further tangible actions

through cooperation in trade and the economy. He said Afghanistan provides opportunities for trade and transit. "A stable Afghanistan is essential for fully realizing these opportunities," he added, calling on the international community to provide humanitarian support to the country while urging the interim Afghan government to ensure its territory is not used for terrorism against its neighbors. Shehbaz also stressed the importance of regional connectivity, noting that Pakistan supports the SCO's connectivity initiative. He mentioned the Belt and Road Initiative, the China-Pakistan Economic Corridor, and the North-South Initiative as critical for enhancing connectivity in the region. He urged against viewing connectivity projects through "narrow political lenses" and instead with a focus on increasing regional prosperity. Shehbaz also highlighted the issue of poverty, stating that collective efforts are needed to eradicate it. "Poverty is not just a social issue but a moral imperative," he said, urging closer cooperation within the SCO region to address it.

## Imran Khan isolated in dark cell, no calls to sons, jail cook on leave: Ex-wife

**World** Jemima Goldsmith, the former wife of Pakistan's jailed ex-Prime Minister Imran Khan, has levelled some serious allegations against the Shehbaz Sharif-led government. She claimed that her former husband was being kept in solitary confinement with authorities cutting off the electricity supply in his jail cell and was no longer allowed to make weekly calls to his sons.



Goldsmith's allegations come as the Pakistan government is hosting the ongoing two-day SCO Summit in Islamabad, which has drawn top leaders from member states, including External Affairs Minister S Jaishankar, and turned the capital city into a fortress. In the days leading to the summit, authorities also arrested hundreds of Imran Khan's supporters who attempted to march in Islamabad, demanding his release. In a social media post on Tuesday, Goldsmith, who was married to Imran Khan from 1995 to 2004, alleged that the Pakistani authorities have postponed all court hearings and also completely stopped visits by the former Prime Minister's friends and family. Khan is presently lodged at the Adilala Jail in Rawalpindi, following his arrest on August 5, 2023. "In addition to cutting off in-person visits, and in defiance of a court order, his weekly calls to his sons, Sulaiman and Kasim Khan, who are British and who live in London, were stopped on September 10," she said, while referring to the couple's two sons. "We have received reports that the authorities have now turned off the lights and electricity in his cell and he is no longer allowed to leave his cell at any time. The jail cook has been sent on leave. He is now completely isolated,

in solitary confinement, literally in the dark, with no contact with the outside world. His lawyers are concerned about his safety and well-being."

Goldsmith further alleged that the Pakistan government was not only mistreating Imran Khan, but also other members of his family in an "attempt to silence them and all political opposition". "Imran's nephew, Hassan Niazi, a civilian, has been detained in military custody since August 2023. More recently, Imran Khan's sisters, Uzma and Aleema Khan, who have continued to speak out on his behalf, have also been arrested as they made their way peacefully to a demonstration, and they are currently being held in jail, despite there being no proper or lawful basis for their imprisonment," she said, while calling for all of their release. Imran Khan, 72, served as Prime Minister from 2018 to 2022, when he was ousted in a parliamentary no-confidence vote after falling out with the powerful military establishment considered Pakistan's political kingmakers.

## How S Jaishankar started his day in Islamabad ahead of SCO Summit

**World** External Affairs Minister S Jaishankar spent a quiet Wednesday morning in Islamabad doing a morning walk with Indian diplomats and planting a sapling on the premises of the Indian High Commission. Jaishankar is in the Pakistani capital for the SCO Summit, becoming the first External Affairs Minister to visit the neighbouring country in nine years.

Jaishankar shared a picture of him wearing a full-sleeved bottle-green t-shirt and track pants and doing a morning walk with the diplomats of the Indian High Commission in Islamabad. "A morning walk together with colleagues of Team @IndiainPakistan in our High Commission campus," he tweeted. He also put up a post showing him planting an Arjuna sapling in the presence of Indian diplomats there on the premises of the High Commission. "An Arjuna sapling at @IndiainPakistan premises is another



commitment to #Plant4Mother," he wrote. Jaishankar is leading India's delegation at the SCO Summit that will be held at Jinnah Convention Centre today. On Tuesday, the External Affairs Minister met Pakistan Prime Minister Shehbaz Sharif during an informal dinner hosted by the latter. Both leaders shook hands and exchanged greetings. No bilateral talks are scheduled between Jaishankar and his Pakistani counterpart Ishaq Dar on the sidelines of the SCO Summit as ties between the two neighbours remain frosty over cross-border terrorism emanating from Pakistan. On Tuesday, Jaishankar landed at Nur Khan airbase in Rawalpindi in Pakistan, making him the first Indian foreign minister to visit the country in nine years. The last External Affairs Minister to visit Pakistan was Sushma Swaraj. Other leaders from SCO member states attending the summit include Chinese Premier Li Qiang, Belarus Prime Minister Roman Golovchenko, Kazakhstan Prime Minister Askar Suleymenov, Russian Prime Minister Mikhail Mishustin, Tajik Prime Minister Kohir Rasulzoda, Uzbek Prime Minister Abdullari Aripov, Kyrgyzstan's Chairman of Ministers Cabinet Zhaparov Akyzbek, and

## Day 2 of SCO summit in Pak: S Jaishankar to attend talks on trade, economy

**World** The second day of the Shanghai Cooperation Organisation (SCO) meeting is set to begin at Pakistan's Jinnah Convention Centre, where Prime Minister Shehbaz Sharif will welcome leaders from across the region. The event started with a group photograph, followed by Prime Minister Sharif's opening remarks. External Affairs Minister S Jaishankar addressed the 23rd Meeting of SCO Council of Heads of Government, in Islamabad, with a video surfacing online. He was welcomed to the venue of the summit by Shehbaz Sharif. S Jaishankar raised the issue of terrorism during his address. He said, "If activities across borders are characterised by terrorism, extremism and separatism, they are hardly likely to encourage trade,

energy flows, connectivity and people-to-people exchanges." He also raised the issue of violation of Indian sovereignty because of the China-Pakistan Economic Corridor (CPEC) project. "Cooperation must be based on mutual respect and sovereign equality. It should recognise territorial integrity and sovereignty. It must be built on genuine partnerships, not unilateral agendas. It cannot progress if we cherry-pick global practices, especially in trade and transit," he said. He reiterated the need to make the UN Security Council more "inclusive, representative, transparent, efficient, democratic and accountable". The session also featured the signing of several documents, after which Pakistan's Deputy Prime Minister Ishaq Dar and SCO Secretary General

Zhang Ming addressed the media. Following this, Prime Minister Sharif hosted an official lunch.

Representatives from India, China, Russia, Belarus, Kazakhstan, Kyrgyzstan, Tajikistan, and Uzbekistan are attending the meeting, with Iran's First Vice President and Mongolia's Prime Minister also present. The Deputy Chairman of the Cabinet of Ministers and the Foreign Minister of Turkmenistan, attending as a special guest, will participate as well. According to Pakistan's Foreign Ministry, discussions will focus on economic cooperation, trade, environmental issues, and socio-cultural ties. The leaders are expected to make significant decisions to boost cooperation among SCO members and approve the organisation's budget.

## Canadian Sikh MP wants sanctions on Indian diplomats, gets mocked by journalists

**World** Canadian Sikh leader Jagmeet Singh, a former ally of Prime Minister Justin Trudeau, was ridiculed by journalists when he called for sanctions on Indian diplomats and walked out of the press conference as he faced a volley of tough questions from reporters amid an escalating diplomatic row between the two countries. "We need to bring severe sanctions on Indian diplomats. We got the RCMP saying that Indian diplomats are hiring criminal elements to shoot at Canadians. I mean why would we do anything other than put in place severe sanctions on Indian diplomats," Jagmeet Singh, a known Khalistani sympathiser, and the leader of the New Democratic Party (NDP) said. "The Modi government has to be held accountable and we all need to be unified as Canadian leaders. All of us have to be unified in denouncing (PM Narendra) Modi, making sure we protect Canadians by putting their safety first and foremost," he said before ending his press conference. As Jagmeet Singh was walking out of the room, some journalists tried to raise their questions to him, with one of them mocking the leader, saying, "That's not how it works," drawing laughter from the audience. The

development came after the Royal Canadian Mounted Police (RCMP) claimed that Indian agents present in Canada were working with the Lawrence Bishnoi gang to target pro-Khalistani elements. Jagmeet Singh had supported Trudeau's Liberal government for over two years before pulling the plug last month, accusing the Canadian Prime Minister of not fulfilling his promises. He has often been involved in rallies featuring Khalistani extremists, advocating for a separate Sikh state. Earlier, Canadian Foreign Minister Melanie Joly had hinted that the Trudeau government may impose sanctions on Indian diplomats, saying "everything was on the table" amid the diplomatic rift. The ongoing India-Canada diplomatic row took a sharp turn on Monday when New Delhi lashed out at Ottawa over its charge that the Indian High Commissioner and other diplomats are 'persons of interest' linked to an investigation into the murder of Nijjar. India dismissed them as "preposterous imputations" and downgraded its ties with Canada. India also said Trudeau's hostility to India has long been evident and cited his constant support for violent extremists



and terrorists to harass, threaten and intimidate Indian diplomats in Canada, stressing that these were done in the name of freedom of speech. Both India and Canada recalled six of their diplomats in a tit-for-tat move as New Delhi chided Ottawa for not sharing a "shred of evidence" of India's involvement in Nijjar's killing and not doing enough to tackle separatist elements on Canadian soil. Ties between India and Canada dived in September last year when Trudeau alleged Indian government agents' involvement in the killing of Nijjar on Canadian soil. New Delhi rejected those charges as "motivated and absurd". Nijjar, the chief of Khalistan Tiger Force

and wanted by the Indian government, was shot dead outside a gurdwara in Canada's Surrey in June last year. 'CANADIAN SIKHS STALKED BY FEAR' Meanwhile, in a statement, Jagmeet Singh claimed that Canadian Sikhs were stalked by fear, threats and harassment from Indian diplomats and called for a ban on Rashtriya Swayamsevak Sangh Network (RSS) in Canada. "We support today's (Tuesday) decision to expel India's diplomats and we are calling on the Government of Canada yet again to put diplomat sanctions against India in place, ban the RSS in Canada, and commit to pursuing the most severe consequences for anyone found to have participated in organised criminal activity on Canadian soil," he said. "New Democrats are extremely worried about the information released by the RCMP commissioner today. Canadians, particularly the Sikh community in Canada, have been stalked by fear, threats, harassment and violence-including extortion, violence and electoral interference all allegedly at the hands of Indian officials," he alleged.

## Scholars of Kashi Clear Confusion: Diwali Will Be Celebrated Nationwide on 31 Oct.

by Sanjay Saxena



**Lucknow:** A debate had recently emerged in North India about whether Diwali would be celebrated on October 31 or November 1. In this state of confusion, not only the general public but also scholars seemed divided. However, the confusion has now been resolved by the scholars of Kashi. Based on mathematical values, scriptural texts, visual evidence, and traditional opinions, a consensus has been reached that Diwali will be celebrated across the country on October 31.

On October 15, at the Astrology Department of Banaras Hindu University, a meeting was held involving the Kashi Vishwanath Temple Trust, Kashi Vidwat Parishad, and various scholars and astrologers. After extensive discussion, they unanimously decided in favor of celebrating Diwali on October 31. In a press conference held at BHU,

Professor Vinay Kumar Pandey, coordinator of the World Panchang, stated that there is no discrepancy in the traditional calendars. Astrologers explained that according to all calendars, the new moon (Amavasya) begins on October 31 before sunset and ends before sunset on November 1. This establishes, according to traditional principles and calendars, that Diwali will be celebrated on October 31 throughout the country. Professor Ramchandra Pandey, Senior Vice-President of

the Kashi Vidwat Parishad, noted that according to visual mathematics, in many regions of the country, Amavasya starts on October 31 before sunset and concludes shortly after sunset on November 1. Thus, there is no discrepancy regarding Diwali in those areas, and it is firmly established as occurring on October 31. It is noteworthy that in certain regions of the country, such as parts of Gujarat, Rajasthan, and Kerala, Amavasya begins before sunset on October 31 and persists into the evening

of November 1. This has led to some contradictory situations regarding the dates. However, according to scriptural texts, Diwali is still validated as occurring on October 31 in those areas as well. Present at the press conference were Professor Chandramouli Upadhyay, Secretary of the Kashi Vidwat Parishad Professor Ramnarayan Dwivedi, Head of the Astrology Department Professor Shatrughan Tripathi, Professor Girija Shankar Shastri, World Panchang scholar Dr. Ajay Pandey, Mahavir Panchang scholar Dr. Rameshwar Ojha, and Rishikesh Panchang scholar Vishal Upadhyay, among others.

According to scripture, for determining the date of Diwali, it is essential for Amavasya to occur during the main period of Pradosh. Since there is no Amavasya during the full Pradosh period on November 1 in any part of the country, celebrating Diwali on that date is not scripturally valid.

## Arjun Ram Meghwal Promises Development & Good Governance



**Dhanbad:** Union Law and Justice Minister Arjun Ram Meghwal visited Dhanbad on Wednesday to attend the BJP Scheduled Caste Front and Enlightened Citizens Conference. Addressing a press conference, he emphasized that the BJP's "double engine" government ensures faster development and better governance.

Meghwal urged voters in Jharkhand to support the BJP for effective development, claiming that without a double engine government, funds from the center often get diverted.

He criticized the Hemant Soren-led state government for ending pension schemes and introducing the Maiya Samman Yojana, while also suggesting possible fund misallocation.

Promising to eliminate such issues, Meghwal assured that the BJP's Gogo Didi Yojana would ensure proper fund utilization. He also vowed to tackle coal theft in Dhanbad if the BJP forms the next government in Jharkhand.

## Karnataka HC Rules Chanting 'Jai Shri Ram' Inside Mosque Does Not Hurt Religious Sentiments



**Bengaluru:** In a significant ruling, the Karnataka High Court has declared that chanting the slogan 'Jai Shri Ram' inside a mosque does not constitute an offense or hurt the religious feelings of any community. The court's judgment came as it quashed a criminal case filed against two individuals who had allegedly raised the slogan inside a mosque.

The case stemmed from an incident on September 24, 2023, when the two accused were charged by the police for entering a mosque and chanting 'Jai Shri Ram'. They were booked under several sections, including one for outraging religious feelings.

A single bench of Justice M. Nagaprasanna, while reviewing the appeal petition filed by the accused, concluded that the charges were not substantiated. The court emphasized that the complainant in the case had acknowledged the harmonious coexistence of Hindus and Muslims in the area where the incident occurred.

The ruling has sparked mixed reactions but highlights the court's stance on maintaining communal harmony and ensuring that expressions of faith do not lead to unwarranted legal action when there is no clear intent to incite religious discord.

## Mithila Sanskritik Parishad Celebrates Kojagara Utsav with Vibrant Cultural Program



by Arun Pathak

**Bokaro:** The Mithila Sanskritik Parishad, a prominent organization of Maithili speakers, celebrated the traditional Kojagara Utsav with great enthusiasm on Wednesday evening. The event, held at the auditorium of Mithila Academy Public School in Sector-4E, was a vibrant reflection of Mithila's rich cultural heritage.

The festival was inaugurated by key members of the council, including General Secretary Neeraj Chaudhary, former General Secretary Satish Chandra Jha, Finance Secretary Mihir Mohan Thakur, and Cultural Program Incharge Arun Pathak. The inaugural ceremony began with the garlanding of the statue of Mahakavi Vidyapati, paying homage to the legendary poet who is central to the Mithila culture.

In his welcome address, Neeraj Chaudhary explained the significance of Kojagara Utsav, which is celebrated on the night of Ashwin Purnima. He highlighted that the festival is marked by Lakshmi Puja in every household and is particularly notable for the night-long vigil, a tradition that holds special importance in Mithila, especially among newly married couples. He urged the community to preserve and promote the rich cultural practices of Mithila for future generations.

The evening's festivities featured a grand cultural program, organized under the coordination of renowned singer and Cultural Program Incharge Arun Pathak. The program kicked off with a rendition of the Bhagwati Vandana, a devotional hymn composed by Vidyapati, setting the tone for the celebration.

The success of the event was also attributed to the collective efforts of several community members, including Hari Mohan Jha, Anil Kumar Jha, Prabhat Kumar Jha, and Govind Ji Thakur, who played pivotal roles in the event's organization and execution.

Prominent figures from the Mithila community, including Jai Prakash Chaudhary, Kamal Kant Pathak, Rajendra Kumar, Shambhu Jha, Sunil Mohan Thakur, and many others, attended the occasion, adding to the festive spirit.

The Kojagara Utsav, with its cultural richness and community participation, not only celebrated Mithila's traditions but also strengthened the bonds of the Maithili-speaking community in Bokaro, reaffirming the importance of cultural preservation and collective celebration.

## GTTC hosts Voter Awareness Program

**Ranchi:** Trainee teachers at the Government Teacher Training College, Kanke, held a voter awareness program today under the Election Festival initiative. The event, coordinated by Dr. Om Prakash, aimed to promote voter participation through creative activities like poster making, slogan writing, and reel creation.

Dr. Raman Kumar Jha, Principal-in-charge, emphasized the theme "Mera Vote Mera Adhikar" (My Vote, My Right) and discussed its significance in detail. The program concluded with the national anthem.

Dr. Zakir Hussain announced that on October 18-19, all trainee teachers will participate in various competitions—including songs, posters, slogans, and short videos—at Jaipal Singh Stadium, Ranchi.

## Baranwal Community Plans Maha Dharna in Patna for OBC Status

by Suresh Pd Nikhar

**Gaya:** A key state executive meeting was convened by the Baranwal Seva Sadan Gaya Nagar Baranwal Seva Samiti on Wednesday, as part of preparations for the upcoming Maha Dharna demonstration on 20 October 2024, at Gardanibagh, Patna.

The meeting, held at Swarajpuri Road in Gaya, was chaired by Vicky Baranwal, General Secretary of the Samiti, and Rajkumar Prasad (Raju Baranwal), State President of the Baranwal Vaishya Mahasabha, Bihar.

The central issue discussed was the demand for the inclusion of the Baranwal community in the Other Backward Classes (OBC) list in both Bihar and at the national level. The community, which claims a population of over 12 lakh in Bihar, is seeking recognition and affirmative action through OBC status, which they believe has long been denied.

Raju Baranwal emphasized the need for unity within the Vaishya community, noting that while the Baranwal community is part of the larger Vaishya caste group, it has been divided into smaller sub-castes, weakening its collective



strength. "Out of the 122 castes within the Vaishya community, Baranwal is only recognized under 21 sub-castes, amounting to a population of 30 lakh, which is a gross injustice," Baranwal said.

He further criticized political parties for using the Baranwal community as a vote bank without addressing its core demands. "Every party seeks our votes, but our caste has yet to be granted OBC status, either in Bihar or at the national level," he added. Vicky Baranwal announced that he, along with thousands of Baranwal community members from Gaya, will participate in the Maha Dharna in Patna.

He also praised Raju Baranwal's efforts, noting his extensive travels across Bihar and Jharkhand to rally support for the cause.

The Baranwal community leaders also expressed concern over the government's policy of granting OBC status to smaller castes with minimal populations, while neglecting larger communities like Baranwal. "This policy is detrimental to the future of our children," Raju Baranwal argued.

The upcoming Maha Dharna in Patna is seen as a crucial moment to bring attention to the Baranwal community's demands. The leaders expressed confidence that the demon-

stration would garner significant support and ultimately lead to the inclusion of the Baranwal caste in the OBC list.

Other prominent members of the Baranwal community, including Jitendra Kumar, Kanchar Kumar, Kundan Prakash, Subodh Kumar, Prem Prakash Pawan, Prashant Kumar, Mahendra Prasad, Rakesh Kumar, and Umashankar Prasad, were also present at the meeting.

The Baranwal leaders are optimistic that the success of the Maha Dharna will draw the attention of both the Bihar Government and the Central Government, ultimately securing OBC status for their community.

## DPS Bokaro Students Shine in Indian Olympiad Qualifier in Mathematics; Shlok Anand Tops State

**Bokaro:** In a remarkable display of academic excellence, 15 students from Delhi Public School (DPS) Bokaro have secured outstanding results in the prestigious Indian Olympiad Qualifier in Mathematics (IOQM), further cementing the school's reputation as a leader in educational achievements.

Shlok Anand emerged as the State topper in Category A (Classes VII-XI), scoring an impressive 59 points in Jharkhand, while Arush Banerjee claimed the District topper and second State topper positions in Category B (Class XII), with a score of 54.

The IOQM, the first stage of the Indian Mathematical Olympiad program, is renowned for its challenging



tests of mathematical aptitude and problem-solving skills. Success in this stage is the gateway for students aiming to compete in the Indian National Mathematical Olympiad (INMO), making these accomplishments even more significant.

The achievements of these DPS Bokaro students are a testament to their unwavering commitment, hard work,

and passion for mathematics. Their success has not only brought immense pride to the school but has also placed Jharkhand on the map of academic excellence.

Dr. A. S. Gangwar, Principal of DPS Bokaro, extended his congratulations to the students and acknowledged the role of the school in nurturing their talents. "These accomplishments are a result of the collective effort of the school, students, and parents. They reflect our commitment to providing world-class education and fostering academic excellence in various fields," he said.

Along with Shlok Anand and Arush Banerjee, other students who qualified in the IOQM include Shivam Ojha, Anuj, Ayush Raj, Kumar Anmol, Aarush Ranjan, Nitin Kumar Singh, Ayush Lachhiramka, Aditya Raj Chauhan, Shirish Krejvia, Shudhanshu Kumar, Malvin Parira, Jay Satvik Madiredy, and Ayushi Singh.

This stellar performance showcases the caliber of DPS Bokaro's students and highlights the school's dedication to academic brilliance.

## CCL holds Capacity Building Programme on Cyber Security



**Ranchi:** The Human Resource Development Department of Central Coalfields Limited (CCL) conducted a one-day capacity building programme on Cyber Security. The event was inaugurated by Pankaj Kumar, Chief Vigilance Officer (CVO) of CCL, alongside A.K. Singh, General Manager (Vigilance), and Suresh Behera, General Manager (Systems).

During the session, both Shri Kumar and Shri Behera addressed the participants, stressing the importance of cyber security in today's digital age. The programme focused on several key topics, including digital literacy, online safety, the dos and don'ts of navigating the internet, and the pillars of cyber security—confidentiality, integrity, and availability. A major highlight was the discussion on building a robust cyber security culture within organizations.

The session was highly beneficial, equipping participants with essential knowledge to safeguard both their personal and professional digital spaces from cyber threats. The event was part of the ongoing Vigilance Awareness Campaign 2024 at CCL, which aims to enhance awareness and educate employees across various sectors, including the headquarters and field areas.

## CCL Dhori Area Holds Grievance Redressal Camp



**Dhori:** A Grievance Redressal Camp was organized at CCL's Dhori Area as part of the Special Campaign 4.0. The camp, held at 11:00 am, saw participation from employees and stakeholders of CCL's Dhori, Kathara, B&K, and Giridih areas.

A total of 50 grievances were received, with senior officials including N.C. Jha, General Manager CMC, A.K. Malik, Chief Manager (P) Solutions, and Ranjay Sinha, GM Dhori, addressing the concerns and working towards resolutions. Union representatives and media personnel also attended the camp.

The initiative, part of CCL's Special Campaign 4.0, aims to raise awareness about grievance redressal processes and ensure timely solutions, reflecting the company's commitment to a healthy work environment and the welfare of its employees and stakeholders.

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# Why Does Anarchy and Violence Erupt Only During Hindu Festivals?

...by Sanjay Saxena

## NUSRL Team Reaches Semi-Finals of FDI International Arbitration Moot, Heading to Berlin

**Ranchi:** A team of talented students from the National University of Study and Research in Law (NUSRL) has advanced to the semi-finals of the FDI International Arbitration Moot 2024 (South Asia Round). The team, consisting of Sarthak Kumar, Lisa Gupta, Suryansh Singh, Eylah Singh, and Abhinav Shukla, has earned a coveted spot to represent NUSRL at the international stage in Berlin.

By excelling in the regional rounds, the team secured a place among the top four and is now set to compete

in the international round from November 1 to 4, 2024. Their performance has not only brought recognition to the university but has also elevated India's standing in this prestigious global competition.

The students demonstrated exceptional legal acumen as they addressed complex issues such as third-party funding, cost protection, gradual clarification, and the power to draw adverse inferences during arbitration proceedings. Vice Chancellor Dr. Prof. Ashok R. Patil expressed



immense pride, saying, "Our students' talent is now shining on the global stage. Their dedication and hard

work have paid off, and I am confident they will continue to excel. We wish them the very best and

hope they return victorious." Moot Court Coordinator and Assistant Professor

Ms. Soni Bhola praised the team's efforts, saying, "This success reflects the collective effort of our students and the supportive environment at NUSRL. Their rigorous research and collaborative spirit, combined with the guidance of our faculty, have made this achievement possible."

The NUSRL team's remarkable progress in the FDI International Arbitration Moot 2024 showcases the university's growing reputation in legal education and its rising presence on the international stage.

## Concetto 2024: IIT (ISM) to Host Three-Day Tech Fest

**Dhanbad:** The annual tech fest of IIT (ISM), Concetto 2024, is set to kick off on October 18, offering a thrilling lineup of technical, entertainment, and knowledge-sharing events. The three-day fest, which will run until October 20, promises an exciting mix of guest talks, panel discussions, workshops, Robo Wars, and proune events, showcasing the latest in technology and providing ample entertainment for attendees. The event will feature a se-

ries of guest talks starting on October 18, with Dr. Shyam Mohan, Director of ISRO Group, delivering a research talk. This will be followed by an insightful session by eminent journalist Vishal Arora on "The Interplay of Media and Technology." On October 19, tech enthusiasts can look forward to talks from Shikhar Goel, CTO of GFG, and Tribuwan Bisen, Founder of Quant Insider, who will discuss Quantitative Trading.

# Rajnath Singh lays foundation stone for naval communication station in Telangana

New Delhi. The Defence Minister laid the foundation stone for a new Very Low Frequency (VLF) Station of the Indian Navy on Tuesday. The station, located at the Damagundam Reserve Forest in Vikarabad, Telangana, will cover 2,900 acres and is expected to cost Rs 3,200 crore. The new facility is designed to enhance the Indian Navy's communication



capabilities, allowing for reliable and secure transmission over long distances. The Defence Minister highlighted its importance, noting that it will serve as a strategic asset, crucial for effective command and control in challenging maritime

environments. "Effective coordination between men and machines is becoming extremely important in view of the evolving methods of warfare," he said while addressing the gathering. He stressed that real-time communication between ships, submarines, and command centres is a decisive factor in military

operations. "Without real-time communication, we cannot gain an edge despite having adequate equipment or manpower," he added. The Minister also highlighted the importance of strong communication systems in complex military operations, stating that they are essential for timely decision-making and conveying orders to field units. He emphasised that clear communication boosts both morale and unity among soldiers in operational environments. He further noted the growing global interest in the Indian Ocean Region (IOR) and stressed the need to continuously empower the Indian Navy. "Our interest is spread across the Indo-Pacific region. If India is to secure its commercial and security interests, a strong communication system is necessary," he said.

## Amid Row Over Siddaramaiah Land Case, Key Official Quits Citing Health

Mysuru: Mysuru urban development body chief Mari Gowda resigned Wednesday - citing health concerns - amid an ongoing state and federal investigation into land scam allegations against Karnataka Chief Minister Siddaramaiah, his wife, and other members of his family.

Mr Gowda was a long-time associate of the Chief Minister and worked with him since 1983; he was made President of the Mysuru Taluk Panchayat in 1995, Vice President of the Zilla Panchayat in 2000, and promoted to the top post eight years later. Siddaramaiah has not responded to the resignation so far. The Chief Minister faces cases filed by the Mysuru branch of the Lokayukta, or the state anti-corruption body, and the Enforcement Directorate, a federal agency. He also faces charges of destroying evidence; a complaint to this effect was filed earlier



this month with the ED.

Specifically, Siddaramaiah faces claims that his wife was allotted 14 plots of land - which he has said was a gift from her brother - in the upmarket Mysuru area of Vijayanagar as compensation for land elsewhere - holding a far lower value - taken for infrastructure projects. Anti-corruption activists alleged this caused a loss of ? 45 crore to the state. Earlier this month the Mysuru Urban Development

Authority agreed to take back those 14 plots from the Chief Minister's wife, BN Parvathi, but said this would have no bearing on the investigation into the allotments and against the veteran Congress leader.

BN Parvathi had written to MUDA saying she had planned to give up the land earlier but was advised against it as the allegations against her husband are "politically motivated". Shortly after her letter, Siddaramaiah said his wife was a "victim of the politics of hatred against me" and had been subject to "psychological torture". "I respect her decision," he said. The MUDA land scam allegations were spotlighted after the Karnataka High Court cleared Governor Thawar Chand Gehlot's order sanctioning prosecution of the Congress leader. A trial court framed charges the next day, with the Lokayukta beginning its investigation almost.

## Nayab Saini's photo with oath event ad out in newspapers before key BJP meet

Ahead of the Haryana BJP legislature party meeting on Wednesday, a government advertisement in newspapers featuring photos of Nayab Singh Saini and Prime Minister Narendra Modi has almost confirmed that the Ladwa MLA would return as Chief Minister for a second term. The advertisement, released by the government's public relations department, also lists details of the swearing-in event, scheduled for 11 am on October 17. Following the BJP's record third consecutive win in Haryana, the legislature party is scheduled to hold a meeting to elect their leader on Wednesday. The BJP has appointed Union Home Minister Amit Shah and Madhya Pradesh Chief Minister Mohan Yadav as central observers for the meeting. Traditionally, the BJP legislature party meeting, overseen by central observers, finalises the leader's name after deliberation and consensus.



However, with Saini's image and swearing-in details already made public, the announcement seems to be a mere formality. The ad features a congratulatory message from Prime Minister Narendra Modi, stating, "I am confident that Haryana's role is going to become more

important in the resolve of developed India." PM Modi is also likely to attend the swearing-in event. The ad also lists details of the ceremony, which will be held at Dussehra Ground, Sector 5, Panchkula. The ad concludes with the message, "Once again, double engine government". The BJP had contested the Assembly elections projecting Saini as the chief ministerial face. Saini, who was made the Chief Minister in March 2024 before the Lok Sabha elections, won the Ladwa seat in Kurukshetra district in the recently concluded Assembly elections. His leadership during the poll campaign was seen as one of the major factors in the BJP securing 48 of the 90 seats and returning to power, defying exit poll predictions. Three independent MLAs have pledged their support to the BJP, strengthening its mandate.

## Baba Siddique murder: Fourth accused sent to police custody till October 21

A Mumbai court on Tuesday remanded Harish Kumar Balakram Nisad, a 26-year-old resident of Uttar Pradesh, to crime branch custody until October 21. Nisad is a suspect in the murder of former Maharashtra Minister Baba Siddiqui. While giving the orders, the court noted the seriousness of the case and the need for custodial interrogation. Nisad was arrested on October 14 in Uttar Pradesh and brought to Mumbai on Tuesday. Police alleged that Nisad provided financial and logistical support to the other accused in the case, including the third shooter, Shivkumar Gautam, who remains on the run. He is the fourth individual to be arrested after Gurmail Baljit Singh (23), a resident of Haryana, Dharmaraj Kashyap (19) from Uttar Pradesh - both accused shooters -



and Pravin Lonkar, a Pune-based co-conspirator. The crime branch informed the court that Nisad might have information on Gautam's whereabouts and the procurement of firearms used in the murder of NCP MLA Baba Siddiqui. Police have also claimed that Nisad's financial transactions are linked to the crime, stating that he played a role in disbursing funds to the accused.

Nisad's lawyer opposed the prosecution's claims, arguing that his client was being framed. The court had earlier remanded two other accused, Gurmail Baljit Singh and Dharmaraj Kashyap, to crime branch custody until October 21. Both are accused of gunning down Siddiqui. A third suspect, Pravin Lonkar, was also sent to custody for his alleged involvement with the Lawrence Bishnoi gang. Baba Siddiqui, who had recently joined the Nationalist Congress Party, was shot dead on October 12 near his son's office in Nirmal Nagar. Police said that the suspects had been conducting surveillance on Siddiqui for weeks before the killing.

## Young IPS Officers Have To Adopt Ruthless Approach To End Anti-National Acts: Amit Shah

New Delhi: Union Home Minister Amit Shah said on Tuesday that all young Indian Police Service officers will have to work with a ruthless approach to eliminate anti-national activities. Interacting with the probationers of the 2023 batch of the Indian Police Service (IPS) here, Shah said the time has come that the police make its best efforts to protect the fundamental rights of the country's citizens. He said the police system should be alert to minimise crimes happening within the borders of the country and deliver justice to citizens in the shortest possible time.



"Now is the time to protect the rights of citizens and make efforts to prevent atrocities against them," he said. The home minister said that protecting the rights of the poor, children and women are of prime importance. He said the security of the nation does not mean only the security of the border. The nation is made of its citizens. The security of the citizen is the basis

of the security of the nation," he said. Shah said when he talks about security, it is not limited to the security of life and property, but the security of the rights given to the citizens by the Constitution too. "The Constitution has given equal rights to the poorest of the poor as are enjoyed even by the prime minister of the country, and police officers have a lot of responsibility to protect their rights," he said.

He told the IPS probationers that there is no work that cannot be improved and there is no work

that is less important. The biggest medal for any police officer posted as SP in his youth will be that he is remembered by the people of his district for his good work for many years to come, he said. "All young officers will have to work with a ruthless approach to eliminate anti-national activities," he said.

While doing police work, he said, the security of the nation should always be in the officers' mind and their eyes should always be open to ensure the security of the nation. Shah said as the home minister of the country, he can definitely say that now no one has the courage to insult India's borders and the army. "We have done a lot to provide tight security to our borders and it is being done," he said. The home minister said earlier Jammu and Kashmir, Northeast and Left Wing Extremism-affected areas were the three sore areas, but now security forces have achieved success in reducing violence by 70 per cent in these three places.

# No financial hurdle to Amaravati capital project says Andhra Pradesh minister

**Amaravati capital project is back on track despite cost escalation, with work in full swing, said Andhra Pradesh urban development minister Ponguru Narayana in an interview.**

Bengaluru. Amaravati, the much-anticipated greenfield capital of Andhra Pradesh, is back on track after a five-year hiatus. The state's Minister for Municipal Administration and Urban Development Ponguru Narayana provided insights into the revival of the capital project in a recent interview. Narayana revealed the state's key financial strategies to build a world-class city in Amaravati, and the road ahead for urban development across Andhra Pradesh in an interview he gave to a newspaper. Initially pegged to cost about Rs 48,000 crore, the Amaravati Capital Project now faces cost escalation of Rs 5,000-10,000 crore. The price escalation was caused due to the five-year delay caused by the previous government's halt in construction. Narayana highlighted that out of the initial budget, Rs 5,000 crore has already been spent.

However, Narayana is upbeat about finances and said there was no "financial hurdle" for the development of the capital city. According to Narayana, the World Bank has shown interest in



providing funding, with a formal announcement expected within the month. Narayana revealed in the interview that discussions with other global agencies, such as the Japan International Cooperation Agency (JICA), were also underway. Narayana said that the central government was also willing to assist to fund the capital's construction. He emphasised that financing would not be a significant hurdle, as "Amaravati is envisioned to be a self-

sustaining project that will also generate wealth," he said. According to him, despite the time lost, the quality of the work completed during the first Telugu Desam Party government in the 2014-19 period was highly praised. He said that the half-completed structures which were abandoned by the previous regime, remained intact even after enduring neglect and vandalism, as certified by an expert committee. Narayana emphasises that the government, by resuming the construction work, is focusing on key infrastructure. Among the top priorities are a "360-km trunk road network within the capital region, five iconic towers of about 50 floors each to house administrative offices, the Assembly, the High Court, and a four-lane river-bund road," he said. Narayana stated that the first set of administrative buildings is expected to be ready by 2027. He was also confident that despite concerns regarding the recent cases of severe flooding in Krishna

district, where Amaravati is situated, the city will be flood resilient. The minister assured that the original master plan remains robust. He revealed that the capital was being designed to handle floodwaters of up to 25 lakh cusecs, with three critical canals—Kondaviti Vagu, Palavagu, and a gravitation canal—planned to ensure proper drainage and flood water discharge. While no major changes were planned for the capital's layout, the canals will enhance Amaravati's ability to withstand extreme weather events, aligning with the government's vision of a well-researched and disaster-resilient city. With renewed momentum behind the Amaravati project and a strong focus on urban development, the state government is optimistic about meeting the financial and infrastructural challenges ahead. By securing support from multilateral agencies and ensuring sustainable growth in Amaravati, Andhra Pradesh hopes to create a model capital city that will drive long-term economic and urban development.

## Not criminalising marital rape smacks of patriarchy

IN an affidavit before the Supreme Court, the Union government has taken a stand against the criminalisation of marital rape. In the affidavit before the apex court, the Home Ministry mentioned that a man has no fundamental right to force sex on his wife as there are enough laws to protect women against sexual violence and that criminalisation of marital rape would be an extremely "harsh measure." The Supreme Court is hearing a number of petitions seeking to amend the British-era law that a man cannot be prosecuted for rape within marriage, even though violence within marriage is rampant in India. According to a recent government survey, one in every 25 women has faced sexual violence from their husbands. In January 2023, the Supreme Court appointed two advocates as nodal counsels to streamline the proceedings by compiling a common document of relevant materials from all parties. Currently, marital rape is outlawed in more than a hundred countries around the world. It was outlawed in the Great Britain in 1991. India is one of the few countries, along with Pakistan, Afghanistan, and Saudi Arabia, where the marital rape law remains in force. The Indian Government, in its affidavit, highlighted the fact that Parliament, in its wisdom, has deliberately chosen to retain the marital rape exception and urges the court to defer to legislative judgment in such sensitive matters. Parliament is directly elected by the people and is aware of the understanding of the people in such delicate, sensitive issues. In the affidavit, the government urged the court to exercise judicial restraint and leave the regulation of marital relations to the wisdom of Parliament. A number of petitions have been filed by different women's rights groups to strike down Section 375 of the IPC, which mentions several situations in which having sex is not considered rape, one of them being sex by a man with his wife, if she is not a minor. According to the campaigners, this kind of argument is medieval and unacceptable in modern times. The United Nations, Human Rights Watch and Amnesty International have raised concerns about India's refusal to criminalise marital rape. The Delhi High Court has given a split verdict, which remains pending for the Supreme Court's final judgment, in which one judge has held that marital rape is "morally repugnant" while the other expressed the view that the exception to Section 375 of the IPC is valid and should continue to exist.

It has to be borne in mind that the marital exception in the IPC and the definition of marital rape were drafted on the basis of Victorian norms that did not recognise men and women as equal and merged the identity of husband and wife under the "Doctrine of coverture." Further, marital rape violates the right to equality enshrined in Article 14 of the Indian Constitution. Hence, it creates two classes of women based on their marital status and immunises action perpetrated by men against their wives. There is no other reason for the victimisation of women other than their married status. Moreover, it becomes difficult for married women to avoid abusive conditions because of their financial dependence on their husbands. The exemption is also violative of Article 21 of the Constitution, which includes the right to life and encompasses the right to health, privacy, and dignity. The Supreme Court has recognised the right to abstain from sexual activity for all women, irrespective of their marital status, as a fundamental right guaranteed by the Constitution. In 2013, the United Nations Committee on the Elimination of Discrimination Against Women (CEDAW) strongly recommended that the Government of India criminalise marital rape. The forthcoming judicial review by the Supreme Court will provide an opportunity to eliminate a discriminatory legal relic that violates the fundamental rights enshrined in the Constitution and will help to transform women's lives and rights.

## India's western flank is on fire

### Why US is acting in tandem with Israel to carry out missile attacks against Iran

ON October 11, Iran launched its third missile strike on several targets in Israel, including on the capital city of Tel Aviv. According to an Israeli Defense Forces statement, nearly 300 ballistic missiles were involved in the attack but most were reportedly intercepted and neutralised by Israel and US forces based in Qatar, working together. The first missile strike took place on April 13, in retaliation for the targeted killing of Iranian diplomats in an Israeli bombing attack on an Iranian consulate in Syria. However, Iran gave advance warning of the attack and avoided causing major damage. It also announced that it did not want to escalate the conflict beyond this retaliatory attack. Nevertheless, this missile attack was the very first direct attack from Iranian soil on Israel and therefore a significant departure from the past.

The proxy war against Israel conducted hitherto through Iranian proxies such as Hamas in Gaza, Hezbollah in Lebanon and Houthis in Yemen, had now graduated to a direct clash of arms between the two major adversaries in West Asia and the Gulf.

Israel did not respond directly to the Iranian attack, but it chose to inflict damage on Iran by targeting both the Hamas and Hezbollah leadership in Lebanon. It carried out the brazen assassination of the Hamas chief, Ismail Haniyeh, in the Iranian capital, Tehran, just hours after he had attended the inauguration of the new Iranian President Masoud Pezeshkian on July 31. This was a humiliating blow to Iran, demonstrating Israel's ability to strike at will at targets within Iran, leveraging its superior intelligence capabilities. More importantly, Iran's attempt at deterrence by launching its April missile attack on Israel had failed. Israel then upped the ante with the bold assassination of the Hezbollah chief, Hassan Nasrallah, on September 27 in a suburb of the Lebanese capital, Beirut. Not just Nasrallah but several other senior leaders of this Shia militia were also killed in the targeted bombing of their headquarters. This was a prelude to the start of a major Israeli ground offensive into southern Lebanon with the objective of flushing out Hezbollah forces spread across southern Lebanon.

Iran's second missile barrage against Israel came soon thereafter on October 1. Like the April attack, this,



too, reportedly caused little damage. Assisted by the US, Israel was able to intercept and shoot down most of the missiles. Unlike the April attack, however, Iran gave no advance warning about the attack. Nor did it declare its intent to avoid further escalation.

As anticipated, Israel declared its intention to retaliate against Iran and promised that it would be "painful." While in April, US President Biden had urged restraint on Israel, this time there was no such advice from Washington. On the contrary, US National Security Advisor Jake Sullivan, promised severe consequences for Iran and said the U.S. would "work with Israel to make that the case."

This change in US stand has not been fully appreciated. This is no longer just an Iran-Israel conflict. It is now a US-Iran conflict and that changes the nature of the confrontation unfolding in the region with serious consequences.

It is against this backdrop that Iran chose to launch yet another missile barrage against Israel on October 10, reportedly using hypersonic missiles which it may have developed itself or may have obtained from Russia. There may have been greater damage inflicted on Israel than in the earlier attacks but it is difficult to assess the scale of such damage. The US announced that it had worked together with Israel to shoot down most of the missiles. This time President Biden declared that the US was "fully, fully, fully supportive of Israel." One should now jettison the view of the US acting as a restraint on Israel, in favour of avoiding escalation and a wider regional war. We will now increasingly see the US acting in tandem with Israel to carry out devastating aerial

and missile attacks against Iran. Three categories of targets are being mentioned: Iran's nuclear facilities, its oil and gas facilities and terminals and military targets, including the command-and-control centres of the Iranian Revolutionary Guards.

The longstanding effort of Benjamin Netanyahu, the Israeli leader, to drag the US into a war against Iran, has finally succeeded. It may be noted that a wider war in the region will have relatively less impact on the US since it is no longer dependent on energy supplies from the region. It would be less worried about an Iran lashing out by attacking oil and gas facilities of the Gulf countries or blockading the Hormuz Straits, through which most of oil and gas supplies are exported to markets both in Europe and Asia. It would be prudent to plan for another era of very high oil prices. India will be seriously impacted.

Iran may be seriously weakened and face a debilitating economic crisis. Its proxies may also be weakened even if they are not neutralised. They will respond as such groups always do — by engaging in asymmetrical warfare. There will likely be an uptick in international terrorism. Even a weakened Iran may finally cross the nuclear threshold and acquire a nuclear arsenal despite the immense sacrifices this may entail. It will be convinced that it is only as a nuclear weapon state that it could ensure its survival. This could have a cascading effect in the region, with Saudi Arabia and Egypt choosing to embrace the nuclear option. None of the countries of the region can escape a negative fallout from a war against Iran. They have tried to shield themselves by pretending that they do not have skin in the game, but they always did. If they had intervened early in the day to impose some penalty on Israel to stop its brutal war against Gaza and now in Lebanon, the trajectory of events may have been different. But their silence meant that Israel saw no downside to its aggressive policies. We may be on the threshold of another major war and one on our western flank where nine or more million Indians live and work. Our energy supplies may be significantly disrupted. That India has so few levers to influence events in its strategically critical neighbourhood is a sobering thought.

## Unsafe in Bangladesh

### Yunus cannot abdicate responsibility

A SENSE of frustration is visible in India's strong condemnation of the attacks on Hindu temples in Bangladesh. Ever since former Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina's ouster following the political upheaval in early August, New Delhi has repeatedly voiced concern about the safety and security of Bangladesh's minorities. It is ironic that the targeting of symbols of Hindu identity continues unabated under the watch of Nobel Peace Prize winner Muhammad Yunus. There have been multiple instances of desecration, vandalism and robbery at shrines and puja pandals. Yunus' contention that these attacks are politically motivated and not communal amounts to a singular abdication of responsibility. A systematic pattern of hate is being allowed to gain ground in Bangladesh, despite his assurances of protecting religious freedom and periodic visits to temples.

Certainly, these are testing times for India-Bangladesh ties. New Delhi's reticence over the demand to deport



Hasina to face trial is possibly raising hackles in Dhaka. For some in the new regime, riling India is the perfect way

with which Bangladesh can look its powerful neighbour in the eye — however misconceived the notion. Still, both sides must be fully aware of the grave consequences of any delay in bridging the growing distrust. Diplomatic channels need to be activated soonest at full throttle. First and foremost, though, Dhaka must crack the whip. To act — or not to act — cannot constitute leverage. Especially not when the reins of power are with Muhammad Yunus, the West's poster boy of all that is noble.

There's a lesson in what's taking place in Bangladesh, for India as well. Side-stepping the elephant in the room would be as deplorable as not calling out Dhaka. Let's not be in denial about minority-bashing at home. This vile absurdity must end. It's a disservice to India and Indians.

## Holding your breath on an India-Pak encounter

India and Pakistan are now at a point where even if they want to sit across a table and talk to each other publicly, they cannot do so for fear of enraging domestic constituencies.

THE visit of External Affairs Minister S Jaishankar to Pakistan to participate in the October 15-16 meeting of the Shanghai Cooperation Organisation (SCO) is unlikely to have a thawing effect on the 10-year freeze in bilateral relations. This much the minister has made clear, ruling out any bilateral agenda. "The visit will be for a multilateral event. I'm not going there to discuss India-Pakistan relations. I'm going there to be a good member of the SCO," he said. Jaishankar's statement is almost identical to that of then foreign minister Bilawal Bhutto Zardari in May 2023, before he arrived in Goa for the SCO Council of Foreign Ministers meeting: "My decision to attend this meeting illustrates Pakistan's strong commitment to the charter of the SCO... during my visit, which is focused exclusively on the SCO, I look forward to constructive discussions with my counterparts from friendly countries."

Nonetheless, bilateral drama is written into the script of every India-Pakistan encounter, or even a non-encounter. That was how it was in Goa, where Zardari and Jaishankar managed to have a showdown without exchanging a single bilateral word. It may be the same in Islamabad. Jaishankar claimed the other day that he is a "civil and courteous person, and will behave accordingly." That was possibly self-deprecatory humour. He is no Diljit Dosanjh who won Pakistani hearts the other day by calling up Pakistani singer Hania Aamir on stage during his Europe tour. The galleries back home would be terribly put out if Jaishankar returns without his signature-style tough talk against Pakistan, this time on Pakistani soil. After all, this is what India-Pakistan diplomacy has been reduced to, not just now, but over several years — a performance for domestic audiences defined by the need to demonstrate toughness toward the other, even in body language.

So, Jaishankar's "namaste" to the Pakistan minister in Goa last year got approving media coverage, as "Jaishankar gives the cold shoulder to Zardari."

India and Pakistan are now at a point where even if they want to sit across a table and talk to each other publicly, they cannot do so for fear of enraging domestic constituencies. This is a logjam that can be broken only with statesmanship and political will. A back-channel process between the two NSAs in 2016-2017, and another the UAE claimed it had mediated in 2020-21 shows a willingness to speak.

When the process makes progress, as in February 2021 when the two armies reaffirmed their commitment to the two-decade-old ceasefire on the Line of Control, things freeze up again, because then the process must be made public. The lessons of the past are not helpful. Prime Minister Atal Bihari Vajpayee's visit in 2004 came after several years of back-channel contacts and a massive shift in relations between the US and Pakistan after 9/11.

Prime Minister Manmohan Singh continued the engagement that began then, but India-Pakistan ties have never recovered from the 2008 Mumbai attacks. Prime Minister Narendra Modi's outreach lasted only a week, from his Christmas Day stopover in Lahore on his way back to Delhi, to the Jaish e-Mohammed (JeM) attack on Pathankot. Today, the dynamic has changed from what it was even 10 years ago. Jaishankar will arrive in Islamabad after the successful holding of an election in the post-August 5, 2019 truncated Jammu & Kashmir. In Kashmir, the victory of the National Conference (NC) is viewed as a verdict against Delhi and the changes the Modi government wrought on August 5, 2019. But the NC knows, and has said as much, that in running the government, a confrontation with the Centre is not



the way forward. From Delhi's point of view, Pakistan's internal turmoil is a further disincentive for engagement. Who to talk to in Pakistan — the civilian government or the army — was a question even in normal times. But now, General Asim Munir, the embattled army chief, is in the midst of a self-inflicted do-or-die battle with not just the untameable and ever-growing popularity of the jailed Imran Khan, but also sections within his own force. Prime Minister Shehbaz Sharif and his brother, Prime Minister Emeritus Nawaz Sharif, once thought of as the most likely of the Pakistani political class to make a paradigm shift in relations with India, are now beholden to Munir for their survival.

The Beijing-Islamabad relationship, the increasingly communal lens in India on ties with Pakistan plus Delhi's demand for a review of the Indus Waters Treaty further complicate the relationship.

For his part, Munir has not spoken his mind on India. What Delhi can see and feel is that the Pakistan

army's preoccupations, including with the Tehreek-e-Taliban Pakistan and its Afghan Taliban patrons, the resurgence in Baloch militancy — with Chinese nationals in their crosshairs — have not led to the quietening of groups like the JeM and Lashkar-e-Toiba. A shadowy group, the so-called 'People's Force Against Fascism', has owned the regular attacks in Jammu since 2021, but Indian security agencies link it to the LeT and JeM. Delhi believes it can handle the costs of cross-border terrorism and leave ties in deep freeze. But flip the script for a moment. Imagine that Jaishankar is taking with him the message, like Vajpayee in 2004, that Modi has accepted Pakistan's invitation to attend the SAARC summit it has been waiting to host since 2016.

India's unquiet quitting of SAARC due to tensions with Pakistan is one reason why it faces so much resentment from smaller countries in the neighbourhood. When India laments the growing influence of China in the region, it needs to recognise its own role in letting the region go.

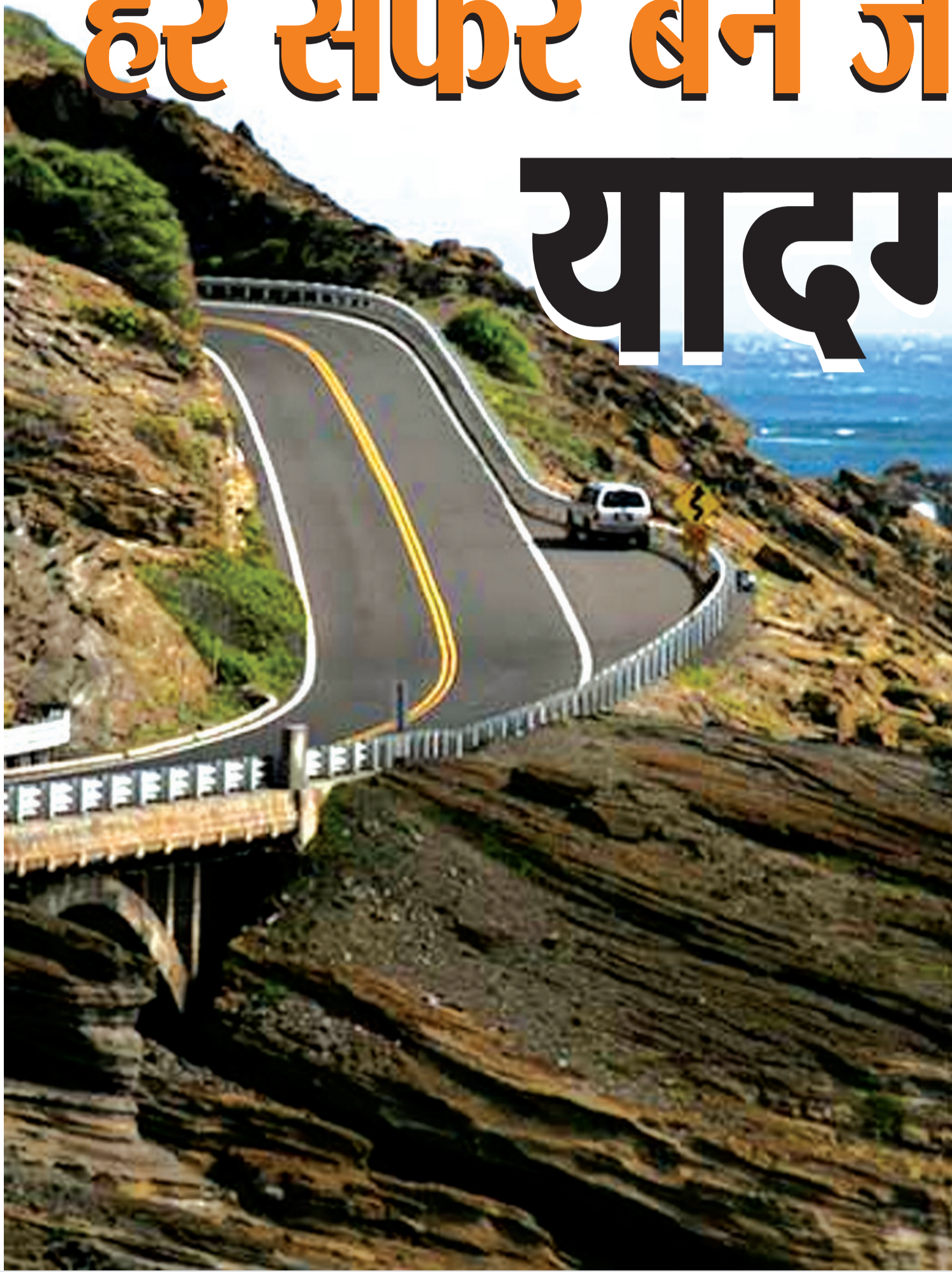
A revival of SAARC would put the energy back into India's neighbourhood policy and earn it the goodwill of neighbours. It would certainly put some pressure on Pakistan to conduct itself responsibly. The revival of SAARC may or may not resolve the differences between India and Pakistan, but it will provide bilateral engagement opportunities, normalise interactions in multilateral fora and make them less of a circus than they are now.

Bonus: An India engaged with Pakistan may help Prime Minister Modi to be taken more seriously by the world in his efforts to stop the war between Ukraine and Russia — and give that peace initiative greater heft.



# हर सफर बन जाएगा

## यादगार



नई खोज होगी। सोचने के नए आयाम खुलेंगे। कोई कह गया है कि सफर का उद्देश्य मंजिल पर पहुँचना नहीं, बल्कि मंजिल तक पहुँचने की प्रक्रिया का पूरा आनंद लेना होना चाहिए। जब हमारी निगाहें महज मंजिल पर टिकी होती हैं, तब रास्ते अक्सर अनदेखे रह जाते हैं... और कायनात का सारा कोलाहल, संसार का सारा स्पंदन, जिंदगी की तमाम रेलमपेल इन रास्तों पर ही तो बिखरी पड़ी है। इन्हें नहीं देखा तो सफर महज एक ठिकाना छोड़ दूसरे ठिकाने पर अपनी उपस्थिति दर्ज कराना भर हुआ, जबकि सफर मौका देता है कदम-कदम पर नए झरोखे से नया संसार देखने का, नए मित्र, नए गुरु पाने का, अनसोचे अनुभवों से गुजरकर नई जानकारी, नए ज्ञान के सागर में नहाने का। खैर, सच यह है कि लोग कई कारणों से सफर करते हैं।

कोई घर या दफ्तर के किसी कार्य विशेष के सिलसिले में एक स्थान से दूसरे स्थान जाता है, कोई छुट्टियों में घूमने जाने की औपचारिकता निभाने तो कोई तीर्थ करने। बहुत कम लोग सफर करने के लिए सफर पर निकलते हैं। ऐसे लोगों को न मंजिल

सफर करने के बारे में सबसे मजेदार बात है, हर कदम पर किसी नई खोज का रोमांच। फिर चाहे वह

किसी बच्चे द्वारा ट्रेन की खिड़की से पहली बार खुले में ऊँटों को चरते देखने का रोमांच हो या फिर पहली-पहली बार किसी अजनबी देश में कदम रखने पर नजर आने वाली एक अलग दुनिया का रोमांच।

यूँ इंसान अपने घर, अपने जाने-पहचाने माहौल के सुरक्षा कवच में सबसे सहज महसूस करता है, लेकिन नए नए नए लालसा भी उसका पीछा नहीं छोड़ती। कुछ नया देखने की लालसा ही उसे दुनिया घुमा लाती है।

कभी आदिमानव कुछ नया तलाशने के लिए एक जंगल से दूसरे जंगल जाता था। आज उसका वंशज महासागर की गहराइयों में गोता लगा चुका है और अंतरिक्ष के निर्वात अंधकार में चहल-कदमी कर चुका है। इन दो विपरीत छोरों के बीच आम मानव रोज कई प्रकार के छोटे-बड़े सफर करता रहता है। जरूरी नहीं कि यात्रा कहीं दूर की हो, बोरिया-बिस्तर बाँधकर रेल, बस, जहाज या विमान से की जाए। अपने ही शहर में, कभी उन रास्तों-गलियों से निकलिये, जहाँ से आपका अब तक गुजरना नहीं हुआ है। कुछ नया देखिएगा, कोई



पर पहुँचने की जल्दी होती है, न घर लौट आने की चिंता।

आप यह तय करके घर तो नहीं बैठ सकते कि कोई अच्छा अनुभव हो तो ही बाहर निकलें। जीवन के प्रवाह में छल्ला लगाने पर ही पता चलता है कि कब कौन-सा अनुभव अच्छा रहा और कब कौन-सा बुरा। छोटी-मोटी परेशानियाँ सफर का हिस्सा ही होती हैं। जब दुनिया को देखने, जानने निकले हैं तो इसके दोनों रूप देखने में ही तो यात्रा की परिपूर्णता होगी।

सर्दियों के मौसम में आमतौर पर लोग जबर्दस्त ठंड से बचने के उपाय करते रहते हैं लेकिन इससे उलट इस मौसम का मजा भी उठाया जा सकता है। हमारे देश में ऐसे कई इलाके हैं जहाँ सर्दियों में सैलानी बर्फ का मजा उठाने के लिए जाना पसंद करते हैं।

## सर्दियों का स्वागत करता उत्तराखंड

बर्फ का मजा उठाने के लिए पहला नाम जो हमारे जेहन में आता है वह जम्मू-कश्मीर का है। इसके अलावा हिमाचल प्रदेश, उत्तराखंड और सुदूर उत्तर-पूर्व का तवांग भी सर्दियों में बर्फ का मजा लेने का अच्छा ठिकाना है। बर्फ में मौज-मस्ती का मजा ही अलग है। इससे ऊर्जा भी भरपूर मिलती है और रिश्तों में गर्माहट भी आती है।

जाड़ों में मध्य हिमालय (1200 मीटर-4000 मीटर) स्थित उत्तराखंड के कई हिल स्टेशन बेहद खूबसूरत हो जाते हैं। बर्फबारी में नहाया पहाड़ तो पर्यटकों को अपनी ओर चुंबक की तरह खींचता है। दिसंबर के दूसरे सप्ताह से लेकर फरवरी के मध्य तक उत्तराखंड के कई पर्यटक स्थलों पर बर्फ गिरती है।

अंग्रेजों के बसाए शहर नैनीताल और मसूरी तो के नजदीक होने तथा रेल स्टेशनों के बिलकुल पास होने के कारण पर्यटकों की पहली पसंद हैं। इन दोनों ही शहरों तक दिल्ली से सड़क से 7 से 10 घंटे में पहुँचा जा सकता है। मसूरी तथा नैनीताल में बर्फबारी की खबर लगते ही दिल्ली, गुड़गाँव, गाजियाबाद तथा उत्तर भारत के शहरों के पर्यटक इन पर्वतीय पर्यटक स्थलों की ओर भाग पड़ते हैं। नैनीताल में बर्फ के साथ खेलने के लिए पर्यटकों की पसंदीदा जगह तो ऐतिहासिक माल रोड ही है पर यदि माल रोड में पड़ी बर्फ पर्यटकों को कम लगे तो वे नैनीताल शहर के

ऊपर झो ब्यू, टिफिन टॉप से लेकर किलवरी मार्ग पर दूर हिमालय दर्शन तक जा सकते हैं। हिमालय दर्शन से हिमालय की चोटियों का विहंगम दृश्य दिखता है। क्रिसमस के आस-पास यदि बर्फबारी हो जाए तो पर्यटक नैनीताल में त्योहार और छुट्टियों का दोगुना आनंद लेते हैं।

राजधानी देहरादून के पास मसूरी में भी साल में 3-4 बार बर्फबारी हो जाती है। बर्फबारी के होते ही पर्यटकों का हजूम मसूरी आ जाता है। इस भीड़ से मसूरी के नीचे किंगररेग तक के रास्ते जाम हो जाते हैं। मसूरी तथा नैनीताल और उसके आस-पास सभी बजट श्रेणी में पर्याप्त होटल उपलब्ध हैं। बर्फबारी का मजा लेने के लिए पर्यटक मसूरी के लाल टिब्बा, किनोग हिल, जॉर्ज एवरेस्ट, गन हिल तथा क्लाउड एंड स्टार्थानों पर जाते हैं।

मसूरी से 32 किमी दूर स्थित नव पर्यटक स्थल धनौली तक बर्फबारी के बीच सड़क के दोनों ओर बर्फ जम जाती है। इस मार्ग पर तब गाड़ी चलाने का आनंद दोगुना हो जाता है। चमोली जिले के जोशीमठ से 15 किमी दूर औली तो अब विश्व प्रसिद्ध स्कीइंग केंद्र तथा शीतकालीन रिजॉर्ट का रूप ले चुका है।

यहाँ 2010 के जनवरी-फरवरी में शीतकालीन सैफ खेलों का आयोजन होना है। औली में स्कीइंग के 7 दिवसीय, 14 दिवसीय प्रशिक्षण के लिए तथा पर्यटकों

के लिए एक-दो दिवसीय स्कीइंग करने की सुविधा गढ़वाल मंडल विकास निगम उपलब्ध कराता है। विद्यार्थियों के लिए तो रहने, खाने की सुविधा, उपकरणों, स्की लिफ्ट की उपलब्धता मय शिक्षक 5,500 रुपए में उपलब्ध है। पर्यटकों को बेशक एक या दो दिन स्की करने के लिए तथा हर सुविधा के लिए अलग भुगतान करना पड़ता है। रोप वे द्वारा औली पहुँच कर पर्यटक नई दुविधा में होता है।

सामने नंदा देवी सहित कई हिमाच्छादित चोटियों का दृश्य दिखता है। औली में 1,300 मीटर लंबा स्कीइंग ट्रैक उपलब्ध है, जो अंतर्राष्ट्रीय मानकों पर खरा उतरता है। पर्यटकों की सुविधा के लिए 800 मीटर लंबी चियर लिफ्ट के अलावा स्कीयरों को ऊपर पहुँचाने के लिए दो स्की लिफ्ट उपलब्ध है।

कुल मिलाकर औली में कम दामों में अंतर्राष्ट्रीय स्तर के स्की रिजॉर्ट का मजा लिया जा सकता है इसलिए विदेशी पर्यटक भी अपने देशों में मंहेंगे स्की रिजॉर्टों में जाने के बजाय औली आकर स्कीइंग करके पैसा बचाते हैं। उत्तराखंड के पर्यटन सचिव उत्पल कुमार सिंह बताते हैं कि शीतकालीन सैफ खेलों के आयोजन की तैयारियों के पूरा होने के साथ औली शीतकालीन खेलों के अंतर्राष्ट्रीय मानचित्र पर स्थापित हो जाएगा।

औली के अलावा उत्तराखंड में उत्तराकाशी जिले का दयारा बुग्याल, देहरादून में चकराता के पास मुंडाली, रुद्रप्रयाग जिले का चोफता तथा पिथौरागढ़ मुंयारी के पास खलिया टॉप स्कीइंग के शौकीनों के लिए पसंदीदा पर्यटक स्थल है। अंग्रेजों के समय के स्थापित पर्यटक स्थलों के अलावा उत्तराखंड में बर्फबारी का आनंद लेने के लिए अनगिनत स्थल है। इनमें से कई स्थल तो अभी पर्यटक मानचित्र पर आ भी नहीं पाए हैं। स्थली मुखवा में भी जाड़ों में अच्छी-खासी बर्फ पड़ती है।



NEWS BOX

**Lionel Messi remains coy on Argentina future: These can be my last games**

New Delhi. Lionel Messi has remained coy on his Argentina future after scoring a hat-trick against Bolivia in the South American World Cup qualifiers on October 15, Tuesday. Messi was in scintillating form as he put the Bolivian side to the sword, bagging his 10th international hat-trick. With this, Messi went level with Cristiano Ronaldo for the most international hat-tricks in history. Messi was asked after the win over Bolivia if he would be there in time for the 2026 World Cup, where Argentina will be defending their crown. The 37-year-old would give an honest answer saying, as quoted by ESPN, he hasn't set a deadline for his future and is focussed on enjoying the love he is getting from the fans at the moment.

"I didn't set any date or deadline about my future," Messi said. "I'm just enjoying all this. I am more emotional than ever and taking all the love from the people because I know these can be my last games." Plan to be with Argentina as long as I can contribute. Messi went on to say that he feels great playing at home as he can lap up the affection from the Argentine fans. The Argentine maestro said that the team enjoys the connection with the fans at the



moment. "It is very nice to play here feeling the affection of the Argentine fans," Messi said after the game. "It makes me emotional to listen how they shout my name. We all enjoy this connection with the fans and we love playing at home."

Messi said that he feels like a kid once again being surrounded by younger teammates and would continue playing for the Argentina team if he can maintain that feeling and contribute to the side.

"It's a joy to be present and appreciate this moment. Being surrounded by younger teammates, given my age, makes me feel like a kid again," Messi said. "I find myself doing silly things because I feel so comfortable. As long as I maintain that feeling and can continue contributing to the team, I plan to be here enjoying [the national team]."

**Shubman Gill should not open in Rohit Sharma's absence in Australia: Anil Kumble**

New Delhi. Shubman Gill has the experience of playing in Australia and he is capable of shining at No. 3, former India captain Anil Kumble said. The legendary leg-spinner urged India to resist the temptation to open the batting with Gill if and when Rohit Sharma is unavailable for a Test match in the much-anticipated Border-Gavaskar Trophy. Shubman Gill began his career as an opener, making his debut in Melbourne in 2020. He opened the batting for India in as many as 17



Tests before opting to move to No. 3 in 2023. When India looked beyond Cheteshwar Pujara, Gill volunteered to drop in the batting order and allow Yashasvi Jaiswal to open the innings with Rohit Sharma in Test cricket.

Rohit, according to sources, is likely to miss the first Test of the upcoming five-match series against Australia in Perth due to personal reasons, leaving a spot at the top up for the taking. Kumble said India should look at opening with Yashasvi and KL Rahul and allow Shubman to continue batting at No. 3. "You know he (Shubman) is exceptionally talented, skilful and he's done that. He's been to Australia before. Like you mentioned, in Brisbane, he got a wonderful fifty there and he knows the conditions," Kumble told the broadcasters during a rain delay on Day 1 of the Test between India and New Zealand in Bengaluru on October 16. "I don't want to change that. I know there's a temptation to push Shubman Gill because Rohit is not available in the first Test. But, there's always KL Rahul— that name is synonymous with change and adapting to whatever the team wants. Whether you want to open the batting or keep wickets, Rahul Dravid did that, now KL Rahul is doing that," he said. Gill hit a match-winning 91 in India's iconic victory in the Brisbane Test in 2021 while opening the batting. The young batting star has slowly, but surely, found his footing at the No. 3 spot for India.

**Pro Kabaddi League: Tamil Thalaivas bank on Sachin, retained core for season 11**

- Thalaivas bought Sachin for 2.15 crores
- Sachin will have a chance to cement himself as one of the best in the league
- Thalaivas retained their core players before the auction

New Delhi. After a disappointing campaign last time around, Tamil Thalaivas are eager to make a strong comeback as Season 11 of the Pro Kabaddi League kicks off on October 18. Despite reaching the semi-finals in Season 9, the Thalaivas faltered last season, failing to progress beyond the league stage. Now, with a revamped coaching setup and key player retentions, they are determined to secure a place in the PKL 11 Playoffs. For this season, the Thalaivas have adopted a dual-coach system, appointing Udaya Kumar as head coach and former PKL champion Dharmaraj Cheralathan as the strategy coach. This collaborative approach is

expected to bring fresh ideas and guidance to the team. Although Tamil Thalaivas weren't amongst the busiest teams during the Season 11 Player Auction, they made headlines by signing star raider Sachin for a record INR 2.15 crores. With their core squad intact, here's a breakdown of the Thalaivas' strengths, weaknesses, opportunities, and threats heading into the new season.

**Strengths**

One of Tamil Thalaivas' key strengths is their ability to retain most of their core players from last season. Star raider Narender, who has accumulated 429 raid points in two seasons, will once again be the focal point of their attack. Adding to this is the acquisition of Sachin, who boasts 952 raid points in his PKL career and holds the record for the most do-or-die raid points (233) in league history. Together, Narender and Sachin form a formidable raiding duo, providing the team with a powerful offensive unit. The Thalaivas' depth in raiding is further strengthened by backup options like Vishal Chahal, who made an impressive debut last season with 34 raid points, and the experienced Chandran Ranjit, who has tallied 534 raid points in his PKL career. In defence, the team has maintained continuity by retaining key players such as Sagar, M.



Abishek, Sahil Gulia, Himanshu, Mohit, and Amirhossein Bastami. Sahil Gulia and Sagar were among the top 10 defenders last season, with 69 and 66 tackle points respectively, ensuring the Thalaivas have a solid defensive lineup.

**Weaknesses**

Despite their strong roster, the Thalaivas' depth in defence could be a concern if key defenders like Sahil Gulia or Sagar suffer injuries or experience a dip in form. Sagar's absence for several matches last season significantly affected the team's defensive balance, and a similar situation this season could expose their backup defenders, such as M. Abishek, Himanshu, Mohit, and Bastami,

who will need to step up under pressure.

**Opportunities**

For Sachin, this season presents an opportunity to further cement his status as one of the league's premier raiders. Just 48 raid points away from reaching 1000 in his PKL career, he will aim to surpass the 200 raid points mark in a season for the first time. With the support of Narender, who will share the raiding responsibilities, Sachin finds himself in an ideal setup to achieve his personal and team goals.

**Threats**

One potential threat for the Thalaivas is the lack of an experienced all-rounder in their squad. All-rounders are crucial for providing balance, contributing on both offense and defense. Iranian Moein Safaghi is the team's only designated all-rounder, but he has yet to make his PKL debut. Relying solely on him to fill this vital role could be risky, especially if key players are sidelined due to injuries. Without a proven all-rounder, the Thalaivas may struggle to maintain balance if they face personnel challenges throughout the season. As Season 11 approaches, Tamil Thalaivas will look to build on their strengths while addressing these potential weaknesses and threats, as they aim to make a deep playoff run.

**IPL 2025: Coach Paras Mhambrey to work with Lasith Malinga at Mumbai Indians**

- Paras Mhambrey worked with Mumbai Indians for 4 years from 2009
- Mhambrey was part of the Rahul Dravid-led coaching staff at T20 World Cup 2024
- Mumbai appointed Mahela Jayawardene as their head coach in October

New Delhi. Mumbai Indians added former India bowling coach Paras Mhambrey to their coaching unit on Wednesday, October 16. The five-time Indian Premier League champions confirmed that Mhambrey will work closely with bowling coach Lasith Malinga in IPL 2025. Mhambrey returns to the Mumbai franchise after having had a successful stint with the Indian senior men's



cricket team. Paras Mhambrey, 52, was part of the Rahul Dravid-led coaching team during India's T20 World Cup triumph. Having worked closely with Dravid over the last few years, Mhambrey is one of the most sought-after bowling coaches. Mumbai Indians confirmed that Lasith Malinga will continue to have the responsibility of working with the bowlers and Mhambrey will work alongside him in IPL 2025. The announcement came a week after MI welcomed Mahela Jayawardene back as

their head coach for the IPL 2025 season. The former Sri Lanka captain, who was instrumental in their title triumphs, replaced Mark Boucher, who was in charge of the team for the 2022 and 2023 seasons. "He will work alongside current Bowling Coach Lasith Malinga, as part of the coaching team under Head Coach, Mahela Jayawardene. He has been a part of the Mumbai Indians coaching team earlier as well, celebrating title wins in the IPL and the Champions League T20," Mumbai Indians said in a statement.

Paras Mhambrey played two Tests and three ODIs for India after making his debut in 1996. A medium-pace bowler, Mhambrey picked 5 wickets in international cricket. Mhambrey played domestic cricket for Mumbai, featuring in 91 first-class matches and taking 284 wickets and 83 List A matches with 111 wickets.

Mhambrey worked with the Mumbai Indians for four years after he was first appointed as assistant coach in 2010. The former fast bowler's extensive experience of working as a bowling coach will come in handy as Mumbai Indians look to bounce back from the horror season in 2023.

**Net gains for Adarshini, Sachin in CM Trophy 2024**

- Adarshini defeated Rajarajeshwari J of Sivagangai 21-13, 21-4 in the girls' final, while Sachin JT got the better of Rishivanth CA of Tiruppur 21-15, 15-21, 21-14 in the boys' category.

CHENNAI. Adarshini Shri NB of Vellore and Sachin JT of Coimbatore clinched the badminton schools girls' and boys' singles gold medals in the CM Trophy 2024 on a day where incessant rains battered the city. Adarshini defeated Rajarajeshwari J of Sivagangai 21-13, 21-4 in the girls' final, while Sachin JT got the better of Rishivanth CA of Tiruppur 21-15, 15-21, 21-14 in the boys' category. Defending champs Chennai



continue to top the leaderboard with 59 gold, 40 silver and 43 bronze while Chengalattu is a distant second with 12 gold, 17 silver and 17 bronze. Salem district, who are third in the standings, managed to close the gap on Chengalattu by winning the women's handball gold as Kancheepuram and Chennai bagged silver and bronze, respectively. Tiruchirappalli bagged the school boys' hockey gold on a better goal difference as three teams finished with five points each, registering one win and two draws.

**MOP Vaishnav triumph**

MOP Vaishnav College for Women won the University of Madras, Inter-Zone (women) ball badminton tournament held at SA Arts & Science College. In the final, MOP defeated Ethiraj 35-19, 35-26. Teams from MOP, JBAS, SRMAS, Ethiraj and WCC took part in the tournament. Placings: 1. MOP Vaishav; 2. Ethiraj; 3. B-Zone combined team; 4. A-Zone combined team.

**Vijay clinches title**

Tamil Nadu's Vijay Shreeram finished with a tally of 7.5 points at the end of the 8th and final round and won the New Prince Group of Institutions-Sri MS Venkataraman Memorial 9th International FIDE-rated chess tournament. International Master Ravichandran Siddharth, Aswin Sairam, Ayushh Ravikumar, Madhesh Kumar, Vignesh B, IM Balasubramaniam R and Karan JP scored seven points each and they finished 2nd to 8th place, respectively, based on their tie-breaks. Vijay bagged a cash award of Rs 60000 and a trophy.

**Bengaluru crowd erupts with Virat Kohli chants at Chinnaswamy Stadium**

- India host New Zealand for three-match Test series
- Day 1 of 1st Test delayed due to persistent rain in Bengaluru
- Kohli received loud cheers from crowd at M Chinnaswamy

New Delhi. Day 1 of the 1st Test between India and New Zealand might not have witnessed any action yet, with rain playing spoilsport. Nonetheless, the fans remained upbeat, cheering through a rainy day at the M



Chinnaswamy Stadium in Bengaluru on October 16, Wednesday. Despite an Orange Alert declared in the city and the Karnataka government ordering work from home due to inclement weather, this couldn't stop the fans from turning up in huge numbers despite the

incessant rain. Supporters queued outside the stadium amid persistent showers before finally gaining entry. The toss was delayed, but the fans continued to fill the stadium, showcasing their enthusiasm for the game and its players. As the Indian team shifted

their base to an indoor training session, Virat Kohli made an appearance, sending the crowd into a frenzy. The RCB star walked across the stadium to the indoor training area, greeted by thunderous cheers. Emerging star Yashasvi Jaiswal accompanied Kohli, eager to get into the groove before the match. Jaiswal has frequently been seen practising alongside Kohli in the nets, eager to learn from the seasoned campaigner. Kohli's arrival was met with chants of his name, creating the perfect homecoming for the crowd favourite. The unbreakable bond between the Bengaluru fans, RCB, and Kohli was on full display. Kohli has always acknowledged the love and support showered on him by the fans. Now, the Bengaluru crowd eagerly awaits his performance in whites for India as they take on New Zealand. Although rain and drizzle persisted throughout the day, fans remained unfazed, waiting patiently to support the Indian team and their favorite stars.

# Taapsee Pannu

## SLAMS Turkish Airlines Over A 24-Hour Delay: 'Not Passenger's Problem To Figure Out'

Actress Taapsee Pannu, who recently starred in "Khel Khel Mein" with Akshay Kumar, took to her Instagram stories in August 2024 to express her disappointment with Turkish Airlines. In the story, she called it her "#WorstExperience" and shared how her flight was delayed by 24 hours without prior intimation. In her Instagram story, Taapsee slammed Turkish Airlines and accused them of having the "most 'non-caring' customer service." She shared that passengers on her flight were left to fend for themselves because the airline offered no support. According to her, there wasn't even a customer care service to help with the long delays, forcing travelers to figure things out on their own.

Taking to her Instagram story, Taapsee wrote, "#WorstExperience @turkishairlines u have the most 'non caring' customer care service. Or wait, u don't have a customer 'care' service itself especially for passengers who suffer coz of your delay. Left to figure it out yourself. Wow 24 hour delay coz of your airline issue is not passenger's problem to figure out!" Not long back, Taapsee, who is known to be vocal about social issues, expressed concern for the current situation of women's safety in the country as she revisited the her film Pink's theme. "8 years ago we never knew this small film of ours would find such a big place in the notable films of our



country and 8 years after that we can't believe that we are still amidst the battle and struggle of security of women and their consent. What bittersweet emotion it is for someone who is proud to be a part of this film," she said.

Taapsee Pannu was recently seen alongside Akshay Kumar in Khel Khel Mein. The film co-starring Pragya Jaiswal, Ammy Virk and Vaani Kapoor failed to perform well at the box office. Besides the comedy-drama, Taapsee also had another release this month - Phir Aayi Haseen Dillruba in which she reprised her role of Rani Kashyap from the film Haseen Dillruba. Joining the actress to entertain the masses were Vikrant Massey and Sunny Kaushal who portrayed her husbands in the film.



### Kareena Kapoor Reveals THIS Actor Was Sister Karisma Kapoor's First Bollywood Crush



The latest episode of The Great Indian Kapil Show saw the Kapoor sisters gracing the show with their infectious energy. Karisma Kapoor and Kareena Kapoor appeared on the show and spilled secrets. One notable moment was the game segment where Kareena shared who was Karisma's first Bollywood crush. She also named Karisma's 'worst film' and 'cringe-worthy' role. Appearing on the second season of The Great Indian Kapil Show, Kareena and Karisma indulged in fun games as they spilled secrets. Karisma wore noise-cancelling headphones as Kareena shared her secrets. Kapil asked Kareena about Karisma's first Bollywood crush and she instantly revealed that it was Salman Khan.

In the same segment, Kareena revealed that she considers Karisma's role in Paapi Gudia the most cringeworthy. She also mentioned that her sister takes a lot of time to dress up and considers this her most irritating habit. She said that she considers Madaan-E-Jung to be Karisma's bad film. As Karisma took off the headphones, she said that she had sent her sister to watch her films quite often. She said, "I've sent Bebo to watch many of my films, and she would often come back saying, 'What a bad film you made me watch. I got a lot of firings.'" The Kapoor sisters fondly remembered their grandfather, Raj Kapoor, in the episode. They mentioned how he motivated them to pursue a career in Bollywood and take the Kapoor legacy to newer heights. They shared how their family pushed them to prove themselves in the film industry without providing any special assistance.

On the work front, Kareena was last seen in Hansal Mehta's The Buckingham Murders. Karisma, on the other hand, was last seen in Murder Mubarak. The Great Indian Kapil Sharma Show Season 2 is available to stream on Netflix.

### Aditya Seal On Chemistry With Sunny Singh In Amar Prem Ki Prem Kahani: 'Once We Broke The Ice...'



Aditya Seal, known for his versatility and dynamic range as an actor, has taken on one of the most challenging roles of his career in the groundbreaking film Amar Prem Ki Prem Kahani, where he portrays a queer character. This bold move not only pushes the boundaries of his own artistic capabilities but also shines a light on the nuances of love and identity. In an exclusive interview with News18, Aditya shared the intense preparation he undertook to bring authenticity to such a deeply emotional role. He revealed the creative challenges he faced, the intricate process of embodying the character, and the powerful connection he built with his co-stars to bring this complex story to life. Reflecting on his journey, Aditya spoke candidly about how playing diverse characters has profoundly shaped his career, allowing him to explore new depths in his craft. He described how this role, in particular, has broadened his understanding of human emotion and storytelling, marking a transformative chapter in his career. Here's an in-depth look at his thoughtful reflections and the impact of this groundbreaking role on his artistic journey.

#### Portraying a Queer Character: Breaking Stereotypes

Aditya Seal's role in Amar Prem Ki Prem Kahani marks a significant step for LGBTQ representation in mainstream Indian cinema. Unlike many stereotypical portrayals, Aditya's approach was to normalize the character and treat the love story with the same authenticity as any heterosexual relationship. Reflecting on his preparation for the role, he explained, "The preparation was just trying to normalize the entire thing. Many might think it required meeting several people from the community for research, but that wasn't necessary for me. I already knew people from the LGBTQ community, and I wanted to approach this like any other love story—just two individuals in love."

His portrayal has been praised for its authenticity and avoidance of clichés. "We weren't trying to make anyone laugh or present caricatures. There was no attempt to dress up in a particular way that could reinforce preconceived notions about the community," he said. "It was important to keep it real and show that, at the end of the day, these are two people experiencing genuine emotions and love, just like anyone else."



# Shraddha Kapoor

## Dating? Stree 2 Star Says 'Love Spending Time With My Partner'

Shraddha Kapoor, one of Bollywood's most beloved actresses, is basking in the success of Stree 2. The horror-comedy has broken all records at the box office. Well, amid this she has been grabbing headlines after the actress confirmed that she is in a relationship. The Stree 2 star, who is known for keeping her private life away from the spotlight, has left fans guessing after mentioning her "partner" in a recent interview. In a recent interview with Cosmopolitan, Shraddha was asked about her approach to relationships. Kapoor confirmed her relationship and said, "I really love spending time with my partner and doing things with him like watching a movie, going for dinner, or traveling. I am generally someone who likes to spend time doing things together or even not doing things together."

The actress was reportedly dating Rahul Mody but recently news came in that the couple has parted ways. The speculation intensified when Shraddha unfollowed Rahul, along with his sister, his production house, and even his dog on Instagram. And now, Shraddha's cousin, Zanai Bhosle — granddaughter of legendary singer Asha Bhosle — has also unfollowed Rahul, which has seemingly confirmed the breakup. Neither Shraddha nor Rahul has commented on the this, but the couple's alleged relationship had been a topic of speculation for some time. The two first sparked dating rumours earlier this year, with multiple sightings together, including a wedding appearance that fuelled the speculation. In June, Shraddha all but confirmed the romance when she posted a photo on her Instagram Stories. While she flashed a smile, Rahul couldn't resist pulling a goofy face, sealing the deal for fans. Sharing the picture, Shraddha wrote, "Dil rakh le, neend to vaapis de de yaar." She added a series of emojis, including a laughing emoji and a heart emoji. She also tagged Rahul in the picture.

"They are not afraid to be photographed with each other, but that doesn't mean they will make their relationship official anytime soon. They are both private people and want to keep their relationship out of the limelight. They are not afraid to be photographed with each other, but that doesn't mean they will make their relationship official anytime soon. They are both private people and want to keep their relationship out of the limelight," a source had earlier told the Hindustan Times. On the work front, Shraddha has not announced any new projects after Stree 2.

