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RNI Regn No. DLMUL/26/A6883

researchers.asia@gmail.com



The Researchers'

NEWS BOX

Nepal's hydropower ambitions face climate reality check

KINSHASA, Congo.(Agency)

Nepal's hydropower boom has long been touted as a cornerstone of economic growth and renewable energy, but the devastating flood in August exposed its vulnerability. The disaster triggered by a glacial mountain collapse on the China-Nepal border killed more than 1,400 people and left thousands missing - while knocking 410 megawatts (MW), or about 10 percent of the generation capacity, out of Nepal's power system. More than 90 percent of Nepal's electricity comes from hydropower, but extensive damage to its river projects has prompted questions about its energy security as climate and geological risks intensify. "Hydropower has been a major driving force in growth of the country... generating jobs and income," Uttam Bhlon Lama, senior vice president of the Independent Power Producers' Association (IPPAN), told AFP. "It was bringing huge hope and future prospects to the people," he said, adding that the country would now have to rethink its dam-building spree. "We have to prepare... This is our new normal." Over the past decade, the Himalayan nation has increased hydropower output more than fourfold to about 4,120 megawatts, according to government figures, helping connect nearly all its 30 million people to the grid. The country had previously moved to export surplus electricity to neighbouring India and Bangladesh, seeking to turn its glacier-fed rivers into a source of revenue. Authorities suspended electricity exports after the disaster. The major destruction of hydropower infrastructure underscored the risks of that strategy in a region where glaciers are retreating, permafrost is thawing and extreme hazards are becoming harder to predict.

CNN Says White House Didn't Allow It To Board Trump's Air Force One

world.(Agency)

The White House left CNN off Air Force One for President Donald Trump's trip Saturday to a college football game in Tennessee, marking the latest media restriction from the administration in an ongoing dispute with First Amendment implications. CNN, a member of the US network video pool that rotates duties shooting and sharing video coverage of the president, reported it had been scheduled to fly aboard the president's plane Saturday for a visit to a midday game between the University of Tennessee in Knoxville and the University of Texas. But White House guidance issued Friday night instead included Real America's Voice, a conservative outlet. The White House guidance was issued after journalists from CNN, along with MS NOW and Politico, which Trump banned last week from the White House grounds, returned to the executive complex with TV cameras in hand after a judge handed the organisations a reprieve. US District Judge Timothy Kelly temporarily struck down the president's ban in an overnight ruling early Thursday, but his decision dealt with "hard passes" to the White House grounds and didn't directly address pool duties. The judge's temporary order also said nothing directly about Air Force One. The spot meant for CNN on the flight has long been saved for a member of the US network video pool; Real America's Voice is not a part of that group. The White House did not respond to emails from The Associated Press requesting comment about the decision.

CNN declined to comment.

A written pool report Saturday morning confirmed there was "no TV pool" for the travel, though Real America's Voice celebrated its inclusion in the trip and said it would make feeds available to other news outlets.

Gunmen Open Fire On Ambulance Rescuing Victims Of Pak Suicide Bombing

Dera Ismail Khan.(Agency)

Gunmen opened fire on an ambulance attending the scene of a suicide bomb attack at a roadside police checkpoint in northwestern Pakistan that killed at least 12 people on Saturday and wounded about 35 others, officials said. The attack involving



an explosives-laden vehicle occurred in Dera Ismail Khan, a district in Khyber Pakhtunkhwa province, said Bilal Faizi, a spokesman for the provincial emergency

service. Local police chief Safdar Baloch said most of those killed and wounded were security personnel and passersby. The blast destroyed the sprawling checkpoint, and witnesses said gunshots were also heard after the attack. Faizi said gunmen opened fire on an ambulance as emergency crews transported victims to a nearby hospital, killing a rescue worker and wounding two others. Two women and a child were among those killed in the suicide bombing, he said.

The Pakistani Taliban, formally known as Tehrik-e-Taliban Pakistan, or TTP, claimed responsibility for the attack. Pakistan has experienced a surge in armed group violence in recent years, much of it claimed by the TTP and the outlawed Baloch Liberation Army, a separatist group primarily active in neighboring Balochistan province.

Hamas leader says Israel to use Gaza 'blood' in election

The Israeli premier has vowed in the run-up to the vote not to withdraw troops from Gaza and rejected a US-led peace initiative in which Hamas said it would surrender weapons.

DOHA.(Agency)

The leader of Hamas brushed aside the possibility of change from Israel's upcoming election in an interview on Saturday, saying he expected Israelis to campaign off Gaza's "blood". "Whether this or that person comes to power, or this party or another -- our people have suffered at the hands of all Israeli parties," Khalil al-Hayya told the Qatari station Al-Araby. "We absolutely refuse to allow the blood, suffering, and cause of the

Palestinian people to serve as fuel for Israeli elections. What matters to us is that our people achieve their goals, aspirations and legitimate rights." Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu is locked in a tight contest as he seeks to stay in power in the October 27 elections. The Israeli premier has vowed in the run-up to the vote not to withdraw troops from Gaza and rejected a US-led peace initiative in which Hamas said it would surrender weapons, a promise Israel views with scepticism. The vote is the first since Hamas led the deadliest ever attack against Israel on October 7, 2023, with militants storming into southern Israel and killing 1,221 people and dragging 251 others as hostages to Gaza. Israel's retaliatory offensive has displaced virtually the entire population of Gaza, damaged or destroyed the vast majority of buildings and killed more than 73,900 people, according to the Gaza health ministry, which operates under Hamas and whose figures are considered reliable by the United Nations. Polls show Netanyahu's

most formidable challenger to be Gadi Eisenkot, a former military chief who served in Netanyahu's war cabinet but has accused him of failing strategically. The



Palestinian Authority in turn has scheduled a legislative election for November 28, which would be the first in two decades, although there are widespread doubts about whether it will go ahead. Hamas won the last election, held in 2006, defeating Palestinian president Mahmoud Abbas's Fatah.

Abbas, 90, has since been ruling by decree, with the legislature not allowed to convene and Hamas seizing control of Gaza. Abbas is based in the West Bank, where the Palestinian Authority wields limited autonomy. "We are ready to sit down with President Abbas to lay the foundations for a national program and achieve genuine unity," Hayya said. "If the Palestinian elections are postponed, that step must serve as an entry point for putting the Palestinian house in order." Hamas has been working on an alliance with Mohammed Dahlan, a former Fatah figure born in Gaza who has been an interlocutor with the United States on its peace plan. "In the event of a postponement, the alliance will remain intact and open to all, aiming to forge a unified national front," Hayya said. It remains uncertain if Hamas could even run in the election as Abbas has required all candidates to accept the platform of the Palestine Liberation Organisation, which has recognised Israel's right to exist since 1993 at the start of the Oslo peace accords.

Oman calls for self-restraint, dialog in Mideast conflict

UNITED STATES.(Agency)

Omani Foreign Minister Badr Albusaidi called at the UN Saturday for "self-restraint" from all sides in the Middle East war, while stressing that Muscat was ready to mediate.

Earlier on Saturday, President Donald Trump rejected a truce deal proposed by Iran that Tehran said could have reopened the Strait of Hormuz to shipping within a week. The waterway is key to the world's energy supply and is now central to the conflict between the US and Iran, which is at a stalemate after nearly

seven months. "We call upon all parties concerned to settle their outstanding disputes through



pursuing a policy of self-restraint and foresight, and through engaging in

dialog to reach consensual, political solutions and sustainable understandings for the benefit of all," Albusaidi said, addressing world leaders gathered in New York.

"Oman once again reaffirms its steadfast commitment to continuing its efforts aimed at safeguarding navigation in the Strait of Hormuz... We also call upon all parties to cooperate with Oman in these efforts." Oman sits across the Strait of Hormuz from Iran, and ships seeking to skirt Tehran's restrictions have recently been taking a route that hugs the Omani coast.

From terrorism to Gulf conflict: Here's what EAM S Jaishankar said at UN | Key Points

In a wide-ranging speech, Jaishankar touched on terrorism, the conflicts in Ukraine and the Gulf, food and energy security, artificial intelligence, development and the need to reform international institutions.

world.(Agency)

External Affairs Minister S. Jaishankar used India's address to the UN General Assembly to call for peace, defend India's right to act against terrorism and press for a greater voice for developing countries in global decision-making. In a wide-ranging speech, Jaishankar touched on terrorism, the conflicts in Ukraine and the Gulf, food and energy security, artificial intelligence, development and the need to reform international institutions. His strongest warning was directed at an unnamed country, which he described as a "serial practitioner of terrorism". Jaishankar

accused it of misrepresenting facts before the General Assembly and attempting to normalise terrorism and avoid accountability. Yesterday, a serial practitioner of terrorism mispresented facts before this assembly," Jaishankar told the General Debate. "Our right to defend



ourselves against terrorism will be exercised." He did not identify the country or spell out what action India might take. He said state-sponsored terrorism with a cross-border purpose was a direct challenge to the international order and called for governments involved in such activities to be held accountable. "Friendship and goodwill cannot

coexist with terrorism," he said, while calling for continued zero tolerance towards terrorism and action against terror financing.

India calls for restraint in Gulf, Ukraine Jaishankar also urged an end to hostilities in the Gulf and Ukraine, warning that conflicts were affecting countries far beyond the immediate battlefield. "We remain deeply concerned over continuing hostilities," he said, stressing the need to protect seafarers and keep energy and foodgrain supplies moving. On the Gulf, he called on all sides to exercise restraint and de-escalate tensions.

"India calls upon all parties to exercise restraint, de-escalate tensions, ensure protection of civilians, and uninterrupted flow of energy and commerce," he said.

On Ukraine, Jaishankar said India supported ongoing efforts to bring peace and recalled Prime Minister Narendra Modi's message to Russian President Vladimir Putin - "As Prime Minister Narendra Modi stated, endless war must give way now to an end to war." India also reiterated its support for a two-state solution in West Asia, with Israel and Palestine living side by side as sovereign states.

'Worry and sorrow': West Asia war opens old wounds in Kurdistan

PENJWEN.(Agency)

Kurdistan resident Ahmed Faraj was just a child when his city became a battlefield in the Iran-Iraq conflict. Decades later, with the West Asia at war, he fears his home might be drawn in again. For months, drones and missiles have buzzed over his lush green hometown of Penjwen bordering Iran, as the Islamic republic and the United States fight a war that has engulfed most of the region. Iran and its allied Iraqi armed factions have intensified attacks on bases hosting US troops, as well as against Iranian Kurdish opposition groups, whose fighters have long sought refuge in Kurdistan's mountains.

While the initial violence has largely subsided, Faraj worries that if fighting resumes, the conflict could escalate, putting his city at risk because "in war, borders no longer exist." "I clearly remember Penjwen's destruction," the 57-year-old told AFP as he sipped his tea at one of the city's busiest markets. Led by Saddam Hussein,

Iraq attacked neighbouring Iran in September 1980, triggering an eight-year war that is estimated to have killed hundreds of thousands of people on both sides. Faraj said one of his sharpest memories was from a



year later, when Iran attacked his hometown, resulting in "dozens of civilian casualties". Eventually, once Penjwen was deserted, "the Iraqi regime demolished the town itself, flattening all the houses with

TNT and bulldozers so that Iranian forces couldn't enter and establish a base there", he added.

Haunted by a memory

Between 1987 and 1988, Saddam's government carried out the "Anfal Operation" that is thought to have killed around 180,000 Kurds. Following a US-led invasion of Iraq, Saddam was toppled in 2003 and hanged three years later, putting an end to Iraqi proceedings against him on charges of genocide over the Anfal campaign. Former parliamentarian Abdul Rahman Ali Reda was also a child when the war broke out, and one incident still haunts him: when Iraqi forces burned down his family home on a hill in Penjwen. "That sight has never left me," he said, now 53 years old. "Homes, schools, government offices and religious sites were all levelled to the ground, and even after all these years, many houses remain in ruins and have never been rebuilt," Reda told AFP.

India's Ayush sector may grow from \$36.9 billion to \$318 billion by 2047: Study

A RIS study has pegged India's Ayush services sector at USD 36.92 billion in 2024-25. It says stronger quality, digital and global outreach could lift it to USD 216-318 billion by 2047.

Delhi. (Agency)

India's Ayush services sector has emerged as one of the country's fastest-growing service segments, with its economic contribution estimated at USD 36.92 billion in 2024-25 and projected to grow to USD 216-318 billion by 2047, according to a study by the Research and Information System for Developing Countries (RIS).

The study said the sector has recorded a compound annual growth rate of 16.91 per cent since 2022-23, directly supported 1.76 million livelihoods, and generated an estimated USD 1.77 billion in Medical Value Travel revenue in 2024-25. The report was released during the 11th Ayurveda Day celebrations in Nagpur on September 23.

Union Ayush Minister Prataprao Jadhav said the findings underlined the sector's growing economic potential.

"The findings of this landmark study affirm that Ayush is not merely a cultural inheritance but a dynamic and high-growth engine of India's economy. The Ayush sector is poised to play an increasingly important role in healthcare, wellness, employment and global economic engagement, while contributing to our vision of a healthy and self-reliant India," he said.

Ayush Secretary Vaidya Rajesh Kotecha said the study created an evidence base for future policy and investment.

"For the first time, the economic contribution of the Ayush services sector has been measured through a nationally scaled, establishment-level survey covering all major Ayush systems. The report provides a robust evidence base to guide future investment, policy planning and reforms," he said.

RIS Director General Professor Sachin Kumar Sharma said the study was based on a survey of 15,914 establishments across all six Ayush systems.

"This study marks an important step in building an evidence-based understanding of India's Ayush services economy. Based on a nationally scaled survey of 15,914 establishments across



all six Ayush systems, the findings show that an economy of USD 36.92 billion, growing at close to 17 per cent annually and supporting 1.76 million livelihoods, is no longer a peripheral sector but a dynamic, knowledge-

based service economy," he said.

According to the study, clinics and day-care centres accounted for more than 71 per cent of the sector's total revenue. Standalone clinics generated an estimated USD 16.21 billion, while day-care centres contributed USD 10.13 billion. Ayurveda was the largest individual system, accounting for USD 17.73 billion, or nearly 48 per cent of the sector's total revenue.

The Ayush-based wellness segment, including yoga centres, spas and resorts, recorded a CAGR of 21.29 per cent. Yoga centres alone saw about 75 per cent growth in revenue over two years, the study said.

The sector directly supported 1.76 million livelihoods, with more than one million jobs concentrated in local and standalone clinics. Women accounted for 43 per cent of the overall workforce, and their participation was more than 50 per cent in several organised segments.

Delhi Cop Thrashed With Baseball Bat After Argument, Gets 5 Stiches Near Eye

Delhi. (Agency)

A Delhi Police head constable has been allegedly assaulted while he was returning home after work following an argument with some men at a shop in the Mangolpuri area.

The cop, Krishna, said the incident took place around 12:15 AM on September 23. He said that his wife was unwell and had asked him to pick up a cold drink on his way back home. Krishna, who is posted at the Aman Vihar police station, said that while he was buying a cold drink from a shop near a petrol pump in Mangolpuri, some boys misbehaved with him.

"I scolded them and chased them away. As I left with the cold drink, 7-8 boys came and thrashed me with baseball bat," he said in a video.

The attack was also caught on a CCTV.

He also said that his gold chain is missing after the attack.

"Maybe they snatched it," Krishna said. "They also snatched my phone. But the police later recovered it," he added. He also claimed that he later went to a police station in Vijay Vihar to get the first information report (FIR) filed, but they "refused" to do register it. "They told me that the area where the fight took place does not come under Vijay Vihar police station. They are saying it comes under Mangolpuri police station," Krishna said.

He also alleged that the police officers there didn't lend him a mobile to make a call to his family. "A head constable later gave me his phone to call my family," he said. Krishna said that he has received five stitches.



Weather Update: Delhi-NCR, Uttarakhand, UP brace for heavy rain as IMD issues warnings

Delhi. (Agency)

North India's spell of heavy rain shows no sign of easing, with the India Meteorological Department (IMD) forecasting heavy to very heavy rainfall on Sunday, September 27, along with isolated extremely heavy showers over Uttarakhand. The weather system driving this spell is losing strength as it tracks north-northwestwards, but forecasters say its effects will keep large parts of central and northern India soaked for now. Thunderstorms and gusty winds are also expected to sweep through several states. Uttarakhand looks set for the heaviest rain on Sunday, with the IMD warning of heavy to very heavy showers and isolated extremely heavy rainfall in places. This follows an already intense spell in the hill state, with similar warnings issued for September 26. Himachal Pradesh and western Uttar Pradesh are also likely to see heavy to very heavy rain in isolated pockets, while eastern Uttar Pradesh, Haryana, Chandigarh, Delhi and Madhya Pradesh could witness isolated heavy showers.

Thunderstorms with lightning and winds of 40-50 kmph are forecast in parts of Haryana, Chandigarh, Delhi, Himachal Pradesh, Punjab, Uttarakhand, Madhya Pradesh, Jammu and Kashmir, and western UP. Eastern UP, Rajasthan, Jharkhand and Telangana may see thunderstorms with slightly gentler winds of 30-40 kmph.

Why the rain persists as monsoon retreats

The wet spell is being fuelled by a depression that formed over northeast Madhya Pradesh and neighbouring north Chhattisgarh, which was tracking north-northwestwards on Saturday. It's expected to move into southeast Uttar Pradesh and gradually weaken into a well-marked low-pressure area.

A low-pressure area forms where air pressure dips below that of its surroundings, drawing in moisture and setting off rain. Even as this system loses steam, its lingering moisture and circulation can keep triggering showers further north.

A western disturbance, a weather system travelling eastwards through the upper atmosphere, is adding to the mix over northern India.

DDA seeks inputs from private developers for JJ cluster dwellers' rehab

The Master Plan for Delhi-2047 envisages in-situ rehabilitation of approximately 17 lakh JJ cluster dwellers.

Delhi. (Agency)

The Delhi Development Authority has started consultations with private developers to take forward its in-situ slum rehabilitation programme, with an investors' meet held on September 25 to seek industry inputs on the proposed framework for redevelopment projects across the city.

Following directions from L-G Taranjit Singh Sandhu, the meeting brought together developers and other stakeholders to discuss opportunities and challenges involved in implementing large-scale rehabilitation projects. The Master Plan for Delhi-2047 envisages in-situ rehabilitation of approximately 17



neighbourhood development, improved urban infrastructure and more efficient land use.

During the investors' meet, developers

shared their views on several aspects of the proposed programme, including project structure, implementation mechanisms, allocation of risks, financing requirements and approval processes. The DDA said that the feedback would help refine the framework for private-sector participation and make it more transparent, predictable and responsive to market conditions. While addressing the gathering, the DDA vice chairman highlighted the role of private developers in meeting the scale of rehabilitation and redevelopment required in the national capital. The authority said the proposed model seeks to combine safe and dignified housing.

Gujral's murals at Shastri Bhawan to get new life; NGMA-led team to remove, relocate artworks

Delhi. (Agency)

With the landmark Shastri Bhawan set to be demolished soon, two giant murals created by Satish Gujral in 1968 adorning its facade may get a second life, as an NGMA-led team of experts has drawn up a blueprint to "carefully remove and relocate" the prized artworks to a site within Lutyens' Delhi.

The team, helmed by the National Gallery of Modern Art (NGMA) in Delhi, consists of NGMA's artists, art and architectural conservation experts, and the celebrated artist's family members through the Gujral Foundation, a top official said. "Satish Gujral was one of the most eminent artists of our country, and last year, we celebrated his birth centenary at the NGMA. As the building is set to be



demolished, we have been assigned the responsibility to carefully remove and relocate his iconic murals of Shastri Bhawan. We will also document the entire process," NGMA

A lead investigator of this "challenging project" from the NGMA side said, "We have already communicated with the NDMC (New Delhi Municipal Council), as well as the art and culture department of the city government to suggest possible places for the relocation of the murals."

The team recently zeroed in on the campus of the School of Planning and Architecture (SPA) near the ITO, but it was found that the massive murals would need a much taller building for relocation, and therefore the hunt for a suitable new address is still underway. Built in the heart of Delhi in the initial decades after Independence to house offices of several ministries, Shastri Bhawan was named after the second prime minister of India, Lal Bahadur Shastri. It is a 'G+7' structure.

Police posts at subways, flyovers to boost women safety

Delhi. (Agency)

In the wake of recent incidents of violence against women, the Delhi government has expedited plans to establish police posts at pedestrian subways, areas beneath flyovers and near foot overbridges. Public Works Department (PWD) Minister Parvesh Sahib Singh on Saturday directed officials to complete formalities in coordination with Delhi Police and ensure the project is implemented at the earliest.

"With the Delhi Police and the PWD completing formalities, directions have been given to issue tenders and start work on the ground. In the initial phase, we plan to set up police posts at around 50 locations. The government will set them up from its own budget, while the Delhi Police must provide manpower and manage the area. Tenders for the project will be floated soon," Singh said. The government aims to improve safety and utilisation of public infrastructure through the project, he added. The PWD, which maintains around 106 flyovers, 115 foot overbridges and nearly 70 subways, will construct the proposed police posts.

Officials said the government received an initial proposal from Delhi Police to set up about 50 posts, which was found feasible. "While we have approved that proposal, in future, we plan to cover all road assets such as flyovers, pedestrian subways and foot overbridges. Approximately 300 police posts will be set up," they said. The PWD is considering allowing commercial establishments inside pedestrian subways in a later phase, though the proposal is yet to be approved, they said. The objective is to provide a sense of security to subway users, they added.

The move comes days after a 17-year-old girl was allegedly gang-raped at Astha Kunj Park by three men who posed as policemen. Delhi Police has since arrested them.



After Op Sindoor, India's Defence Push Faces A New Test. What Experts Said

Operation Sindoor was launched in response to the terror attack in Jammu and Kashmir's Pahalgam. The attack, attributed to Pakistan-based terror groups, killed 26 people, including one Nepali national, and injured many others.

Delhi. (Agency)

Operation Sindoor has provided India with important lessons about the country's defence capabilities, particularly the need to build greater self-reliance in emerging technologies, manufacture drones and missiles at scale, and develop the ability to rapidly adapt when adversaries devise countermeasures -- a view shared by defence industry experts who spoke about it at length at NDTV's Defence Summit on Sunday.

Dr Samir V Kamat, former DRDO chairman and former Secretary, Department of Defence R&D said the Operation Sindoor, viewed alongside the wars currently being fought elsewhere, had underlined the need for

an "Atmanirbhar" defence capability. "I think Op Sindoor was a good learning experience for all of us. Though it was a very short conflict, this conflict, along with the current ongoing wars -- the Russia-Ukraine war or the US-Iran war -- has taught us that we need to have 'atmanirbharta' capabilities. And they have to be in the emerging domains of cyber security, information warfare, space situational awareness, space-based capabilities for ISR, it has to be in the ability to manufacture drones and missiles in numbers but also the ability to innovate and modify when an opponent comes up with a counter to whatever you have developed."

Operation Sindoor was launched in response to the April 22, 2025 terror attack in Jammu and Kashmir's

Pahalgam. The attack, attributed to Pakistan-based terror groups, killed 26 people, including one Nepali national, and injured many others.



The missile strikes targeted facilities in Muzaffarabad, Kotli, Bahawalpur, Rawalakot, Chakswari, Bhimber, Neelum Valley, Jhelum and Chakwal. These areas had long been suspected by intelligence agencies of harbouring terrorist camps.

The sites were believed to be affiliated with Lashkar-e-Taiba (LeT) and Jaish-e-Mohammad (JeM), two terror groups responsible for multiple attacks in India over the years.

Five of the nine locations struck were in Pakistan-occupied Kashmir, while four were in mainland Pakistan. Dr Kamat said developing these capabilities could not be the responsibility of a single organisation but there should be a "whole of nation approach", bringing together industry, academia, MSMEs and start-ups. "And this can only happen if we work or approach a 'whole of nation' approach. One organisation cannot deliver the capabilities the country needs. We have to look at how we can synergise the capabilities that exist in our industries.

Ajay Rai calls Gyanesh Kumar corrupt, demands repoll of Varanasi LS seat where PM won

Lucknow/Agra(Agency)

Uttar Pradesh Congress chief Ajay Rai on Saturday demanded the arrest of Chief Election Commissioner Gyanesh Kumar over the Special Intensive Revision (SIR) row, calling him a "corrupt and dishonest person". He also sought the cancellation of the 2024 Lok Sabha election in Varanasi, where Prime Minister Narendra Modi won, and demanded that the poll be held again.

Rai alleged that Kumar helped rig the election to ensure the BJP's victory. His remarks came amid Opposition criticism after a news report claimed that Kumar ignored objections raised by Election Commissioners Sukhbir Singh Sandhu and Vivek Joshi on 14 occasions in 10 months over decisions and orders linked to the SIR exercise.

Speaking to reporters in Agra, Rai said, "Gyanesh Kumar is a corrupt officer and a dishonest person. He is the one who orchestrated a fraudulent election victory. He ensured (PM) Modi's win by rigging the election across the entire state, and he continues to aid the BJP and PM Modi. The person who helped form the (BJP) government did so by stealing our votes, by resorting to dishonesty."

He added, "He should be arrested, and the (2024 Lok Sabha) election in Varanasi must be cancelled. A re-election should be held."

DMK MP seeks EC action against Vijay, TVK minister over Pocso case remarks

Bengaluru. (Agency)

DMK Rajya Sabha MP J Constandine Ravindran has filed a complaint with the Election Commission, accusing Tamil Nadu Chief Minister C Joseph Vijay and sports minister Aadhav Arjuna of violating the Model Code of Conduct (MCC) and a Madras High Court order by referring to an ongoing Pocso case ahead of the Madurantakam Assembly bypoll.

The parliamentarian alleged that the two TVK leaders repeatedly made mention of the sensitive case, which involves granite baron R Veeramani, in "complete disregard" of the court's order during an election rally.

"The speeches were made in Tamil before large public gatherings. They were telecast by television channels and have been circulated widely on social media," Ravindran wrote in his complaint.

He said the High Court had categorically asked TVK representatives to refrain from speaking in any manner that linked the Pocso case against Veeramani to the DMK, its leaders or functionaries.

The direction was issued on Friday, September 25, during the hearing on a defamation suit filed by DMK general secretary Duraimuguan against Arjuna, his fellow minister CTR Nirmal Kumar, and the IT wing of the TVK.

In his complaint, Ravindran also asserted that the remarks made in Madurantakam were also in violation of the MCC, which stipulates that criticism of other parties should remain confined only to their policies, programmes, past record and work.

Russian Foreign Minister Lavrov backs India’s permanent UN Security Council seat, opposes more Western expansion

New Delhi(Agency)

Russian Foreign Minister Sergey Lavrov has backed India’s candidacy for a permanent seat on the United Nations Security Council (UNSC), while cautioning against increasing Western representation as part of any reform of the powerful UN body. Addressing world leaders at the UN General Assembly, Lavrov said changes to the Security Council must not weaken the prerogatives of the Council or its permanent members. He also made clear Moscow’s opposition to allocating additional permanent seats to Western countries.

Russia backs India and Brazil

“UN Security Council reform cannot involve any additional seats being allocated to Western countries, especially to Germany and Japan, who are now on the path to militarism and revanchism,” Lavrov stated.

At the same time, Lavrov called for broader representation of the Global South, arguing that the Council’s composition should better reflect geographical realities.

“We are in favour of broadening the representation of Asia, Africa, and Latin America. We support Brazil’s and India’s candidatures for a permanent seat,” Lavrov said.

He added, “And at the same time, I wish to emphasise this, we must satisfy the interests of the African continent in keeping with the Israeli consensus and the SEAT declaration.”

BRICS nations, including Russia, had earlier reiterated their

support for Brazil and India playing a greater role in the UN, including the Security Council, in the New Delhi declaration.

Mauritius endorses India’s candidature

The push for Security Council reform was also prominent during the ongoing general debate at the UN headquarters, with several leaders calling for the Council to reflect present-



day geopolitical and economic realities.

Mauritius gave an explicit endorsement of India’s bid. Mauritian Foreign Minister Dhananjay Ramful said, “We support the positions of the G4 and of L69 on Council reform, and we reiterate our support for India’s candidature for a permanent seat, commensurate with its constructive role in global affairs.”

Mauritius also endorsed the Common African Position,

calling for adequate regional representation, equal rights for new permanent members and dedicated spaces for small island developing states.

Portugal also backed structural reform. Prime Minister Luis Montenegro called for a more representative Security Council with permanent representation for Africa, Brazil and India.

G4 partners press for reform

Support for New Delhi’s ambitions also came through the four-nation G4 alliance. Marshall Islands President Hilda Heine said, “The Marshall Islands affirms its longstanding support for Japan and its G4 partners to achieve permanent membership on the UN Security Council.”

Japanese Prime Minister Sanae Takaichi did not name individual G4 candidates in her address, but placed Security Council reform at the centre of her remarks.

Amit Shah said India had not only sustained but accelerated its growth trajectory despite global challenges, reaffirming the government's long-term target of making India the world's leading economy by its 100th year of independence.

September 30 INDIA bloc meeting to intensify stir against CEC

KOLKATA (Agency).

The India bloc is expected to go into a huddle on September 30 at the Constitution Club in Delhi to deliberate and strategise a joint programme aimed at cornering the Centre on the issue of chief election commissioner Gyanesh Kumar, amid concerns over special intensive revision (SIR) of electoral rolls.

The decision to hold the meeting was taken after the top leadership of INDIA bloc parties touched base on Saturday. Leader of the disputed Trinamool Mamata Banerjee spoke at length over the phone to Leader of the Opposition (LoP) in Lok Sabha and Congress MP Rahul Gandhi and CPM general secretary MA Baby to discuss the course of action against the BJP and CEC, sources said.



Besides Rahul, Congress chief Mallikarjun Kharge, Sonia Gandhi, Mamata, her nephew Abhishek Banerjee, SP chief Akhilesh Yadav, Shiv Sena (UBT) chief Uddhav Thackeray, and Baby are expected to attend the meeting. Sources said INDIA bloc leaders are likely to chalk out a roadmap for pan-India protests seeking removal of Kumar and an independent inquiry into the EC’s decisions.

Discussion will focus on three core agenda items, including impeachment motion against Kumar, nationwide stir in poll-bound states including UP, Punjab and Uttarakhand.

Speaking in Sreerampur in West Bengal’s Hooghly, Mamata on Saturday said, “I sent a message to Rahul Gandhi, and told him we must sit together.”

Punjab university students block highway, damage campus property over unverified rape rumours

New Delhi. (Agency)

Students damaged buildings and blocked a highway near Lovely Professional University (LPU) in Punjab late on Saturday after unverified claims of a gang rape and a student’s death spread on campus. Police said they had found no evidence to support the rape allegation. The university called the rumours “false, baseless and fabricated”.

Around 2,000 students gathered near the girls’ hostel in Phagwara after the claims circulated on social media. The protest escalated when students blocked the highway, smashed window panes and threw bricks and flower pots. Parts of university buildings caught fire during the unrest.

Police cleared the highway and restored traffic. Kapurthala Senior Superintendent of Police Gaurav Toora said officers had brought the



situation under control and had begun talks with students and university officials.

Police find no evidence

Police said a woman had died by suicide four to five days earlier near the campus agriculture department. They said they had received no complaint that linked her death to the rape allegation.

“The students claim that there was a woman who was raped. We don’t have a complaint about the girl,” Toora said. Police had not established the identity of the woman mentioned in the rape rumour or of any alleged perpetrator, he added. “Some students claimed a girl student died by suicide, while some claimed that the student was raped. This has led to unrest among students against the LPU administration. So far, we have found no substantiating evidence to corroborate.

How many sitting MPs, MLAs changed parties after winning elections between 2022 and 2026? Study reveals shocking numbers

Bengaluru(Agency).

More than a hundred sitting Members of Parliament (MPs) and Members of Legislative Assembly (MLAs) switched their political parties after winning elections between 2022 and 2026, according to a new report published by the election watchdog Association for Democratic Reforms (ADR). The recent analysis examined the movements of sitting members across the Lok Sabha, Rajya Sabha, and state and Union Territory Assemblies during general elections and by-elections over the four-year window.

The analysis revealed that in total, 111 legislators swapped parties: 26 Lok Sabha MPs, seven Rajya Sabha MPs, and 78 state MLAs, between 2022 and 2026.

ADR compiled its findings from candidate election affidavits, categorising the movements based on the specific legal mechanisms used by lawmakers to switch political alignments.



Which state recorded the highest number of political party switches

The study found party switches across 17 States and Union Territories. Nagaland recorded the highest number, with 32 MPs/MLAs, accounting for 29% of all the cases analysed. West Bengal followed with 20 cases (18%), while Telangana recorded nine (8%).

Goa and Punjab had eight each, accounting for 7% apiece. Maharashtra recorded six cases, while Meghalaya had six and Manipur five.

Arunachal Pradesh and Gujarat recorded four cases each. Himachal Pradesh and Rajasthan had two each, while Karnataka, Madhya Pradesh, Delhi, Sikkim and Uttar Pradesh recorded one case each.

NDPP, AITC and Congress account for most exits

Among the parties from which the legislators moved, Nationalist Democratic Progressive Party (NDPP) recorded the highest number of exits at 25 (23%). It was followed by the All India Trinamool Congress.

2016 surgical strikes set new benchmark in India's anti-terror policy: PM

NEW DELHI(Agency).

Prime Minister Narendra Modi on Sunday said the 2016 surgical strikes were India’s decisive response to the pain caused by terror attacks and had set a new example of the country’s counter-terrorism policy. In his monthly Mann Ki Baat broadcast, he said India follows a policy of zero tolerance against terrorism and has made it clear that terror will be dealt with strongly and decisively. PM Modi said that over the past decade, from the Balakot air strike to Operation Sindoor, India has repeatedly sent a clear message that any attempt by terrorists to target the country would invite a befitting response.

Referring to the surgical strikes, PM Modi said, "A major historic achievement of India is set to mark its 10th anniversary in just a day - this achievement is the surgical strikes. Ten years ago, on September 28-29, 2016, the Indian Army carried out surgical strikes on terrorist hideouts in Pakistan." The strikes were carried out across the Line of Control after terrorists attacked an army camp at Uri in Jammu and Kashmir, killing 18 soldiers. In the same address, he also spoke



about the fight against drugs, paid tribute to Vishwa Hindu Parishad leader Ashok Singhal, referred to the Somnath Swabhiman Parv, and highlighted cleanliness drives being led by young people across

the country.

He also mentioned that the world was astonished by the way Indian soldiers crossed the LoC to act against terrorism. "The surgical strike boldly demonstrated to the entire world a new example of India’s counter-terrorism policy," he said.

CM Shivakumar seeks scrapping of SIR, Siddaramaiah wants Gyanesh Kumar dismissed

Shivakumar urged the president to intervene and dissolve the Election Commission and demanded that the ongoing Special Intensive Revision (SIR) of electoral rolls be scrapped and undertaken afresh.

NEW DELHI(Agency).

Chief Minister D K Shivakumar on Saturday accused the Election Commission of India of being a “partner in vote theft” and demanded its dissolution, while former chief minister Siddaramaiah sought President Droupadi Murmu’s intervention and the dismissal of Chief Election Commissioner Gyanesh Kumar, alleging that the poll panel’s functioning and autonomy has come under serious question.

Addressing a Congress protest at Freedom Park against the CEC, Shivakumar accused the Election Commission of functioning as a “puppet of the BJP”. “The Election Commission is a puppet of the BJP. The names of poor voters and those who criticise the administration are being targeted. They have become partners in vote theft along with the BJP,” he said.

Shivakumar urged the president to intervene and dissolve the Election Commission and demanded that the ongoing Special Intensive

Revision (SIR) of electoral rolls be scrapped and undertaken afresh.

“The president should intervene and dissolve the Election Commission. The chief election commissioner should be arrested and elections that were conducted illegally should be cancelled,” he said.



Referring to Article 324, Siddaramaiah said the CEC enjoyed special protection from removal and could be removed only in the same manner and on the same grounds as a Supreme Court judge.

Tata tussle raises a stink beyond boardroom doors

Board-level developments unfolding in Tata Sons, the unlisted holding company of the sprawling Tata Group, have cast an unfavourable light on the state of corporate governance in India, apart from raising uncomfortable questions about regulatory autonomy. These developments have long-term repercussions for India’s reputation as an investment destination.

The Tata Sons board, on September 17, through a contentious process that is sure to invite legal action, decided to reappoint N Chandrasekaran as chairman for a third five-year term. Even more curious was Chandrasekaran’s decision to accept the nomination, reversing his earlier decision to not seek re-appointment. The voting on the resolution was not only odd in its final outcome, but was also conducted by disregarding the rights of the majority shareholder—Tata Trusts, representing Sir Dorabji Tata Trust and Sir Ratan Tata Trust, which collectively own over 65 percent in Tata Sons. In an earlier board meeting, Noel Tata, nominee director of the majority shareholder Tata Trusts on the Tata Sons board, had dissented against the board’s decision to re-appoint Chandrasekaran; the extant rules provide paramount weightage to this veto power. Chandrasekaran had also announced he would be stepping down. The subsequent volte-face by Tata Sons directors and Chandrasekaran is like an open rebellion against the majority shareholder.

The board used the casting vote of an officiating chairman, emboldened by a debatable legal opinion, for pushing through Chandrasekaran’s re-appointment. Additionally, the directors in favour of the re-appointment included the company’s chief finance officer, who effectively reports to the chairman. At the very least, to avoid any future complications, the gentleman should have recused himself. The end result is a cringe-worthy spectacle of board directors willfully abandoning their fiduciary duties, failing to stand up for the right thing and accepting an outcome that smacks of opportunism and vaulting personal ambitions.

The questionable behaviour by the Tata Sons independent directors did not end with Chandrasekaran’s re-appointment. They also resolved to meekly heed a directive issued by the Reserve Bank of India that instructs Tata Sons to list its shares publicly. This was again a mystifying somersault: the same directors had unanimously passed a resolution in March 2024, ratified by Tata Trusts in July 2025, to stay unlisted.

There were no attempts to put the RBI imprimatur under expert scrutiny or test its legal validity; there was only craven acceptance. There was also no explanation forthcoming for this strange about-turn in their collective stance, and this has further strengthened speculation about the real motive behind the directors’ action. The speculation gains further credence when examining RBI’s directive, which, when combined with the Mumbai charity commissioner’s stand, seemed to have created an enabling environment for the Tata Sons directors to rebel against the majority shareholder. It is unlikely that the regulators are acting in concert or have non-regulatory goals in mind, but the tenor of their action breeds reservations and anxieties. The RBI’s diktat to Tata Sons to go public has multiple intriguing aspects to it. The central bank came out with a list of upper-layer non-banking financial companies in September 2022, which included holding companies of two industrial groups—Tata Group and Sun Pharma. These companies were instructed to list within three years. Both the holding companies immediately paid down their outstanding debts. Sun Pharma’s holding company Shangkvi Finance applied to the RBI in February 2023 to surrender its registration which the central bank promptly accepted, making the company an unregistered core investment company and exempt from the listing requirement.

The ECI itself has become suspect

It’s time for the Supreme Court to act strictly and put the poll panel in its place

THE essence of democracy is that every citizen has the right to vote and elect their representatives. Universal adult suffrage was contemplated by Motilal Nehru in his 1928 report, which stated, “every person of either sex who has attained the age of 21 and is not disqualified by law shall be entitled to vote.”

Under the Government of India Acts of 1919 and 1935, the voting rights were restricted to people on the basis of qualifications relating to property, income or education. Less than 10% qualified. In the Constituent Assembly, there was near unanimity on this aspect. There was only one lone voice of dissent. Article 325 of the Constitution provides that no person shall be ineligible for inclusion in the electoral roll — on grounds only of religion, race, sex or caste. The Election Commission of India (ECI) was constituted under Article 324 for the superintendence, direction and control of the preparation of electoral rolls. The ECI has the power to review the electoral rolls, but this power must be exercised in accordance with the Constitution and the laws. The exercise must be carried out in such a manner that, though the ineligible are weeded out, the citizens who have the right to vote are neither disenfranchised nor put in such a position that their right is set at naught. The West Bengal SIR exercise was a fiasco. The Supreme Court gave a very long rope to the ECI. The Court directed that the claims and objections of voters whose names were not included in the electoral roll be examined by judicial officers. It also provided for an appellate mechanism against the decisions of these officers. This was done at the cost of normal litigation.

The Court’s experiment of appointing judicial officers to decide these disputes did not yield positive results. These judicial officers were not trained to decide such disputes, that too in a summary manner. They rejected almost all the claims of the voters and upheld their disenfranchisement. These orders were, by and large, incorrect. This is apparent from the affidavit filed by the Election Commission before the apex court, which states that out of 1,26,194 appeals decided after the Bengal elections, 93% were decided in favour of voters who were disenfranchised. More than 37 lakh appeals are still pending. Going at the present rate, it will take more than 12 years to decide these appeals. These figures clearly show the inefficacy of the dispute redressal system.

The ECI has started issuing discrepancy notices, which will result in a number of disputes. Who will decide these disputes? It is obvious that judicial officers who are already overburdened cannot be tasked with this duty.



discriminate between the rich and the poor. However, in actual fact, the rich, the powerful and the educated will reply to the notices, produce documents and will easily give evidence and have their names restored. That will not be true for the poor. A large number of the names deleted are of those who were staying in colonies which have been demolished. What address will they give? Who will fight for them? How will they be able to produce documents to show where they reside? Even a homeless citizen has the right to vote, and a vote being deleted on the ground that the house has been demolished is a travesty of justice. What worries me is what will happen to the house help from Jharkhand or Assam or any other part of the country working in Delhi; the young man from Himachal Pradesh working in Mumbai; and the boys and girls from the North-East working in Bengaluru. How will they, with their limited resources, satisfy the ECI that they have a right to vote? Will they have to spend time and money to go back to their native places to collect their

documents? It is easy for the ECI to shift the burden onto the citizen, but that is not the right path. The burden should be on the ECI to collect evidence to show that a person is not entitled to vote and then issue a notice to such a person. I do not know on what algorithms the ECI’s system is working, but the so-called (un)Artificial Intelligence has resulted in absolutely absurd results. The system developed by the ECI is totally unreliable since more than 15% of the population has been removed from the electoral rolls. This can easily affect the result of elections. That is not a true democracy. We have been consistently having elections since 1951, but the citizens have never faced such hurdles in exercising their right to vote. The ECI has many better things to do than disenfranchise 15% of the population. In the last two weeks, it has been widely reported in the press how some unheard-of unrecognised parties have collected hundreds of crores of rupees in a short span of two to three years. One such party appears to have got more money than the entire Opposition. It seems the ECI has turned a blind eye to this patently corrupt practice and has taken no action whatsoever. The votes of many citizens belonging to a particular community are being deleted or questioned. Booth-level agents of political parties have filed applications in Form 7 for the wholesale deletion of names. In most cases, these applications have been rejected. No action has been taken by the ECI against such booth-level agents and political parties.

Ordinary citizens of this country who have the right to vote are facing hurdles and have to move from pillar to post to prove their citizenship. It is now an open secret that two members of the ECI have raised serious objections with regard to the procedure being followed for adding new voters and deleting old ones. They have questioned the integrity of the database. In these circumstances, the entire SIR exercise becomes questionable and unreliable. Till now, the Supreme Court has relied on the statements made on behalf of the ECI. Now this should not and cannot be done. The ECI itself has become suspect. It is time for the Supreme Court to act strictly to ensure that ordinary citizens of the country are not left at the mercy of the ECI. In a column in this newspaper a few weeks ago, I had said that the Court must take steps to regain its lost glory. This is a golden opportunity for the Court to redeem itself. It must put the ECI in its place and put the voters on the pedestal which they deserve in a democracy.

The Election Commission of India needs to ensure unhurried SIR process in Delhi, speed in Bengal

The ECI needs to ensure far greater efficiency in the tribunals’ work

It’s deeply damaging for Indian democracy that the Election Commission of India regularly makes the headlines for unsavoury reasons. The charges range from inept revision of electoral rolls and disregard of complaints to selective application of the model code of conduct. The crescendo of complaints reached fever pitch this week as the Delhi SIR exercise revealed glaring lapses and the West Bengal SIR’s redress mechanism reported agonisingly slow progress. At the same time, pleas challenging the method of selecting election commissioners themselves came up in the Supreme Court. On Wednesday, Justices Dipankar Datta and Satish Chandra Sharma delivered a split verdict on referring the pleas to a Constitution Bench. The decision to constitute a larger bench now passes to the Chief Justice, whose replacement with a Union cabinet minister on the appointment panel is in question. Thus, the prospect of judicial delay clouds the horizon at a time crucial state elections loom large.

The Delhi SIR stands out as much for how many were struck off the voters’ list as for who were among them. Of the



1.45 crore voters, about 47.6 lakh names were taken off and 31.6 lakh sent notices—together almost half the national capital’s electorate. Among the latter were a former Deputy PM, a former Vice President, current and

previous Chief Ministers of the state, and current and former Union cabinet ministers. If senior officials are facing such glitches, it raises more worrying questions of common citizens’ status. Inconsistent methods of serving notices are a cause for concern, with a large section of voters reporting ignorance of being taken off the rolls. By Wednesday, less than 3 percent of them had applied for inclusion. In West Bengal, the latest numbers show it would take nearly 12 years for the ECI-appointed tribunals to address all disputed cases at the present rate of disposal. If an SC judge’s remark that some voters might have to skip one chance to vote seemed too casual for comfort, lakhs now face the prospect of missing two national elections. While the deadline for filing claims in Delhi needs to be extended beyond September 30, the opposite needs to happen in West Bengal. The ECI needs to ensure far greater efficiency in the tribunals’ work. Though the speed imperatives are different, both pose a serious challenge to electoral integrity.

Wielding Opec to douse oil fire

Oil producers’ cartel Opec emerged in 1960 and expanded in 2016 to address Western attempts to control the energy market.

On August 9, 1960, Standard Oil of New Jersey (Esso) reduced the posted crude prices in West Asia by 8 percent as Soviet oil exports to Europe and Asia rose. Burmah-Shell and Caltex followed with a 14 percent reduction for Indian imports, triggered by Russia’s cheaper oil sale. The interlocking system of oil company ownership and pressure from other consumer countries for lower prices led to the reduction of West Asian crude prices.

Infuriated by these unilateral cuts, Venezuela’s mines and hydrocarbons minister Juan Pérez Alfonso and Saudi Arabia’s first oil minister Sheikh Abdullah Tariki sought a mechanism to regulate oil output and ensure price stability. To weaken international oil majors’ control over production, pricing and global sales, five major producers—Iran, Iraq, Kuwait, Saudi Arabia and Venezuela—convened the historic Baghdad Conference a month later. Thus, on September 14, 1960, the Organization of the Petroleum Exporting Countries or Opec was founded to “coordinate and unify petroleum policies among member countries to stabilise international oil markets and secure fair returns”.

The 1973 oil crisis imparted a boom-bust volatility to the energy market for decades. Opec often leveraged its capacity to stabilise markets and maximise profits during the early 1980s, but global exploration provoked Saudi Arabia to flood the market, crashing prices in 1986 for years. Whether managing 1990 Gulf War supply fears or speculative trade amid growing emerging markets’ demand in 2008, as oil hit \$147 a barrel, Riyadh’s production hikes doused inflationary fires. Just months later, the global financial crisis triggered a major slump in demand and price. Brent peaked at \$115.06 in June 2014. Then, surging US shale flows and lifting of its export ban in December 2015 affected Opec’s dominance. The glut

crashed prices to a multi-year low of \$30 by January 2016. Opting to secure its market share, Opec refrained from production cuts. More than 100 US oil and gas companies filed for bankruptcy by mid-year. The 2016 Algiers Accord by Opec members to arrest the plunge in prices, followed by the Vienna Agreement in November, cut 1.2 million barrels of production per day. Ten non-Opec producers joined the coalition that December to form Opec+. Saudi Arabia, considered the de facto Opec leader due to its massive reserves and production capacity, firmly influenced the cartel’s policy and pricing framework allocating member’s production quotas. A cautiously calibrated politico-economic stance balanced its relations with the West and within bloc members. However, emerging non-Opec and US supplies have shrunk Riyadh’s authority in a dynamically altered organisational structure. As new oil is discovered in South America and the Caribbean, Opec members were reluctant to let much of their wealth lie buried for longer and lose their historical share in the soaring global demand. Many petro-States used oil revenues to cover high fiscal deficits missing out on long term oil infrastructure investments. China emerged as an important economic catalyst with its financial participation in oil facilities across continents. Its loan-for-oil partnership was difficult to ignore.

With strong bilateral ties in energy and technology, focusing on long-term LPG supplies and to increase its energy exports to Asian markets, Qatar exited Opec in 2019. Ecuador’s parleys with China, centred on debt and stronger bilateral ties, locked \$1 billion in loans for Quito

and its walk-out of Opec in 2020. Angola President João Lourenço’s visit to Beijing and Shandong, a hub of ‘teapot refineries’, in March 2024 after the nation broke away from Opec, secured China’s commitment of over \$21 billion in investment across solar power and oil exploration. The Crown Prince of Abu Dhabi met the Chinese President in Beijing last April as they decided on a “more robust, resilient and dynamic” partnership. The



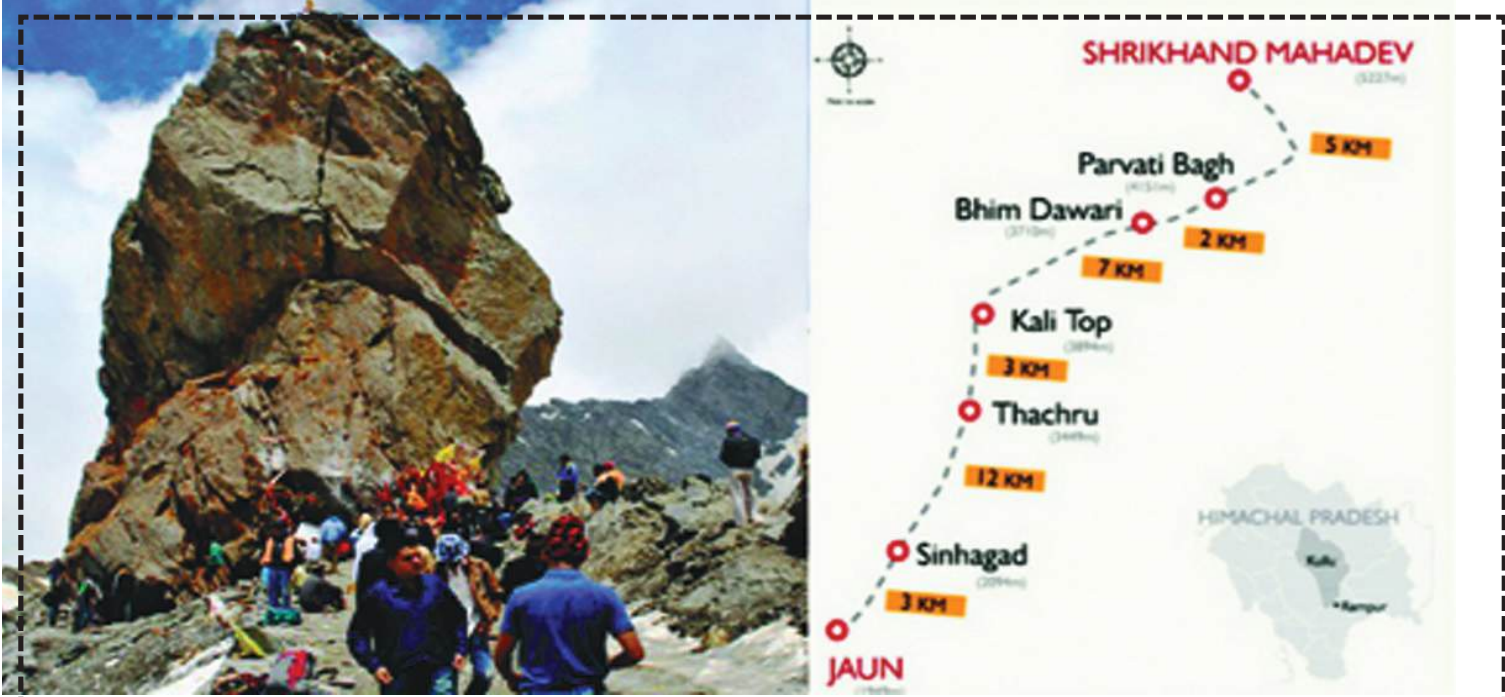
UAE exited Opec within a fortnight to break away from Saudi dominance for a larger share in Asian oil demand. Despite America’s vast investments in the Emirati oil industry, the latter is keen to pursue clean energy ambitions with China, a powerful actor in the sphere. In the absence of a quota hike, Iraq could consider quitting

the cartel as it plans to raise production capacity to 6 million bpd by 2029 with Chinese investment.

Russia’s overland pipelines elude EU and US sanctions. The Druzhba, built around the time of Opec’s formation, is one of the longest to provide oil to Europe. The ESPO pipeline transports Siberian crude to Russia’s Pacific coast for Asian markets, with a branch providing direct supplies to Chinese refineries. Moscow could explore a similar pipeline for Indian buyers and draw curtains on its quota centric relationship with Opec. Nigeria’s Dangote refinery has bolstered national energy security while becoming Europe’s leading jet fuel supplier. An ongoing \$1.6 billion IPO—Africa’s largest—aims to scale its capacity to 1.4 million bpd. To feed this expansion and maximise exports, the nation could resist Opec’s strict production quotas. Robert McNally, energy advisor to President George W Bush, once commented, “While the days of monopolists, soldiers, cartels and regulators stabilising the oil market may be over, the only thing worse than someone controlling the global oil market is no one doing so.” America’s evolving foothold in Venezuela, Opec’s founding member holding the largest proven reserves, could dent Opec’s collective leverage over oil markets. Though Opec was considered a negative for the markets because it managed pricing and volume, the tacit order within a cartel occasionally lends the market, rife with speculators, an element of stability and sustains broader economic growth. Each time it failed to regulate supply or cushion a price surge, the ensuing volatility led to universal chaos.

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अनोखी है श्रीखंड महादेव यात्रा

आस्था से सराबोर हमारे देश में कई धर्मस्थल हैं, इनमें से ऐसे कई धर्मस्थल ऐसे भी हैं जहां धार्मिक यात्राएं की जाती हैं। इन्हीं में से एक यात्रा है, श्रीखंड महादेव यात्रा। यह यात्रा हिमाचल प्रदेश में मौजूद श्रीखंड दर्शन के लिए की जाती है। यह यात्रा वर्ष में एक बार जून-जुलाई माह में होती है। तो जानते हैं इस धार्मिक यात्रा से जुड़ी बातें

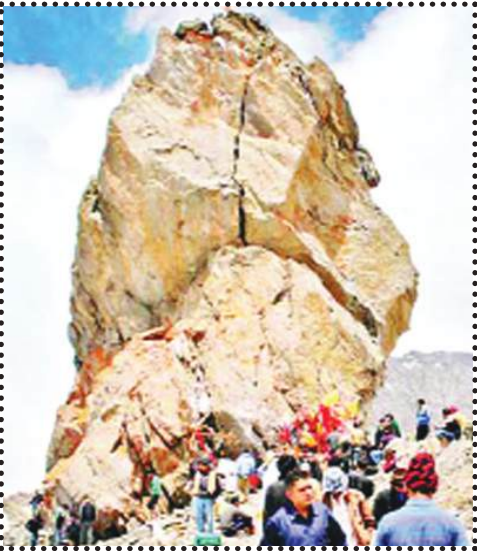
- श्रीखंड महादेव हिमाचल के ग्रेट हिमालयन



नेशनल पार्क के पास है। स्थानीय लोगों की मानें तो, इस चोटी पर भगवान शिव का वास है।

- यहां मौजूद शिवलिंग की ऊंचाई 72 फीट है। यहां तक पहुंचने के लिए सुंदर घाटियों के बीच से एक ट्रैक है।
- श्रीखंड महादेव के दर्शन के लिए 18570 फीट की ऊंचाई पर चढ़ना होता है।
- श्रीखंड यात्रा के लिए 25 किलोमीटर की सीधी चढ़ाई श्रद्धालुओं के लिए किसी अग्नि परीक्षा से कम नहीं होती है।
- लगभग 18 हजार फुट की ऊंचाई पर स्थित श्रीखंड यात्रा के दौरान सांस लेने के लिए ऑक्सीजन की भी कमी पड़ती है।

धार्मिक यात्रा का पौराणिक महत्व
पौराणिक मत के अनुसार, एक बार एक दैत्य भस्मासुर ने शिव को तप से प्रसन्न कर वरदान मांगा था कि वह जिस पर भी अपना हाथ रखेगा तो वह भस्म होगा। दैत्य स्वभाव होने के कारण उसने



माता पार्वती से शादी करने इच्छा हुई। तब भस्मासुर ने शिव के ऊपर हाथ रखकर उन्हें भस्म करने की योजना बनाई, लेकिन भगवान विष्णु ने मोहिनी रूप रख, उससे नृत्य करने की मंशा जाहिर की और इस तरह नृत्य में ही उसका हाथ उसके सिर पर रखवा दिया। जिससे भस्मासुर जलकर भस्म हो गया। कहते हैं जहां भस्मासुर का अंत हुआ था। श्रीखंड महादेव मंदिर परिसर में वो जगह वर्तमान में भी मौजूद है।

यात्रा के लिए यहां से करते हैं शुरुआत

जून-जुलाई में शुरू होने वाली यात्रा के लिए भक्त हिमाचल प्रदेश के शिमला जिले के रामपुर से कुल्लू जिला और फिर यहां से निरमंड से होते हुए बागीपुल पहुंचते हैं। और यहां से शुरू होती है 30 किमी की आस्था से सराबोर यात्रा।



इस मंत्र का जप करने से नहीं आती अकाल मृत्यु

मौत जिंदगी का अंतिम सत्य है। इस सत्य से आप किनारा नहीं कर सकते हैं। क्योंकि जिस व्यक्ति ने इस पृथ्वी पर जन्म लिया है। उसकी मौत निश्चित है। लेकिन ये मौत अकाल मौत न हो इसके लिए कुछ उपाय करना बेहद जरूरी है। क्योंकि ईश्वर ने आपको एक तय उम्र दी है। जिसमें आप नेक कर्म कर जन्म-जन्मांतर के चक्र से मुक्त होकर मोक्ष प्राप्त कर सकते हैं। इसलिए अकाल मृत्यु से बचने के लिए आप ये उपाय जरूर आजमाएं...

- शिवपुराण के अनुसार जो महाकाल के भक्त होते हैं उनका काल भी कुछ नहीं बिगाड़ सकता।
- अकाल मृत्यु से बचने के लिए जल में तिल और शहद मिलाकर भगवान शिव का अभिषेक करना चाहिए। महामृत्युंजय मंत्र और ऊं नमः शिवाय मंत्र का जप करना चाहिए। यह उपाय शनिवार को करने से

- अकाल मृत्यु का खतरा टल जाता है।
- शनि देव की शनिवार के दिन पूजन से शनिदेव प्रसन्न होते हैं। इसलिए हर शनिवार के दिन शनिदेव की पूजा करने वाले व्यक्ति से अकाल मौत का खतरा दूर हो जाता है।
- नौ ग्रहों में सबसे बुरा माने जाने वाले शनिदेव की कृपा पाने के लिए शनिवार को उनके पूजन के अलावा उनसे संबंधित वस्तुओं का दान करना चाहिए। ऐसा करने से शनिदेव की कृपा प्राप्त होती है और अकाल मृत्यु का भय नहीं सताता है।
- भगवान सदैव उन लोगों की रक्षा करते हैं जो उनकी शरण में जाते हैं। इसलिए ईश्वर पर आस्था रखकर इन मृत्यु डालने के उपाय को करने से इसका फायदा जरूर मिलता है।

भोजन में शामिल करें ये चीजें ग्रहों के कोप से मिलेगा छुटकारा

नवग्रहों को प्रसन्न करने के लिए उपासना, यज्ञ और रत्न आदि धारण करने का विधान है। हम लोग जड़ की अपेक्षा सीधे जीव से संबंध स्थापित रखें तो ग्रह अतिशीघ्र प्रसन्न हो सकते हैं। ज्योतिष ग्रंथ जातक पारिजात में बताया गया है, व्यक्ति किस तरह का भोजन करता है, इसका सीधा संबंध ग्रहों से है। यथोचित और शुद्ध भोजन ग्रहण करके भी नवग्रहों को प्रसन्न किया जा सकता है। सूर्य के अशुभ प्रभाव को दूर करने के लिए गेहूं, आम और गुड़ को भोजन में शुमार करें। चन्द्र मन का कारक ग्रह है। इसे अनुकुल करने के लिए गन्ना, चीनी, आईसक्रीम, मिठाईयां,

दूध और दूध से बने पदार्थ खाएं। बुद्धि के कारक बुद्ध ग्रह को शुभ करने के लिए मटर, ज्वार, मूंग, हरि सब्जियां आहार में शामिल करें। धन, पुत्र और विद्या के दाता बृहस्पति को फेवर में करने के लिए चने और चने से संबंधित चीजें, केला, हल्दी, सेंधा नमक, पीले रंग की दालें और फल खाएं। शुक के निर्बल या अशुभ होने पर जातक की अनेकिक कार्यों में प्रवृत्ति होती है, समाज में मान-सम्मान नहीं मिलता तथा अनेक सुखों का अभाव रहता है। जीवन में मनचाहा प्रेम और सौंदर्य शुक ग्रह की बदौलत ही प्राप्त होता है। ये भोज्य पदार्थ खाने से ये अनुकुल प्रभाव देने लगते हैं त्रिफला, दालचीनी, कमलगट्टे, सफेद शलगम, मूली, मिश्री। शनि की टेट्टी नजर से बचने के लिए खाने में तिल, उड़द, मूंगफली का तेल, अचार, लौंग, तेज पत्ता ग्रहण करें। उड़द, तिल और सरसों राहू-केतू का अशुभ प्रभाव दूर करने में सहायक हैं।

कैसा होना चाहिए मंदिर जाते समय पहनावा



जब भी किसी भी धर्मस्थल पर जाते हैं तो कपड़े ऐसे होने चाहिए जो शालीन हों और पहनने में सहज हों। क्योंकि जब मंदिर में भगवान के सामने सिर झुकाते हैं या खुद के सामने सजदा करते हैं तो शालीन और सहज कपड़े पहने होने पर किसी प्रकार की समस्या नहीं होती। और यदि आप काफी तंग कपड़े पहने होते हैं तो इस तरह की समस्या आना आम है। ऐसे में भक्त का सारा ध्यान अपने वस्त्रों पर होता है। भगवान पर नहीं। याना आस्था और मनोकामना के लिए धर्म स्थल पर आना पूरी तरह से व्यर्थ हो जाता है। पौराणिक ग्रंथों में उल्लेख मिलता है कि प्राचीन काल में ऋषि-मुनि, राजा-महाराजा और आम आदमी धोती पहना करते थे। यह काफी सहज होती है। ऐसे में जब वो मंदिर जाते या फिर यज्ञ हवन करते तो उन्हें उठने-बैठने और चलने में किसी तरह की परेशानी नहीं होती थी। और उनका पूरा ध्यान ईश्वर की आराधना में रहता था। हालांकि यह परंपरा आज भी जारी है। इसलिए देश के भव्य मंदिरों में पूजा अर्चना करते समय पारंपरिक वस्त्रों को ही पहना जाता है। इन वस्त्रों का रंग अमूमन पीला और लाल होता है। वह इसीलिए कि पीला रंग सकारात्मकता को दर्शाता है तो लाल रंग स्वयं देवी का का रंग है। जो अपना आध्यात्मिक महत्व रखता है।



गौ परिक्रमा से मिलते हैं ढेरों लाभ

विष्णुधर्मोत्तरपुराण के अनुसार व्यक्ति के किसी भी अनिष्ट की निवृत्ति के लिए गौमाता के पूजन का विधान किया गया है। अनेक तरह के अरिष्टकारी भूचर, खेचर और जलचर आदि दुर्योग उस व्यक्ति को छू भी नहीं सकते जो निय्य गौमाता की सेवा करता है या फिर रोज गौमाता के लिए चारे या रोटी का दान करता है। तिल, जौ व गुड़ का बना लड्डू नौ गायों को खिलाने से व परिक्रमा करने से संतान प्राप्ति एवं मनोवांछित फल मिलता है। पति-पत्नी में आपसी मनमुटाव या क्लेश रहता हो तो दोनों गठजोड़े से गऊमाता की परिक्रमा करें एवं घर से रोटी बनाकर तिल के तेल से चुपड़ कर गुड़ के साथ नौ गायों को खिलाएं। घर में सुख-शांति बनी रहेगी। गर्भवती महिलाएं नौ माह में प्रत्येक अमावस्या व पूर्णिमा पर परिक्रमा कर लें तो सामान्य डिलीवरी से संतान होगी। प्रतिदिन भोजन करने से पहले एक रोटी व गुड़ अपने हाथ से देसी गाय को खिलाने से एवं गाय के मुंह से लेकर पूछ तक हाथ फेर कर अपने शरीर पर हाथ फेरने से शरीर का संतुलन बना रहता है। गाय को जो खिलाएं और उसके गोबर में से जी निकले, उसे धोकर खीर बना कर एक चम्मच गाय का घी डालकर गर्भवती महिलाएं अंतिम माह में खाएं। यह साधारण डिलीवरी में सहायक है। जिन बच्चों की शादी में अनावश्यक विलम्ब हो रहा हो, वे स्वयं विधिपूर्वक गाय की पूजा करके नौ रोटी व गुड़ खिलाएं जिससे मनवांछित फल प्राप्त होगा। गाय के आगे वाले पांव पर कुमकुम, अक्षत, पुष्प, जल, दूध, गुड़ से पूजन करने से घर में सुख-शांति व मोक्ष की प्राप्ति होती है। जिनके बच्चे कहने पर नहीं चलते हैं, ऐसे बच्चों के माता-पिता गौ माता की नौ परिक्रमा करें। बच्चे को एक बूंद गौमूत्र व गंगाजल, दूध या चाय में मिलाकर पिलाएं। बालक आज्ञाकारी होगा। आज्ञाकारी एवं मनवांछित संतान प्राप्ति के लिए पति एवं पत्नी दोनों गर्भधारण करने के पश्चात बछिया को दूध पिलाती हुई गाय की परिक्रमा करें। गौ धूलि बेली के समय गौ माता की परिक्रमा करने से भी समस्याओं का अंत होता है।

हनुमानजी को प्रसन्न करने के अचूक उपाय

एक बार शनिदेव ने हनुमान जी को अपने साथ युद्ध करने के लिए ललकारा। हनुमान जी उनसे युद्ध करना नहीं करना चाहते थे, तब उन्होंने शनि को अपनी पूछ से बांधकर ब्रह्मांड के चक्कर लगावा दिए। शनिदेव का शरीर पूरी तरह से छलनी हो गया। उनके शरीर से रक्त की धार बह रही थी। वह हनुमान से खुद को छोड़ने का आग्रह करने लगे। हनुमानजी ने उन्हें एक शर्त पर छोड़ा कि वो उनके भक्तों को कभी परेशान नहीं करेंगे। शनिदेव उनकी इस बात को मान गए।

- मंगलवार के दिन लाल वस्त्र पहने हनुमान जी को लाल रंग बेहद पसंद है।
- हर मंगलवार को हनुमान जी को बनारसी पान अर्पित करें। इससे हनुमान जी आपसे प्रसन्न रहेंगे।
- हनुमान जी को खुश रखने के लिए गरीबों की मदद करें, हर किसी के साथ अच्छा व्यवहार रखें और अपने माता पिता का हमेशा सम्मान करें।
- हनुमान जी की पूजा करते वक्त हनुमान जी को सिंदूर चढ़ाएं इससे हनुमान जी आपसे प्रसन्न रहेंगे।
- हनुमान चालीसा में वर्णित है कि, किसी अन्य देव की पूजा करने से शायद आपको फल मिलने में थोड़ा समय लग जाए लेकिन हनुमान की आराधना तुरंत फल देती है।
- मंगलवार के दिन राम मंदिर में जाएं। हनुमान जी के मस्तक का सिंदूर दाहिने हाथ के अंगूठे से लेकर सीता माता के श्री रूप के श्री चरणों में लगा दें। अपनी मनोकामना पूरी करने के लिए प्रार्थना करें।
- मंगलवार की सुबह स्नान करने के बाद बड़ के पेड़ का एक पत्ता तोड़ें और इसे साफ पानी से धो लें। अब इस पत्ते को कुछ देर हनुमानजी के सामने रखें। इसके बाद इस पर केसर से श्रीराम लिखें। अब इस पत्ते को अपने पर्स में रख लें। ऐसा माना जाता है कि इससे पर्स में पैसे बने रहते हैं।



NEWS BOX

Ravindra Jadeja ‘obviously in the mix’ for 2027 ODI World Cup, says Team India coach



New Delhi. (Agency)

India will start their 2027 ODI World Cup preparations with the three-match series against West Indies, beginning on September 27. The Men in Blue came close to lifting the title in 2023, but suffered a heartbreaking defeat to Australia in Ahmedabad. The focus in this series will be on three veterans: Virat Kohli, Rohit Sharma and Ravindra Jadeja. Kohli and Rohit have been a regular part of the ODI setup, but Jadeja is back in the 50-over setup after eight months. He last featured in an ODI in January, but India’s batting coach Sitanshu Kotak believes that the allrounder is in contention for next year’s World Cup. I think he is obviously in the mix. I am not part of the selection [committee], so I don’t know what their thinking is. I just think whoever is coming and playing for India, they are obviously part of the 20-25 players who possibly can be in the team,” Kotak said. He further said that Jadeja is a brilliant all-rounder and that anyone can check his records. Kotak added that the team combination will depend on the captain and coach, and there is still time to decide that. However, for him, Jadeja is also one of the best fielders in the world. “He bowls, he bats and the experience he has, and I actually firmly believe that experience is something you cannot beat. So like we see Rohit, we see Virat, [the same way] we see Jadeja. And that brings a lot to the team. Jadeja is obviously a very useful member of the team,” he added. Jadeja has played 210 ODI matches for India and scored 2905 runs at an average of 32.28, while also taking 232 wickets at an economy of 4.89. **Shubman Gill fit to play 1st ODI** India ODI captain Shubman Gill took a blow in the nets, but coach Kotak confirmed his availability, saying the batter was “Good to go.” This means that Yashasvi Jaiswal, who is also a part of the squad, might have to sit out. The left-handed batter smashed a century in his last ODI match against Afghanistan, but hasn’t featured in the playing XI since.

India Storm into Archery semifinals at Asian Games 2026, South Korea await - Details



New Delhi. (Agency)

India’s compound women’s and men’s teams have made it to the semifinals after beating Kazakhstan and Bhutan, respectively, here at Okazaki Chuo Sogo Park Multipurpose Square on Sunday. The women’s team of Jyothi Surekha Vennam, Chikitha Taniparthi and Prithika Pradeep defeated Kazakhstan’s Roxana Yunussova, Viktoriya Lyan and Adel Zhexenbinova 233-230 in the quarterfinals. The Indian team, who placed second in the qualification, started off with a win over Mongolia 238-223 in the Round of 16 before edging Kazakhstan in the quarter-finals. The men’s team of Kushal Dalal, Sahil Jadhav and Ganesh Mani Ratnam beat Bhutan’s Kezang Norbu, Tshetum Gaytshey and Tandin Dorji 235-232 in the quarterfinals. The Indian men finished third in the qualification and defeated the UAE 235-215 in the Round of 16 before eliminating Bhutan in the quarter-finals. Both teams will face South Korea in the semi-finals, with the medal rounds scheduled for September 30. The compound mixed team competition will also carry significance. With the discipline set to make its historic Olympic debut at LA28, one quota place is available at the Asian Games, adding another layer of intrigue to the battle for continental honours. Overall, eight quota places for the LA28 Olympic Games are up for grabs at the Asian Games. Two quota places each are on offer in the recurve men’s and women’s individual events, while the recurve mixed team and compound mixed team champions will each earn one men’s and one women’s quota place. India enjoyed its most successful Asian Games archery campaign in Hangzhou 2023, winning a record nine medals - five gold, two silver and two bronze. The compound archers swept all five gold medals on offer, while the recurve teams contributed a silver and a bronze.

In a battle with destiny: At 33, fate beats Karthik Unnikrishnan at Asian Games

New Delhi. (Agency)

The rain had made the runway at the Nagoya City Mizuho Park Athletic Stadium difficult to negotiate. It was coming down steadily as Karthik Unnikrishnan prepared for the biggest competition of his life, at an age when most triple jumpers would be thinking about the end of their careers rather than the beginning of their international ones. Karthik was 33 and making his Asian Games debut. He had waited years for this opportunity. He had also spent years wondering whether it would ever come. There was more bad news waiting for him on the runway. Praveen Chithravel, India’s 2022 Asian Games bronze medallist, pulled a muscle in the opening round and was ruled out without completing a jump. The responsibility of carrying India’s challenge in the event was suddenly on Karthik, who had already arrived in Nagoya knowing that this could be the only major continental Games of his career... It was hardly the debut he had imagined. But then, very little about Karthik’s career has gone according to plan. **HUMBLE BEGINNINGS IN KERALA**

Karthik was born in 1993 and has been part of India’s triple jump scene since 2015. He is not a late starter in athletics; what slowed him down was everything around the sport. His parents ran a tea shop in Ooty, while Karthik grew up at his maternal grandparents’ home in Kerala. He was not particularly good at studies, and when his family saw a six-foot boy who needed direction, sport became the obvious option. At Parali High School in Palakkad, he was initially put into the hurdles, where he struggled. For a child living away from his parents and finding success in neither studies nor sport, failure quickly hardened into self-doubt. He cried. He felt lonely. When he was eventually moved to the triple jump, success came only in small bursts before stalling again at the state level. So he made the dream smaller. He stopped measuring himself against national standards and focused on the only thing he thought was within reach: he just wanted to wear the Kerala state jersey. **THE ACCIDENTAL BREAKTHROUGH** Karthik’s trajectory shifted when he was

called up as an injury replacement for a national meet and unexpectedly finished second. That medal caught the eye of coach P.G. Manoj, who gave him practical advice: secure a job first, then figure out the rest.



That security came through the sports quota in the Indian Air Force. It was a massive moment for a family that initially, and hilariously, thought getting an Air Force job meant he would be flying planes. Instead, the Air Force gave Karthik something he had never known: an environment where a domestic medal was just the starting point. Surrounded by jumpers looking far beyond state lines, his

internal target steadily moved from 15 metres to 16, and then to 17. The Asian Games and the Olympics were no longer distant abstractions. **CARRYING THE BAGGAGE** The problem with allowing yourself to dream bigger is that failure stops being a vague feeling and starts taking very specific shapes. Over the next few years, circumstance kept pulling the rug out. COVID-19 lockdowns trapped him in Patiala, far from his support system. Post-COVID recovery and the absence of his coach cost him at the Tokyo Olympic trials. An ankle injury at the Commonwealth Games trials sidelined him just after he had joined the elite club of Indians to breach the 17-metre barrier. By 2023, a severe tendon injury disrupted his muscle coordination so completely that he and his physio, Garima, now his wife, had to strip his technique down and teach him how to jump all over again. In isolation, each setback had a logical explanation: a bad infection, a torn tendon, bad timing. But stacked together, they became a psychological weight. Each major trial was no longer just a fresh runway.

Anahat Singh, Abhay Singh Chase Asian Games Gold With LA 2028 Spot At Stake

New Delhi. (Agency)

Indian squash stars Anahat Singh and Abhay Singh will be on the verge of making history on Sunday when they take on Malaysian opponents in the women’s and men’s singles gold-medal matches at the Asian Games, with victory also bringing an Olympic qualification spot for the Los Angeles 2028 Games. Anahat will face Malaysia’s Sivasangari Subramaniam in the women’s singles final at 1:30 pm IST, while Abhay will take on Malaysia’s Ng Eain Yow in the men’s singles gold-medal match at 12:30 pm. The two finals offer India the chance to claim its first individual Asian Games gold medal in squash while also securing a place at the sport’s Olympic debut at LA 2028. At just 18, Anahat has already established herself as one of India’s leading squash players. She announced herself on the senior international stage even earlier, becoming the youngest member of India’s contingent at the 2022 Commonwealth Games in Birmingham.

Anahat also registered a win on her CWG debut, defeating Jada Ross of St Vincent and the Grenadines in the women’s singles Round of 64. Her latest Asian Games run has underlined her ability to perform



under pressure. In the semifinal, Anahat fought back from two games down to defeat Japan’s world No. 6 Satomi Watanabe 9-11, 11-13, 12-10, 11-6, 11-3. She was also forced to receive medical attention after a collision with Watanabe but returned to complete one of the biggest comebacks of her young career. Standing alongside her in Sunday’s

historic double bid is 28-year-old Abhay, India’s highest-ranked male professional squash player. Born in Chennai, Abhay reached a career-high PSA ranking of No. 22 in April 2026 and is currently ranked No. 26. An Arjuna Award recipient in 2024, he has emerged as a key member of India’s national squad. Abhay booked his place in the Asian Games final with a convincing 11-3, 12-10, 11-6 win over Pakistan’s Muhammad Irfan in the semifinals. He became only the second Indian man after Saurav Ghosal to reach the Asian Games men’s singles final. His recent record has also included significant success, with Abhay helping India win the 2025 SDAT Squash World Cup in Chennai and claiming the Indian Open in Mumbai and his third Tuanku Muhriz Trophy title in Malaysia in 2026. India already has a squash medal from the Games, with Joshna Chinappa and Velavan Senthilkumar securing bronze in mixed doubles.

Ro-Ko return as India enter final stretch of World Cup preparations with WI ODIs



New Delhi. (Agency)

Rohit Sharma and Virat Kohli are back in action, and with the 2027 ODI World Cup now just over a year away, India’s three-match series against West Indies comes at a time when their World Cup plans need to start taking shape. There is still plenty to sort out, and every ODI between now and next October will give India a chance to settle combinations, look at their options and work out who fits where. Eventually settled for bronze. The first ODI of the three-match series will be played on Sunday, September 27, with the toss scheduled for 1:30 PM IST. Live streaming of the India vs West Indies ODI series will be available on the JioHotstar app and website, while the matches will be telecast live on the Star Sports Network in India. West Indies arrive with a very different set of priorities. Their hopes of direct qualification for the 2027 World Cup are over and they will have to go through the Qualifier for the third successive time to make it to the ICC event. The India tour is therefore an important test for Daren Sammy’s side, both in terms of seeing how they measure up against a strong opponent and identifying what needs to improve before the qualifier, which is five months away. India have played three ODI series this year and lost two of them. Injuries, along with the focus on the T20 World Cup, which India won, have meant they have struggled to put their strongest side on the field consistently. They will again be without Hardik Pandya and Jasprit Bumrah for this series, leaving two significant holes to fill. Pandya gives India the all-round balance that can change the make-up of the XI, while Bumrah remains the leader of their pace attack and one of their most important white-ball players. If both are fit and available when India travel to Southern Africa for the World Cup, they will be central to the team’s plans.

IND vs WI: Virat Kohli 59 runs away from breaking Sachin Tendulkar’s historic ODI record

New Delhi. (Agency)

Star batter Virat Kohli is on the verge of breaking another historic ODI record held by Sachin Tendulkar during the three-match series against the West Indies, which begins on Sunday, September 27. Kohli needs just 59 runs in the first ODI in Thiruvananthapuram to become only the second batter in men’s ODI history to complete 15,000 runs, joining Tendulkar in the elite list. Kohli has scored 14,941 runs in 302 ODI innings at an average of 58.59, with 54 centuries and 79 fifties. While Tendulkar is the ODI’s highest run-scorer with 18,426 runs, Kohli has several other milestones within his reach in the upcoming series. If the veteran batter scores 59 runs against West Indies, he will complete 15,000 ODI runs in his 303rd innings, making him the fastest batter to



the landmark by a big margin. Tendulkar reached the landmark in his 377th ODI innings in 2007, meaning Kohli would get there 74 innings earlier than his illustrious predecessor. Earlier, Kohli became the fastest batter to 13,000 ODI runs, reaching

the feat in 267 innings in 2023, breaking Tendulkar’s previous record of 321 innings. **Tendulkar’s home record also in Kohli’s sights** Kohli will also aim to break another of Tendulkar’s records, which is the most ODI runs scored at home. Tendulkar amassed 6,976 ODI runs in India, while Kohli currently has 6,867, leaving him just 110 runs short of surpassing the former India opener. Kohli’s record at home underlines his consistency. He has smashed those 6,867 runs in 127 innings, averaging 62.42, with 27 hundreds and 36 fifties. At home, Kohli has hit 41 international centuries, while Tendulkar’s record stands at 42. He needs two more centuries in India to overtake his former teammate and India’s batting legend in that list.

Panama coach blames Bengaluru traffic, poor logistics for 1-1 draw against India

CHENNAI. (Agency)

Panama coach Thomas Christiansen did not want to call it an excuse, but after watching his side surrender the lead and settle for a 1-1 draw against India in Bengaluru, he had little hesitation in pointing towards the circumstances around the team’s preparation. Speaking at the post-match press conference at Sree Kanteerava Stadium, Christiansen said Panama had not had enough time to train together because of travel and logistics, while the team’s journey to the stadium on matchday took around two hours in Bengaluru traffic. He also took responsibility for the result, with five players making their first starts for the senior national team as Panama begin a generational transition. “A generational change is not easy. Five players got their first start today. The result is my fault. We didn’t have time to work, to train, because



of the travel and logistics. But I’m happy to see them start with five debutants. We have to learn from this experience.” “I don’t want this to sound like an excuse, but it is not easy to be in a bus for two hours in traffic to get to

the stadium. The logistics and the travel here were also complicated. We have to be smarter when we sign these agreements again. I don’t want this to sound like an excuse, but we have to be careful with how

we handle things inside and outside the pitch because our players deserve better.” The five debutants were Marcos De Leon, Jair Modelo, Joseph Jones, Daivis Murillo and Mijahir Jimenez. Panama had also brought substantial World Cup experience to Bengaluru, with 14 players from their 2026 World Cup squad included in the group for the India friendly, although the side Christiansen fielded was clearly one being used to begin the next phase. Panama were based at the Renaissance Bengaluru Race Course Hotel, while their training sessions were held at the Centre for Sports Excellence Phase 3 in Bettahalasuru, up in North Bengaluru. Their final pre-match session was on September 24, so the squad had already made that trip across the city and back before matchday even arrived. Getting to Kanteerava on September 25 was a much shorter journey on paper.

Koffee With Karan 9



Janhvi Kapoor

Varun Dhawan Shoot Episode; Arjun Kapoor Makes A Cameo?

Karan Johar has kickstarted the shoot of Koffee With Karan 9 last Sunday. As per reports, the first episode will feature Salman Khan in a rare solo appearance. Speculations are also rife that Shah Rukh Khan and Aryan Khan will also be gracing the couch this season. While there's no official confirmation on these heresays, we've some exclusive update for you!

We hear that an episode of this season has already been filmed. A little birdie tells News18 exclusively, "The episode was shot at Yash Raj Films' studio with Janhvi Kapoor and Varun Dhawan. This is the first time that they appeared on the chat show together. Karan and his protégés had a blast. A special guest also made a cameo, leaving Janhvi and Varun surprised."

The source further adds, "Arjun, who became the unofficial mascot of season 5, will be making a special appearance in this particular episode with the Bawaal and Sunny Sanskari Ki Tulsi Kumari co-stars. Varun's camaraderie with Arjun is no secret and when they came to the show as a duo back in 2016, they left Karan, the crew members and the audience rolling in laughter."We also hear that the recently shot episode was a rollercoaster ride with Arjun, Varun and Janhvi trading hilarious anecdotes. The trio let their guard down, and teased one another, resulting in several candid moments. Needless to say, Karan was in splits throughout. On a related note, Arjun went on to earn a Special Koffee Award for appearing a total of four times on season 5.

He had made three unannounced cameos across the season. He made a surprise pop-in to sit between Ranbir Kapoor and Ranveer Singh for a game segment called 'Kiss the Arjun'. He was brought in again for another round of the segment in the episode featuring Katrina Kaif and Anushka Sharma. He also stayed to act as a guest judge for the 'Rapid Fire' round.

Coming back to season 9, this is the fourth time that Janhvi is making an appearance on Koffee With Karan. She had made her debut on the show in 2018 along with Arjun. She went on to share the couch with Sara Ali Khan on season 7 and her younger sister Khushi Kapoor on season 8. Varun, on the other hand, has been a regular since 2013 and has already been a part of it six times.



Kareena Kapoor

Reveals Why She, Saif Ali Khan 'Fight' About Work: 'I'm Instinctive, He Likes To Prepare'

Kareena Kapoor, who will soon be seen in Daayra, recently opened up about how she and her actor-husband Saif Ali Khan differ in their approach to acting. She credited her sister and superstar Karisma Kapoor for teaching her everything she knows. Kareena also reflected on her kids, Taimur and Jeh, noticing her advertisements everywhere.

Kareena said at a recent SCREEN event, "We always end up fighting. Two actors in the house will always end up fighting. I might not like a promo of his, or he might not like mine. We are pretty different when it comes to that. I am more instinctive, while Saif likes to prepare a lot more. He will read a lot more and get into it. Whereas I want to be switching on and off."

She said that Karisma has been her mentor. "I credit her with everything. But, if there's one thing that she has always taught me is just that hard work and perseverance. Because in the 90s, there was a constant push they had to do, just be there and prove themselves. She tells me to never lose faith, no matter how great an actor or bigger star you are," she said.

In the same chat, she also revealed she finds it

strange when Taimur and Jeh see her ads. "It's a lot, because now they are constantly watching ads. I don't know what I feel when my ads show up in front of them. Whether I want them to see too much or... There is a constant battle," she said.

The actor recalled an incident with Taimur and added, "I feel weird sometimes, like at airports. If I



see myself pouting in some ad, Taimur asks, 'Why are you doing that?' I ask him to move on; it's an ad, that's fine. But he asks why I am doing that. I just ask him to leave it and let it be."

Meanwhile, on the work front, Kareena's Daayra will be out in theatres on September 18. The film is directed by Meghna Gulzar and also stars Prithviraj Sukumaran.

Amitabh Bachchan Slams Retirement Rumours: 'Iska Matlab Hota Hai Sone Jaa Raha Hu'



Amitabh Bachchan has dismissed retirement rumours. Days after the Bollywood superstar expressed his desire to quit Kaun Banega Crorepati (KBC) and mentioned that he "wishes to retire", he has now clarified that he only meant about going to bed after finish writing his blog. "I wrote in the blog .. 'it's late, time to retire ..' which we all know means retire to bed it's late .. and this is the Media – the CONSCIENCE of a NATION – THE ULTIMATE INFORMER !!" Big B wrote in this latest blog while sharing a newspaper cutting of a report about his 'retirement'.

He further explained what he meant by 'retirement' and added, "Ji nahin huzoor, main kaam se retire nahin ho raha hoon; Angrezi mein iska matlab hota hai main ab sone jaa raha hoon. Aur wahan maanyavar aapko aane ka nimantran nahin hai. (No sir, I am not retiring from work any time soon; (retire) in English means going to sleep. And you are not invited there.)"

What Did Amitabh Bachchan Say About Retirement?

Just a few days back, Amitabh Bachchan dropped a big hit about his longtime association with Kaun Banega Crorepati.

The Bollywood actor, who is currently hosting the 18th season of the show, indirectly expressed his desire to quit the show. Big B mentioned that it has become 'difficult' for him to continue hosting duties because of contestants' heartbreaking stories.

"... some contestants come with such grave personal stories, that it becomes difficult to conduct not just our feelings for them but also to continue hosting the show ..I shall not indulge more because it would take away some elements from the understanding that a host gives to the Channel .. but it has been a heart – breaking experience .. I wish to retire now .. it is late .. and the night invites .. Love," he wrote.

It should be noted that Amitabh Bachchan has been the host of KBC since its inception in 2000, except for the third season, which was hosted by Shah Rukh Khan.

Shah Rukh Khan Calls Ranveer Singh's Dhurandhar 'Fantastic': 'Loved Both The Parts'



The Hamza fever is far from over. Ranveer Singh's Dhurandhar franchise has not only delivered a massive box-office run but has also created a strong wave of conversation around his performances as Hamza and Jaskirat. Now, the franchise has received a shoutout from none other than Shah Rukh Khan, who has revealed that he has watched both films and enjoyed them. During a recent #AskSRK session, a fan took the opportunity to ask Shah Rukh about the biggest blockbusters to come out of Hindi cinema in recent times. The user asked him directly: "Have you seen Dhurandhar? #AskSRK" Shah Rukh Khan replied, "Loved both the parts....fantastic by the whole team!!!"

Dhurandhar: What Is The Film About?

Dhurandhar is a Hindi spy-action thriller written and directed by Aditya Dhar, who previously made Uri: The Surgical Strike. The film is set against the backdrop of Karachi's criminal underworld, political networks and India-Pakistan tensions. It follows Hamza Ali Mazari, played by Ranveer Singh, an undercover Indian intelligence operative who enters Karachi's Lyari area and slowly builds his position inside the local underworld.

The film is inspired by real geopolitical events, including the 1999 IC-814 hijacking, the 2001 Parliament attack, the 2008 Mumbai terror attacks and the gang wars in Karachi's Lyari region. However, it is a fictionalised spy thriller and not a direct biopic of any one real-life intelligence officer. The story explores how an undercover agent infiltrates a dangerous criminal network while hiding his real identity and mission. Ranveer Singh plays Hamza Ali Mazari, whose deeper identity is later revealed to be connected to his Indian intelligence mission. Unlike a conventional spy who operates in uniform, his character works from inside the enemy's criminal network. The film's central conflict comes from the risks involved in gaining the trust of gangsters, politicians and terror-linked figures while trying to protect his own identity.

Ganpati Bappa Morya: Mumbai Bids Emotional Farewell to Ganesha

by Vijay Sinha

Mumbai has bid an emotional farewell to Lord Ganesha after days of grand celebrations, colourful processions and devotional fervour. The 12-day Ganeshotsav concluded with the immersion of thousands of idols across the city, while the farewell processions continued through the night and into Saturday morning. The festival began on September 14, with Anant Chaturdashi falling on September 25. While most idols were immersed on Friday, some of Mumbai's iconic public Ganesh idols completed their marathon processions on Saturday morning. **Lalbaughcha Raja gets grand farewell**

The biggest attraction of the concluding celebrations was the immersion procession

of Lalbaughcha Raja, which drew huge crowds of devotees along the streets of Mumbai. After a procession lasting more than 21 hours, the iconic idol reached Girgaon Chowpatty, where it was immersed in the Arabian Sea at around 10:50 am on September 26. The immersion followed traditional prayers and aarti, with the idol being taken into deeper waters on a barge.

The Chinchpokhicha Chintamani idol was also immersed at Girgaon Chowpatty at around 10 am, followed by other prominent public Ganesh idols.

Nearly 2 lakh idols immersed

The scale of the festival was reflected in the number of immersions recorded across Mumbai. According to figures cited from the Brihanmum-



bai Municipal Corporation (BMC), 199,325 idols were

immersed during the festival. This included 182,048 house-

hold idols, 10,536 public Ganesh idols and 6,741

Gauri/Hartalika idols. From small household processions

to massive public mandals, Mumbai's streets remained packed with devotees chanting "Ganpati Bappa Morya, Pudchya Varshi Lavkar Ya" as the idols made their final journey.

Massive arrangements for safe immersion

The BMC and Mumbai Police made extensive arrangements to manage the enormous crowds. More than 25,000 civic personnel and over 24,000 police personnel were deployed across the city.

The BMC had prepared 67 natural immersion sites and 383 artificial ponds at 278 locations.

The arrangements also included lifeguards, ambulances, motorboats, floodlights, control rooms and observation towers.

The civic body also encouraged devotees to use artificial

ponds as part of its environmentally conscious immersion arrangements. BMC has stated that idols immersed in artificial ponds can help reduce pressure on natural water bodies, while collected nirmalya is processed for composting.

Mumbai returns to normal after the celebrations

As the final major idols were immersed, civic workers began cleaning immersion points and the major procession routes.

The festival once again transformed Mumbai into a sea of devotion, music and colour before giving way to the familiar rhythm of the city.

For millions of devotees, however, the farewell was not an ending but a promise of reunion next year — "Ganpati Bappa Morya, Pudchya Varshi Lavkar Ya."

Dr Amit Kumar Pandey Honoured with KankeTalks Samwad Samman 2026



Ranchi: Dr Amit Kumar Pandey, Pro-Vice-Chancellor of RKDF University, Ranchi, was honoured with the KankeTalks Samwad Samman 2026 for his contribution to higher education, youth empowerment and creating opportunities for meritorious students.

The award was presented by former Jharkhand Chief Minister and former Union Minister Arjun Munda at the Samwad programme organised by Kanke Talks at Celebration Banquet Hall, Ranchi.

The event was attended by several prominent personalities, including Rajya Sabha Deputy Chairman Harivansh Narayan Singh, former Rajya Sabha MP Mahesh Poddar, senior journalist and Padma Shri awardee Balbir Dutt, and Padma Shri awardee Nagpuri folk artist Mukund Nayak. Speaking after receiving the honour, Dr Pandey said recognising and providing opportunities to talented students is a social responsibility. He said education should go beyond degrees and focus on knowledge, skills, confidence, personality development and leadership.

He said RKDF University is committed to providing students with quality higher education, skill development, guidance and better career opportunities, with special emphasis on holistic development.

The Samwad programme focused on education, youth empowerment, social transformation and creating opportunities for Jharkhand's talent. Discussions also highlighted the role of education in strengthening youth and contributing to the development of the state and the nation.

Johar Darpan's Annual Celebration, Kavi Sammelan Held in Bokaro

Bokaro: The second annual celebration and Kavi Sammelan of the Johar Darpan literary forum was held at DAV Public School, Sector-6, Bokaro, on Sunday, bringing together writers, poets and literature enthusiasts from across Jharkhand. The programme began with the lighting of the ceremonial lamp and floral tributes to Goddess Saraswati. BSL official Deep Kumar Saxena was the chief guest, while Neelima Mishra and DAV-6 in-charge B.K. Jha attended as guests. Forum founder Pankaj Kumar Das welcomed the guests and participants.

A major highlight was the launch of writer Mahendra Nath Goswami 'Sudhakar's' book Katha Sarovar. The forum also conferred the Johar Darpan Matrubhasha Gaurav Samman on noted Jharkhandi writer Shanti Bharat for his contribution to regional and mother-tongue literature.

During the Kavi Sammelan, poets presented compositions on love, nature, social concerns, human emotions, mother tongue and contemporary issues, drawing enthusiastic applause from the audience.

India's First LNG-Powered Train Flagged Off in Gujarat; ₹1,500-Crore-Plus Rail Projects Launched

Ahmedabad: India took a step towards cleaner railway operations on Sunday with the flagging off of the country's first LNG-diesel dual-fuel train from Sabarmati Railway Station in Gujarat. Union Home and Cooperation Minister Amit Shah flagged off the train and launched several railway projects in the state. The train uses a dual-fuel system combining LNG and diesel. Two 1,400-horsepower Driving Power Cars (DPCs) have been converted for LNG operation. According to railway officials, the technology can replace nearly 40% of diesel consumption with LNG. More than 2,000 km of field trials have reportedly been completed.

The initiative is aimed at reducing diesel consumption, fuel costs and emissions, including carbon dioxide, nitrogen oxides and particulate matter. The inaugural service operated between Sabarmati and Mahesana. The programme also saw



India Gets Its First LNG Train; Kavach, WAG-12 Shed Projects Launched

the inauguration of a WAG-12 locomotive maintenance shed at Sabarmati, built at a reported cost of around ₹700 crore. The facility can maintain up to 300 high-capacity WAG-12 electric locomotives.

Other projects include the rollout of the indigenous Kavach automatic train pro-

tection system across 404 km, automatic block signalling over 122.57 km and the 21-km doubling of the Sabarmati-Sarkhej railway line.

Reports have put the combined value of the railway projects at more than ₹1,500 crore, although government-linked sources have

cited a figure of ₹1,472 crore, while several media reports have used ₹1,542 crore.

The LNG train initiative marks another move by Indian Railways towards alternative fuels and lower-emission railway operations, alongside ongoing efforts to modernise safety, signalling and freight infrastructure.

1-Gram Gold for Newborns: Vijay's Tamil Nadu Scheme Comes Under EC Scrutiny

Chennai: Tamil Nadu's 'Thaimaman Thanga Mothiram' scheme, offering a one-gram, 22-carat gold ring to eligible babies born in government hospitals, has come under Election Commission scrutiny ahead of the October 6 bypolls in Madurantakam and Dharpuram.

Social activist Saravanan Palanisamy has complained to the EC, alleging that implementing the scheme violates the



Model Code of Conduct (MCC) in force in the two constituencies.

The scheme, to be launched on September 28, covers eligible babies

born from June 22, 2026. Reports indicate that its implementation will be restricted in the two bypoll constituencies while the MCC remains in force.

The Tamil Nadu government has allocated around ₹755.83 crore annually and plans to distribute over 4.4 lakh gold rings under the programme. The government says the initiative aims to honour newborns and encourage institutional deliveries.

The scheme was also among the welfare promises made by Tamilaga Vettri Kazhagam (TVK) during the 2026 Assembly election campaign.

Shorties

SC to Hear Plea Against MDR on UPI Payments Above ₹2,000

New Delhi: The Supreme Court will on Monday hear a PIL challenging the Centre's decision to introduce a 0.4% Merchant Discount Rate (MDR) on specified UPI person-to-merchant transactions above ₹2,000. The new framework is scheduled to take effect from October 15.

The petition, filed by advocate Anjan Datta, challenges the Centre's notification and the new MDR framework, alleging a lack of adequate statutory safeguards, transparency and public consultation.

Under the framework, MDR will be capped at ₹300 for transactions of ₹75,000 and above. The government has clarified that person-to-person UPI payments will remain free, while UPI payments up to ₹2,000 and transactions covered under the zero-MDR framework for small merchants will not attract the charge. The Supreme Court's official cause-list information confirms the court's listing for September 28.

Lalit Kala Akademi Announces 20 Awards at 65th National Exhibition of Art

New Delhi: The Lalit Kala Akademi, the National Academy of Art, has announced 20 Lalit Kala Akademi Awards as part of the 65th National Exhibition of Art, one of India's major annual exhibitions of contemporary visual art.

According to the Ministry of Culture, the exhibition received around 6,000 artworks from more than 2,000 artists representing 27 States and Union Territories.

Among the awardees are Chandra Shekhar Sain in Sculpture, Chandra Naskar in Painting, Gopal in the relevant category, Pankaj Kumar Sharma in Drawing and Pritam Madhukar Deuskar in Printmaking. The Ministry said the exhibition provides artists with a national platform for recognition while also contributing to the growth of India's creative economy.

Kedarnath Route Landslide Leaves Around 4,000 Pilgrims Stranded

Rudraprayag: A landslide on the Kedarnath pilgrimage route has disrupted movement, with falling debris and boulders blocking the road and leaving around 4,000 pilgrims stranded at different points along the route.

Following the incident, the administration and rescue teams launched clearance operations to remove debris and restore movement. Pilgrims have been moved to or held at safe locations as authorities monitor the situation. Continuous rainfall in the hilly region has increased the risk of further landslides. Officials are keeping a close watch on vulnerable stretches while ensuring that stranded pilgrims receive essential assistance.

Authorities have advised pilgrims and other travellers to remain alert and avoid unnecessary movement until road and weather conditions improve.

'Sanatan Dharma Is Eternal': Gurudev Shrimali's Powerful Message Resonates in Bokaro

Bokaro: Thousands of devotees from Jharkhand, Bihar, Odisha, West Bengal and other states attended the one-day 'Pitru Prasanna Kul Devi-Devta Sadhana' camp organised by Nikhil Mantra Vigyan (Siddhashram Sadhak Parivar) at Buddha Vihar, Sector-4, on Sunday.

Addressing the gathering, Gurudev Shri Nandkishore Shrimali described Sanatan Dharma as an invaluable legacy preserved by generations of ancestors despite centuries of foreign rule and challenges to their faith. He urged devotees to protect this heritage and maintain their faith, citing the principle, "Dharmo Rakshati Rakshitah." Speaking on Pitru Paksha, Gurudev highlighted the traditional importance of remembering and honouring ancestors. He said the Guru forms the foundation of a disciple's spiritual life and compared the Guru's role to the steel-making



process in Bokaro, where raw material is transformed into strong steel through intense heat and processing. He also said true youth is a state of mental freshness, enthusiasm and inner joy, rather than merely a matter of age. Unnecessary worry, he added, weakens faith and affects the quality of life.

Gurudev further spoke about the importance of faith and discipline in spiritual practice, saying a strong Guru-disciple bond provides guidance and

inner strength. He also explained that spiritual traditions should be understood through proper guidance rather than misconceptions, encouraging devotees to approach their practices with awareness and devotion.

The camp also witnessed the participation of devotees who travelled from different parts of eastern India. The gathering continued throughout the day with prayers, spiritual sessions, devotional music and initiation programmes, creating a festive

atmosphere around Buddha Vihar and the adjoining Jagannath Temple complex.

The camp began with prayers to Lord Ganesha and the Guru, followed by devotional programmes. Pitru Prasanna Sadhana, Shaktipat Diksha and Guru Diksha were conducted during the programme, with many devotees joining the Nikhil family.

The venue remained lively throughout the day, with devotees participating in spiritual activities and bhajan programmes. Mahendra Singh Mankar and his troupe presented devotional songs, while Manoj Bhardwaj conducted the proceedings.

Former Jharkhand minister Amar Kumar Bauri, Siddhashram Sadhak Parivar office-bearers P.N. Pandey and Vijay Kumar Jha, camp associates and thousands of devotees attended the event.

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BRIFF NEWS

**Higher EPF wage limit
Monthly PF contribu-
tions rise to Rs 3,917**



New Delhi, Agency: With EPFO increasing the mandatory wage ceiling from Rs 15,000 a month to Rs 25,000, employees will now contribute Rs 3,000 (at 12% contribution of Rs 25,000 wage) towards their PF savings from Rs 1,800 earlier, govt said in a set of FAQs released. This will be along with a contribution of Rs 917 by employers (at 3.67%), up from Rs 550, taking the mandatory monthly PF contributions to Rs 3,917.

In addition, Rs 2,083 - an 8.3% contribution from employers' share - will now go towards the pension kitty from earlier Rs 1,250. On Sept 17, govt increased EPFO wage ceiling to bring one crore additional workers into the social security net as minimum wages in at least seven states and UTs - Delhi, Maharashtra, Karnataka, Haryana, Gujarat, Rajasthan and Uttarakhand - have crossed the Rs 15,000 threshold.

In the case of an employee with a monthly wage of Rs 20,000, the mandatory PF contribution will be Rs 3,134 - the employee share Rs 2,400 and the employer share Rs 734, with an additional Rs 1,666 going towards EPS from employer's share. But if an employee earns, say, Rs 35,000 a month, the mandatory PF contribution will be Rs 6,000 (Rs 3,000 from employee and employers each), with no amount going towards pension as EPS is available only to those whose wages do not exceed the EPFO wage ceiling.

**2 more Naga men killed
as ethnic violence flares
up in Manipur again**



New Delhi, Agency: Two Mao Naga men were shot dead by unidentified gunmen at Kalenjang village in Manipur's Senapati district Saturday afternoon, with two others wounded, in the latest escalation in a Naga-Kuki conflict that has claimed more than 40 lives since Feb. The shooting took place under Senapati police station around 2.30pm, shortly after CM Yumnam Khemchand Singh left a function about 30km away. It came two days after four Tangkhul Naga men were killed allegedly by Myanmar-based Kuki National Army-Burma (B) at Pilog village near the international border in Kamjong district.

The Kalenjang and Pilog killings are part of a series of Naga-Kuki clashes that began in Feb, shortly after Singh's govt took charge. At least 21 people - 11 Nagas and 10 Kukis, including a pregnant woman - have been killed since Aug 27. The toll is separate from the Meitei-Kuki conflict, which has killed over 300.

Both the communities have accused militant groups from the other side of the attacks. Police have said several such allegations are under investigation and have not been independently verified.

All misconceptions put to rest': NDA allies welcome EC press note amid SIR row''

New Delhi, Agency: BJP allies in the ruling National Democratic Alliance (NDA) on Saturday welcomed the Election Commission of India's (ECI) statement in response to a media report claiming a "rift" between Chief Election Commissioner (CEC) Gyanesh Kumar and the two Election Commissioners, Sukhbir Singh Sandhu and Vivek Joshi, over the Special Intensive Revision (SIR) exercise. "In the recent months, the Commission



has taken numerous decisions including SIR across the country. The order for the SIR issued on 24.6.2025 for all the States/UTs, starting with Bihar, followed by West Bengal and 30 other

States/UTs was issued with the unanimous approval of the Commission. The same has been upheld by the Hon'ble Supreme Court of India vide its order dated 27.5.2026. The schedule for

SIR for 12 States and UTs was issued on 27.10.2025 and those for 19 States/UTs was issued on 14.05.2026 with the unanimous approval of the Commission. The final figure of number of electors will be known only after final publication in the remaining 12 states of Phase-III," the ECI's press note read. Following the ECI's response, Union minister and Lok Janshakti Party (LJP) chief Chirag Paswan, among the first BJP allies to raise the issue, maintained that it was his

responsibility to voice any question or concern arising in the public mind.

"The concerns raised by the public regarding SIR, which came before us, were presented before the Election Commission... Today, the Election Commission has clearly stated its position on all important issues point by point. The process of SIR, the unanimous agreement of all three commissioners, and the facts related to the meeting with the Cabinet Secretary have also been clearly presented," Paswan

posted in Hindi on X.

"This clarity further strengthens public trust in democracy. The Election Commission plays a crucial role in democracy, and in this way, the trust of the country's people in democracy has increased even more," the Hajipur MP added. Andhra Pradesh chief minister and Telugu Desam Party (TDP) supremo N Chandrababu Naidu also welcomed the Election Commission's statement, maintaining that it "reaffirmed the credibility of constitutional institutions."

SIR row: Congress' Khera questions EC over Form 6, says Bengal & Bihar polls 'illegal'

New Delhi, Agency: Congress leader Pawan Khera on Sunday questioned the Election Commission's response to concerns over Form 6, claiming that the Special Intensive Revision (SIR) of electoral rolls was based on a change to the form that could not have been made without amending the Registration of Electors Rules, 1960. Speaking to news agency, Khera said the rules could not be changed without being amended in Parliament and questioned whether the Election Commission had addressed the objections raised by Election Commissioners Sukhbir Singh Sandhu and Vivek Joshi.

"The 1960 Rules cannot be changed without being amended in Parliament. The biggest point of



difference between Sandhu ji and Joshi with Gyanesh Kumar was this, and did we receive the answer to it today?" Khera said.

Questions Form 6 changes Khera alleged that the SIR exercise was based on an "illegally changed" Form 6 and questioned the validity of elections conducted in Bengal and Bihar on the basis of the exercise.

"The entire SIR is based on a

Form 6 that was changed illegally. The SIR that arose from that illegal form has also become illegal. The elections held in Bengal and Bihar based on that illegal SIR have also become illegal. Did we get an answer on this?" he said.

What is the Form 6 row? The controversy centres on the requirement for new voters to provide details linking themselves or their parents or grandparents to electoral rolls from the previous SIR.

According to Indian Express reports, Election Commissioners Joshi and Sandhu had objected to incorporating the requirement into Form 6, arguing that the statutory form could not be altered without an amendment to the Registration of Electors Rules, 1960.

BJP allies close ranks, flay opposition for 'undermining democracy'

New Delhi, Agency: BJP's allies on Saturday closed ranks to hit out at opposition, with TDP chief and Andhra Pradesh CM N Chandrababu Naidu saying EC's statement reaffirmed "the integrity and credibility of our constitutional institutions" and ended "misconceptions" around it. "Attempts to undermine global confidence in India's democratic framework for short-term political gains are deeply unfortunate," he said, urging opposition to accept wins and losses with grace.

LJP (Ram Vilas)'s Chirag Paswan said opposition is spreading confusion and



questioned why it keeps silent on states where it has formed govt. JDU member Sanjay Jha said rising frustration over poll defeats have led opposition to spread propaganda to undermine the democracy. Shiv Sena's Eknath Shinde said Congress keeps mum when it wins but attacks EC when it loses.

JKCA 'scam': HC rejects ED plea to add charges

Jammu, Agency: Jammu and Kashmir high court Friday rejected an Enforcement Directorate's petition that challenged a Srinagar CJM court's order denying permission to add charges related to the receipt and concealment of stolen property in the alleged Jammu and Kashmir Cricket Association (JKCA) fund scam. Justice Sanjay Parihar held that ED's prayer for invoking sections 411 (dishonestly receiving stolen property) and 424 (dishonest or fraudulent removal or concealment of property) of Ranbir Penal Code (RPC) lacked merit based on the material cur-



rently available.

However, the HC set aside the trial court's reasoning that ED lacked a "locus standi" to move such an application. The case dates to the period between 2002 and 2011, when BCCI granted Rs 94.06 crore to JKCA. A CBI probe found that Rs 43.69 crore was misappropriated by the then office-bearers of JKCA.

Congress owes nation a public apology: Nabin after EC statement



New Delhi, Agency: Buoyed by the Election Commission's statement, BJP Saturday said it has exposed Congress and its allies as their attack on the poll body was nothing but a continuation of their tactic of shifting blame for their shrinking popular support in elections and demanded their apology.

BJP president Nitin Nabin said, "Opposition has once again been exposed for misleading the public on SIR. EC has made it clear that every decision relating to the SIR was taken unanimously by the full commission. Yet, Congress chose to build its allegations around a manufactured lie and attack our constitutional bodies." Nabin noted that opposi-

tion has no complaint when it wins but raises questions when it loses.

He said, "The hypocrisy is evident. When the same electoral process delivers victories to Congress and its allies, including in states like Kerala and Tamil Nadu, its credibility is readily accepted. But when the people's mandate goes against them elsewhere, they question the very institutions that conduct those elections. Democracy cannot be respected selectively."

Those who have repeatedly undermined India's democratic framework for political survival owe the nation an honest reckoning and a public apology, Nabin said.

BJP's Ravi Shankar Prasad said the poll panel's statement has made it clear that Rahul had levelled unfounded and shameful allegations. "He and Congress are blaming the Election Commission for their political failures by levelling baseless allegations against a constitutional institution. Today, their web of lies stands exposed yet again," Prasad said.

India, Canada seek to take ties 'to a higher level': EAM Jaishankar after UNGA meet

New Delhi, Agency: India and Canada are looking to take their bilateral relationship to a "higher level", external affairs minister S Jaishankar said after meeting Canadian Foreign Minister Anita Anand on the sidelines of the UN General Assembly.

"Always a pleasure to meet FM @AnitaAnandMP of Canada #UNGA81 A productive discussion as we prepare to take the relationship to a higher level," Jaishankar said in a post on X on Saturday.

The meeting comes as New Delhi and



Ottawa work to rebuild ties and advance negotiations for a Comprehensive Economic Partnership Agreement. The two sides have set a target of concluding the trade negotiations by the end of 2026. Canadian Prime Minister Mark Carney said earlier this week that he expected Prime

Minister Narendra Modi to visit Canada in December. He also said negotiations on the trade agreement were making "good progress".

"We are making good progress in our trade negotiations with India. It is an exceptionally important relationship on many many levels, people-to-people levels, security levels, and also trade and economic," Carney said at a press conference on the sidelines of the UNGA.

Carney was responding to questions about Modi's possible visit and the timeline for the trade agreement. Canada had

formally invited Modi to visit in 2026, with both governments agreeing to work through diplomatic channels to settle a mutually convenient date. The possible December visit could coincide with the G20 Summit in Miami, which US President Donald Trump is scheduled to host on December 14 and 15.

India and Canada have been working to broaden cooperation beyond trade, including in energy, critical minerals, technology, defence and talent. The two countries have also agreed to work towards a stronger strategic partnership.

India, Bangladesh look towards Rahman visit in Nov

New Delhi, Agency: After an earlier attempt was aborted, India and Bangladesh are looking to schedule a visit by PM Tarique Rahman to India in the third week of Nov, sources said.

Efforts to reschedule the visit are likely to gain momentum after the arrival of the new Bangladesh



high commissioner, Asad Alam Siam, in the last week of Oct or early Nov. For Dhaka though, the

key concern - one which might decide whether the visit materialises - is the unresolved issue of former PM Hasina's extradition.

Rahman's birthday greetings to Modi and the latter's prompt response seem to have boosted the likelihood of an early finalisation of dates for the visit.

INDIA bloc to meet on Sept 30, CEC's ouster on top of agenda

New Delhi, Agency: Opposition INDIA bloc will meet on Sept 30 to discuss the alleged manipulation of poll rolls under SIR and a possible joint struggle to press for the resignation of CEC Gyanesh Kumar.

The meeting has been scheduled against the backdrop of nationwide outrage triggered by revelations that ECs SS Sandhu and Vivek Joshi had questioned many of the decisions regarding SIR. The opposition, led by Rahul Gandhi, has said the revelations tie in with their allegations of 'vote chori' in favour of BJP over the last two years. It



has demanded the scrapping of the SIR process. TMC MP Derek O'Brien said the demand for Gyanesh Kumar's resignation is "non-negotiable", while other issues will also be discussed at the meeting. "We will work unitedly and purposefully."

The meeting is expected to be attended by the leading lights of the anti-

BJP front, including Mallikarjun Kharge, Rahul Gandhi, Mamata Banerjee, Akhilesh Yadav, Uddhav Thackeray and MA Baby. The meeting has been scheduled after CPM's MA Baby wrote to parties (including AAP, DMK and CJP) seeking an immediate meeting.

Trinamool's Mamata Banerjee also reached out to INDIA bloc members.

She called the CEC "Vanish Kumar", demanded his ouster and said the Bengal mandate was stolen. The joint brainstorming will follow a Congress Working Committee meet on Sept 29. The parties are also planning to submit a fresh "removal notice" against Kumar in both Houses of Parliament.

CPI-ML's Dipankar Bhattacharya said that there is a strong belief within INDIA bloc that some parties (Aam Aadmi Party and DMK) which are not part of the alliance umbrella should also be roped in to boost the campaign.

Rabies: A Preventable Killer That Still Takes Thousands of Lives

On World Rabies Day, the focus is on timely treatment, dog vaccination and collective action to prevent a disease that becomes almost invariably fatal once symptoms appear

Every year on September 28, World Rabies Day draws attention to one of the world's oldest yet still preventable infectious diseases. The day is observed to increase awareness about rabies and encourage governments, health workers, veterinarians and communities to work together to eliminate deaths caused by dog-mediated rabies.

The theme for World Rabies Day 2026 is "Stronger Together", highlighting the need for coordinated action involving communities, animal-health professionals, healthcare workers, governments and international organisations. The World Health Organization (WHO) says that rabies elimination cannot be achieved by any one sector working alone. Dog vaccination, public awareness, surveillance and timely treatment all have to function together.

Rabies is a viral disease that affects the central nervous system. It can infect both domestic and wild animals and is transmitted to humans mainly through the saliva of an infected animal, most commonly through bites or scratches. Dogs remain the main source of human rabies transmission. WHO estimates that about 99 per cent of human rabies cases are associated with dogs.

The numbers explain why awareness remains important. WHO estimates that rabies causes around 59,000 human deaths every year across more than 150 countries. More than 95 per cent of human deaths occur in Africa and Asia, while children account for a substantial share of those affected.

India continues to face a significant burden of animal bites. According to estimates cited by WHO India from the Indian Council of Medical Research-National Institute of Epidemiology, about 9.1 million animal bites occur in India each year, with more than three-quarters caused by dogs. The same estimates put annual human rabies deaths in India at about 5,726.

Yet rabies has an important distinc-



tion from many other fatal diseases: deaths can be prevented even after a potentially dangerous exposure if appropriate treatment is started promptly.

The crucial first step

One of the most important messages on World Rabies Day is what a person should do immediately after being bitten or scratched by a potentially infected animal.

WHO advises people to wash the wound thoroughly with soap and running water for at least 15 minutes and seek medical attention immediately. Depending on the nature of the exposure, post-exposure prophylaxis can include rabies vaccination and, when indicated, rabies immunoglobulin or

monoclonal antibodies.

This is why dismissing a bite as "only a small wound" can be dangerous. The size of the wound does not by itself determine the risk. Medical professionals assess the type and location of exposure and the animal involved before deciding what treatment is required.

Another common mistake is relying on home remedies instead of seeking medical care. The immediate priority after a suspected exposure is proper wound washing followed by professional medical assessment.

Why dog vaccination matters

Treatment after a bite is only one part of rabies prevention. The more sustainable approach is to control the disease at

its source.

Vaccinating dogs can interrupt transmission between animals and humans. WHO identifies mass dog vaccination as one of the most effective tools for preventing dog-mediated human rabies. Responsible pet ownership, vaccination and appropriate animal population management therefore play a central role.

Public awareness is equally important. Children in particular need to learn how to behave around unfamiliar animals. Approaching a stray dog, disturbing an animal while it is eating or handling an injured animal can increase the risk of a bite.

Bhutan offers a recent example

There is also encouraging news in

the global fight against rabies. In September 2026, WHO validated Bhutan as having eliminated dog-mediated human rabies as a public health problem. The country recorded no human deaths from dog-mediated rabies since June 2023. WHO attributed the achievement to sustained vaccination, surveillance, population management, community participation and coordinated action over more than a decade.

Bhutan's experience illustrates the central message of this year's World Rabies Day theme: sustained cooperation can make elimination possible.

The global goal is known as "Zero by 30"-ending human deaths from dog-mediated rabies by 2030. Achieving it requires more than medicines. It requires reliable vaccination of dogs, accessible post-exposure treatment, trained health and veterinary personnel, accurate reporting and communities that know what to do after an exposure.

From awareness to action

World Rabies Day is therefore not simply an awareness event. It is a reminder that prevention begins before a bite occurs and continues immediately after one.

A vaccinated dog protects not only its owner but also the wider community. A child who knows not to approach an unfamiliar animal is less likely to be bitten. A family that washes a wound immediately and seeks medical attention can prevent a potentially fatal outcome. A health system that maintains access to vaccines and other post-exposure treatment can save lives.

Rabies remains a serious public-health problem, but it is also a disease against which society already possesses effective preventive tools. The challenge is ensuring that those tools reach the people and animals who need them.

The message of World Rabies Day 2026 is therefore straightforward: prevention is a shared responsibility. Communities, doctors, veterinarians, governments and animal owners all have a role. As the WHO theme puts it, the world is "Stronger Together" when it comes to ending rabies.

Bhagat Singh at 23: The Young Revolutionary Who Read, Wrote and Questioned

Remembered for his revolutionary role in India's freedom struggle, Bhagat Singh was also a prolific reader, writer and thinker whose ideas continued to circulate through his writings after his death

On September 28, India remembers Bhagat Singh, one of the most widely recognised young figures of the country's freedom struggle. His name is closely associated with revolutionary politics and the anti-colonial movement, but the story of Bhagat Singh is larger than the familiar image of a young man in a hat.

He was also a reader, journalist, writer and political thinker. Much of what is known about his intellectual world comes from his writings and from accounts of his reading and political activities.

Bhagat Singh's life was extraordinarily brief. He was executed by the British colonial government in March 1931, at the age of 23. Yet in those few years he moved from the political atmosphere of Punjab to journalism, revolutionary organisations, public protest and imprisonment.

One of the lesser-discussed aspects of his life was his relationship with books. The Ministry of Culture's Azadi Ka Amrit Mahotsav archive records that Bhagat Singh read extensively in political theory, history and economics. He was associated with the Dwarka Das Library in Lahore, where he and his comrades accessed books that influenced their understanding of politics and society.

His commitment to reading did not disappear when he was imprisoned. During the hunger strike by political prisoners at Lahore Central Jail in 1929,



access to books, writing material and newspapers was among the demands made by the prisoners. A letter written by Bhagat Singh from jail to his school friend Jaidev Gupta also requested a number of books from libraries in Lahore.

That detail offers a different picture of the young revolutionary. For Bhagat Singh, political action was closely connected with reading, argument and the development of ideas.

Journalism as a political tool Before his imprisonment, Bhagat Singh had also developed an interest in journalism. According to the Ministry of Culture's archive, he worked under nationalist journalist Ganesh Shankar Vidyarthi in Kanpur and contributed articles to the newspaper Pratap. He also wrote for the Hindi journal Matwala under the pseudonym "Balwant" and became associated with Kirti, a journal that addressed workers, peasants and political questions.

Writing allowed him to communicate political ideas beyond the circle of revolutionaries. His articles dealt with political leaders, revolutionary movements and the sacrifices made during the freedom struggle.

This side of his personality is important because it shows that his legacy was not created only by dramatic events. It was also built through words-articles, essays, letters and political arguments.

A prisoner who continued to think

Imprisonment became another important period in Bhagat Singh's intellectual development. His writings from jail reveal an individual who continued to examine questions of politics, society, religion and human

behaviour.

Among his best-known writings is "Why I Am an Atheist." Records held by the Gandhi Smriti Library at the Lal Bahadur Shastri National Academy of Administration identify the essay as a work written by Bhagat Singh while he was in Lahore Central Jail. The essay was later published in The People in September 1931, after his death.

The essay is significant not simply because of its title but because of the manner in which Bhagat Singh approached a deeply personal question through argument and reasoning. The National Book Trust continues to publish the work, including an English edition introduced by historian Bipan Chandra.

His writings also reflected concerns about society and political change. They were shaped by the period in which he lived-a time of colonial rule, political repression, mass movements and intense debates about the future of India.

Beyond the iconic photograph for generations, Bhagat Singh has been remembered through photographs, posters, books, films and public commemorations. His distinctive image has become one of the most recognisable symbols associated with India's freedom struggle.

But the photograph can sometimes overshadow the person behind it.

The young man in the photograph spent considerable time reading. He wrote for newspapers. He debated political ideas. He maintained correspondence while in prison. He was interested in history and economics and engaged with questions that went beyond the immediate struggle against colonial rule.

This is perhaps why his writings remain an important part of his legacy. They provide a route to understanding what he thought rather than relying only on later descriptions of him.

Why his story still draws attention

The continuing interest in Bhagat Singh comes partly from the extraordinary contrast between his age and the scale of his historical impact. He was only 23 when he was executed, an age at which many young people today are completing university, beginning careers or deciding what direction to take in life.

His story belongs to a very different historical period, and direct comparisons with the present have limitations. Yet his emphasis on reading, questioning and engaging with ideas gives his life a dimension that extends beyond the events of the freedom struggle.

Remembering Bhagat Singh, therefore, need not mean remembering only the revolutionary image. It can also mean remembering the student, journalist, reader and writer.

His life demonstrates how a young person in a turbulent historical period became deeply engaged with the political and intellectual questions around him. His writings preserved that engagement beyond his lifetime.

September 28 is thus more than a date on the calendar. It is an opportunity to revisit a short life through the books he read, the articles he wrote, the questions he asked and the historical circumstances that shaped him.

Bhagat Singh's story ended at 23, but the documents he left behind ensured that the conversation around his ideas did not end with him.