INDIAN INFO EXCHANGE

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weather report

Kolkata Weather

33 °C | °F

Precipitation 25%

Humidity 77%

Wind 5 km/h

Sunny

Indian Indices

NIFTY 50		
25585.30	261.75	1.03
SENSEX		
83467.66	862.23	1.04
NIFTY BANK		
57422.55	622.65	1.10
NIFTY IT		
35531.05	129.25	0.37
BSE SMALLCAP		
53303.72	248.54	0.47

Gold Rates

Today gold price in Kolkata
1,30,860 1,19,950
»
Today gold price in Bangalore
1,30,860 1,19,950
»
Today gold price in India
1,30,860 (₹-1,910) 1,19,950 (₹-1,750)

MONDAY, 20 OCTOBER 2025. KOLKATA VOLUME 3 ISSUE 167 . PAGES-8 . RS : 4/- MORNING DAILY

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Dev Confident 'Chief Minister's Dream Will Be Fulfilled' as Ghatal Master Plan Gains Momentum

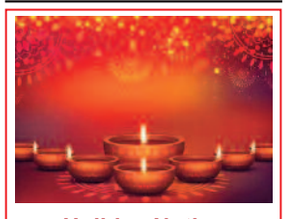
Staff Reporter, Kolkata, 19 October: Ghatal MP and Trinamool Congress leader Deepak Adhikari, popularly known as Dev, has expressed renewed confidence that the much-anticipated Ghatal Master Plan — a long-standing dream project of Chief Minister Mamata Banerjee — will soon turn into reality. Attending a high-level review meeting at Ghatal Town Hall, Dev said he was satisfied with the pace of work and optimistic that the project would be completed on schedule. The meeting was convened to review the progress of the ambitious flood-control and infrastructure initiative that promises to change the face of the flood-prone region. Also present at the meeting were West Bengal Minister Shiuli Saha, MLAs Mamata Bhuiyan and Arup Dhara, Sub-Divisional Magistrate Suman Biswas, and senior officials from various departments. Following detailed discussions, Dev said, "I am satisfied with the way the Ghatal Master Plan work is progressing. A lot of important work has already advanced. The dredging of rivers and canals will start very soon, and inspection of several concrete bridge sites is underway. I am sure that the Ghatal Master Plan work will be completed on time. Didi had promised me about this project, and she is keeping her word." Dev's statement comes as a morale booster for residents of the region, who have long awaited a permanent solution to recurring floods that devastate Ghatal and its adjoining areas almost every year. The Ghatal Master Plan, which aims to strengthen flood-control measures through extensive river dredging, embankment reconstruction, and improved drainage, has been in discussion for several



years. The project is crucial for restoring normalcy to the region, which lies at the confluence of the Shilabati, Kangsabati, and Dwarkeswar rivers — all major tributaries prone to overflow during heavy monsoons. Later in the day, Dev attended the Vijaya Sammilani of the Ghatal Lok Sabha Organizing District Trinamool Congress at Vidyasagar High School ground. He also participated in a preparatory meeting to form the Ghatal Festival and Children's Fair Committee. Sub-Divisional Magistrate Suman Biswas has been appointed chairman of the fair committee, while Dev and Municipality Chairman Tuhinkanti Bera have been named joint secretaries — indicating the MP's continued involvement in community and cultural initiatives alongside his development agenda. Ghatal's flood woes trace back centuries. During the era of the Permanent Settlement under British rule, local zamindars constructed circuit embankments to protect agricultural lands from frequent flooding. These zamindari dams, though originally effective, have weakened over time due to lack of maintenance after the abolition of the zamindari system. Today, these old embankments, left unrepaired for decades, often collapse during the monsoon, inundating vast areas. Adding to the crisis is the persistent problem of silt accumulation. Each year, tidal silt brought in by river currents settles at the bottom, reducing the water-carrying capacity of rivers like Shilabati and Kangsabati. As a result, even moderate rainfall leads to river overflow, submerging homes, crops, and roads across Ghatal subdivision. The Ghatal Master Plan, therefore, was conceptualized as a comprehensive response to these twin challenges — erosion and siltation — through river dredging, embankment reinforcement, and construction of new sluice gates and drainage systems. For years, the implementation of the project remained stalled, largely due to a lack of funds from the Centre. The West Bengal government has long alleged financial discrimination by the Union Government against projects in opposition-ruled states. Determined to break the deadlock, Chief Minister Mamata Banerjee announced last year that her government would fund the project entirely from the state exchequer.



Women prepare 'laddoos', traditional sweets, for the 'Diwali' celebrations, in Mirzapur, Sunday.



Holiday Notice

On the occasion of Kalipuja and Deepavali, all offices of the **INDIAN INFO EXCHANGE** will remain closed on Monday, October 20, 2025. There will be no issue of the edition of the newspaper on Tuesday, October 21, 2025.

—— Editor

Amit Shah Admits Border Challenges but Blames Mamata for Infiltration: 'It's Not Always Possible to Prevent Every Intrusion'

Staff Reporter, New Delhi, 19 October: In a striking admission that has stirred political debate, Union Home Minister Amit Shah acknowledged that it is "not always possible to prevent infiltration" along India's borders, citing difficult terrain and logistical hurdles. However, even as he conceded to the limitations faced by the Border Security Force (BSF) and his own ministry, Shah launched a scathing attack on the Trinamool Congress government in West Bengal, accusing it of sheltering illegal intruders for political gain. His remarks have reignited the long-running war of words between the Centre and the Bengal government over border management and internal security. Speaking in an interview with a national media outlet on Saturday, Shah explained that the geographical complexity of India's border with Bangladesh poses severe challenges to total surveillance.

"The border area is not an easy place. There are many rivers, forests, and hills. It is not always possible to install fencing everywhere. Monitoring 24 hours a day is also extremely difficult," he said. The Home Minister pointed out that border infrastructure is often damaged by natural forces. "Sometimes even if a check post is built, it is washed away by floods. Those who have been to the Bangladesh or Pakistan border know this reality. It's easy to ask questions sitting in Lutyens' Delhi," he remarked.

However, Shah's candid acknowledgment quickly turned into a political offensive. Without directly naming West Bengal Chief Minister Mamata Banerjee, he accused the Trinamool Congress government of deliberately allowing infiltration to serve its "vote bank politics."



Uttar Pradesh Chief Minister Yogi Adityanath and others pull a chariot carrying artistes dressed as Lord Rama, Goddess Sita and Lord Lakshmana during a procession ahead of the Deepotsav celebration, in Ayodhya, Sunday.

Pinpoint Precision & Pride: Rajnath Singh Lauds BrahMos as Flagbearer of 'Aatmanirbhar Bharat

Staff Reporter, New Delhi, 19 October: Union Defence Minister Rajnath Singh on Saturday lauded the supersonic missile system BrahMos as a symbol of India's evolving technological might and self-reliance. Addressing a gathering at the newly established BrahMos production unit in Lucknow, Singh placed the missile at the heart of the government's ambition for an "Aatmanirbhar Bharat" — a self-reliant India ready to lead rather than follow. The occasion was no ordinary ribbon-cutting. The event marked the flag-off of the first batch of BrahMos missiles produced at the new facility in Uttar Pradesh. Singh, joined by Uttar Pradesh Chief Minister Yogi Adityanath, declared that the unit in Lucknow is a "milestone" in India's defence manufacturing journey and a tangible manifestation of the "Make in India, Make for the World" vision. In his address, Singh emphasised the missile's "pinpoint accuracy" in the recent operations. "During Operation Sindoor, the BrahMos missile hit wherever it was fired with pinpoint accuracy," he asserted. The minister highlighted the missile's combination of speed, accuracy and power, describing it as "one of the best systems in the world" and the "backbone of our Armed Forces." According to him, its advanced guidance system and long-range strike capability have raised the bar in India's indigenous defence manufacturing. Singh further underscored how the BrahMos, alongside its international export prospects such as to the Philippines, demonstrates that India is now a



"giver, not just a taker." "Whether it's the export of the BrahMos to the Philippines or cooperation with other countries in the future, India is now playing the role of a partner," he remarked. This, he said, is the "true identity of an Aatmanirbhar Bharat, the vision with which the Prime Minister's Government began its journey in 2014." The Lucknow facility itself forms a pivotal node of the Uttar Pradesh Defence Industrial Corridor and has been equipped for assembly, integration and testing to high technical standards. Singh said that with the dispatch of the first consignment of missiles, Uttar Pradesh has emerged as a key partner in national manufacturing of sophisticated weaponry. By doing so, the government aims to build a robust ecosystem of defence production across regions, creating jobs and technological capacities while reducing dependency on imports. Observers note that the event carries weight beyond symbolism. For years, India's defence imports have been a point of strategic vulnerability.

Asaduddin Owaisi's AIMIM Declares 25 Candidates in Bihar, Shakes Up Political Equation for RJD-Congress



Staff Reporter, New Delhi, 19 October: Asaduddin Owaisi's All India Majlis-e-Ittehadul Muslimeen (AIMIM) has announced its first list of candidates for 25 constituencies, signaling its intent to contest the polls independently. After being sidelined by the INDIA alliance, Owaisi has sent a clear message that his party is ready to chart its own course in Bihar's volatile political battleground. The announcement has triggered ripples across the state's political landscape, putting pressure on both the Rashtriya Janata Dal (RJD) and the Congress, who now face the possibility of a split in their traditional support base.

Making the announcement on Sunday, AIMIM chief and Hyderabad MP Asaduddin Owaisi took to social media platform X to share the list of names. "These are the names of AIMIM candidates for the Bihar Assembly elections. InshaAllah, we hope to become the voice of the most oppressed people of Bihar," Owaisi wrote in his post. He added that the list was prepared by the Bihar state unit of the party after consultations with the national leadership. The 25 names include Mohammad Kaif from Siwan, Anas Salam from Gopalganj, Advocate Shams Ajaz from Kishanganj, Rashid Khalil Ansari from Madhubani, and Mohammad Manzoor Alam from Araria — constituencies where AIMIM aims to consolidate its influence, particularly among the Muslim electorate.

The party's decision to expand its contest from 20 seats in the last election to 25 this time underlines Owaisi's ambition to transform AIMIM into a decisive player in Bihar's multi-cornered political arena. In the 2020 elections, AIMIM had contested 20 seats in alliance with the Bahujan Samaj Party (BSP) led by Mayawati and the Rashtriya Lok Samata Party (RLSP) led by Upendra Kushwaha. That coalition had limited success, but AIMIM managed to make a significant mark by winning five seats — all in the Seemanchal region, which has a large Muslim population.

Since then, Bihar's political dynamics have undergone notable changes. Upendra Kushwaha has rejoined the National Democratic Alliance (NDA) after forming his new outfit, the Rashtriya Lok Dal, while the Congress-RJD combine has continued to face challenges from both the BJP-led NDA and regional forces like AIMIM. With this latest move, Owaisi has made it clear that he intends to position AIMIM as a third front, capable of disrupting the long-standing bipolar structure of Bihar politics dominated by the NDA on one side and the RJD-Congress alliance on the other.

Political observers believe that Owaisi's decision could have far-reaching implications. The Seemanchal region — comprising districts like Kishanganj, Araria, Purnia, and Katihar — has a substantial Muslim population, traditionally loyal to the RJD and Congress. By fielding strong local candidates and projecting himself as the voice of marginalized Muslims and Dalits, Owaisi is attempting to erode that traditional support base. Analysts suggest that even a small shift in Muslim votes towards AIMIM could weaken the RJD-Congress alliance in key constituencies, indirectly benefiting the BJP-led NDA.

However, AIMIM leaders dismiss such speculation, insisting that their goal is to represent communities who have long been neglected by mainstream parties. "We are not here to help anyone. We are here to fight for justice and dignity for the oppressed," a senior AIMIM leader said in Patna, emphasizing that the party's focus remains on issues of education, employment, and security for minorities.

Meanwhile, the announcement has reportedly caused unease within the RJD and Congress camps. Both parties have relied heavily on the combined Yadav-Muslim vote bank for decades, and any fragmentation in that demographic could prove costly. With the Bihar polls approaching, the INDIA bloc's inability to bring AIMIM on board is now being viewed as a strategic setback.

Owaisi's growing presence in Bihar's electoral politics reflects his broader ambition to expand AIMIM's footprint beyond its strongholds in Telangana and Maharashtra. His decision to contest independently underscores a calculated attempt to project the party as a national voice for marginalized communities, especially Muslims.

As Bihar braces for another high-stakes election, the AIMIM's 25-candidate list has added a new dimension to an already complex political contest. For Owaisi, it is an opportunity to cement his party's influence in northern India. For the RJD and Congress, it's a new challenge that could upset their long-standing arithmetic of caste and community politics. One thing is certain — with Owaisi in the fray, the road to Patna has just become more unpredictable.

GST Slash Brings Relief to Consumers: Prices Drop Across Essential and Luxury Goods, Says Nirmala Sitharaman

Staff Reporter, New Delhi, 19 October: The Central Government has announced a sweeping reduction in Goods and Services Tax (GST) rates, bringing cheer to consumers across the country. Finance Minister Nirmala Sitharaman said on Saturday that the new GST structure, implemented at the beginning of Navratri, has not only simplified the taxation system but has also significantly lowered the prices of many essential and luxury items. The government's decision to reduce and restructure GST slabs is being hailed as a festival gift to the people, offering tangible financial relief to millions. Under the new framework, the Centre has retained only two tax slabs—5 percent and 18 percent—replacing the earlier complex system of 5, 12, 18, and 28 percent. Sitharaman explained that this streamlined structure aims to make the tax system more transparent and consumer-friendly, while also supporting economic reform. Essential items such as milk, cheese, ghee, soap, and shampoo have become considerably cheaper, while prices of higher-end goods like air conditioners, televisions, and cars are also on a downward trend. The government has also fully exempted several products from GST, including fresh fruits, vegetables, pulses, cheese, and bakery items such as roti and paratha. Addressing a joint press conference in New Delhi alongside Commerce and Industry Minister Piyush Goyal and Railway and IT Minister Ashwini Vaishnaw, Sitharaman emphasized that the GST reforms have already begun to deliver measurable benefits. "After the GST reforms, consumers are getting more discounts than expected in some cases," she said. The Finance Minister also highlighted that the reduction in duty rates has stimulated demand, particularly in the automobile and electronics sectors. "Sales of vehicles and electronic goods have increased significantly since the new tax rates came into effect," she noted. The revised GST structure follows the decisions taken during the 56th GST Council meeting on September 3, where it was announced that the previous four-tier system would be replaced with two primary rates. However, luxury and sin goods such as tobacco products, pan masala, soft drinks, high-end cars, yachts, and private aircraft will continue to attract a higher tax rate of 40 percent. The government has also provided relief to the health sector by exempting 33 life-saving medicines from any form of GST. Moreover, life insurance and health insurance premiums, which were earlier taxed at 18 percent, are now fully exempted, providing a much-needed breather to policyholders. The entertainment and hospitality sectors have also received substantial relief. The GST on hotel bookings, beauty treatments, and health-related services has been slashed from 18 percent to just 5 percent. Cinema tickets priced below ₹100 will now attract only a 5 percent GST, while those priced above ₹100 will continue to be taxed at 18 percent. A special 3 percent tax slab has been introduced for gold, silver, diamonds, and other precious stones to maintain stability in the jewellery market.

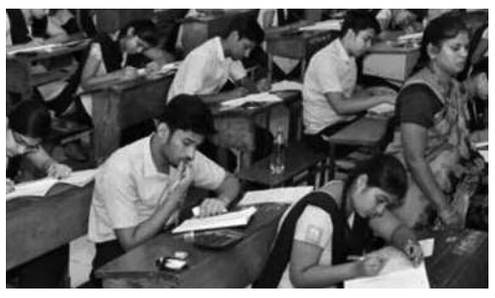


Board Officers Refuse Responsibility as Students Prepare for Madhyamik Exams Amid Controversy

Staff reporter, Kolkata, 19 October: A wave of confusion and concern has engulfed students and parents ahead of the upcoming Madhyamik examinations, following a controversial statement by officers of the West Bengal Board of Secondary Education (WBBSE). The officials have reportedly declared that they will not assume any responsibility if students appear for the exams, sparking widespread debate over accountability and administrative preparedness.

The Madhyamik examination, a critical milestone in the academic journey of West Bengal students, serves as the board's secondary-level assessment and plays a significant role in determining higher education opportunities. Traditionally, the board has ensured comprehensive support for examinees, from timely distribution of admit cards to the proper conduct of examination centers. However, the recent declaration by board officers has left students and parents anxious about the procedural and legal implications of appearing for the exams.

According to sources within the board, the statement stems from administrative complexities and procedural ambiguities that have arisen in recent weeks. Issues ranging from discrepancies in student enrollment data to logistical challenges at examination centers have prompted board officers to take a cautious stance. The declaration, while procedural in nature, has been interpreted by many stakeholders as a withdrawal of institutional accountability, raising questions about the board's readiness to manage the examination process smoothly.



Educational experts have expressed concern over the impact of such statements on students' morale and mental well-being. "Examinations are already a period of high stress for students. Uncertainty regarding administrative responsibility only adds to the anxiety and could affect their performance," said Dr. Rina Mukherjee, a prominent education consultant. Parents have echoed these sentiments, demanding clarity and assurance from the board regarding the safety, fairness, and legitimacy of the examination process.

The board's stance has also triggered debates on the broader framework of accountability in public examinations. Critics argue that the primary responsibility of educational boards is to safeguard the interests of students and ensure a transparent and fair assessment process. Statements that appear to disclaim responsibility, they contend, may undermine public confidence in the system and create a perception of institutional negligence. In response to the growing unrest, several schools have reportedly initiated discussions with board representatives to seek clarification and guidance.

South Bengal Braces for Unsettled Weather During Kali Puja Festivities

Staff reporter, Kolkata, 19 October: As the auspicious festival of Kali Puja approaches, residents across South Bengal are being advised to brace for unpredictable weather conditions that could affect celebrations and travel plans. Meteorological reports indicate a mix of clouds, intermittent showers, and gusty winds across several districts, prompting authorities to issue alerts and preparedness measures to ensure public safety.

The India Meteorological Department (IMD) has predicted that coastal districts such as South 24 Parganas, Purba Medinipur, and North 24 Parganas may experience moderate rainfall over the next few days. Inland areas, including Howrah, Hooghly, and Nadia, are expected to witness cloudy skies with scattered showers. While the rainfall is not forecasted to be severe, officials warn that sudden downpours combined with gusty winds could cause local disruptions.

Weather experts suggest that the cyclonic activity in the Bay of Bengal, coupled with seasonal transitions, has contributed to the unsettled conditions in the region. "During this period, the convergence of moist air from the Bay and relatively cooler inland air can lead to sudden rainfall spells and strong winds in South Bengal. Residents should remain cautious, especially in low-lying areas prone to waterlogging," said a senior IMD official.

The timing of the forecast has raised concerns among festival-goers, as Kali Puja is traditionally celebrated with elaborate outdoor decorations, community pandals, and evening processions. Local authorities are urging citizens to take precautionary measures, including securing temporary structures, avoiding unnecessary travel during heavy rainfall, and remaining vigilant near waterlogged streets and low-lying areas.

Transport services are also being advised to remain alert. Kolkata's traffic and transport departments have suggested contingency plans for buses, taxis, and private vehicles to navigate flooded areas efficiently. Meanwhile, suburban rail services are expected to run with caution, and announcements regarding delays or cancellations are likely to be issued as weather conditions evolve.

In addition to physical safety, power supply management has emerged as a concern. Utility companies have reportedly instructed crews to remain on standby for potential disruptions caused by storms or tree falls. Residents are being encouraged to use electrical appliances cautiously and avoid exposure to live wires during rainfall.



Local businesses and markets, which experience high footfall during festival days, are also making contingency arrangements. Street vendors and shopkeepers are reportedly reinforcing their stalls and tarpaulin covers to protect goods from sudden showers. Community organizers and temple committees are similarly taking preventive steps to ensure smooth conduct of religious ceremonies and cultural events, emphasizing minimal disruption to devotees' celebrations.

Despite the cautionary outlook, meteorologists emphasize that the rainfall is unlikely to last for extended periods. Short spells of rain interspersed with dry intervals are expected, allowing festival activities to continue with minor adjustments. "The weather may be unpredictable, but it is not prohibitive. People can still celebrate safely if they stay informed and take basic precautions," added the IMD official.

Residents are encouraged to monitor local weather updates through official channels and mobile applications for timely information on rainfall intensity, wind speed, and flood-prone areas. Public awareness campaigns are underway to educate citizens about safe practices during stormy weather, particularly in densely populated urban centers such as Kolkata, Howrah, and Durgapur.

Kali Puja in South Bengal is set to be celebrated with traditional zeal and community spirit, the region's weather conditions necessitate a degree of caution. Authorities and meteorologists alike emphasize preparedness, responsible celebration, and adherence to safety advisories to ensure that festivities remain joyous and accident-free.

'No Kings' Protests Sweep US Cities, Millions Rally Against Trump

Staff reporter, United States, 19 October: Protesters spanning all age groups took to the streets en masse for "No Kings" rallies across the United States on Saturday, denouncing what they view as authoritarian tendencies and unbridled corruption of US President Donald Trump.Organisers expected millions of people to turn out by day's end at more than 2,600 planned rallies in major cities, small towns and suburbs, challenging a Trump-led agenda that has reshaped the government and upended democratic norms with unprecedented speed since he took office in January.

By all accounts, the demonstrations were largely festive, often featuring inflatable characters and marchers dressed in costumes. The demographically mixed crowds included parents pushing youngsters in strollers alongside retirees and people with pets in tow."There is nothing more American than saying, 'We don't have kings' and exercising our right to peacefully protest," said Leah Greenberg, co-founder of Indivisible, a progressive organisation that led planning of Saturday's events. Demonstrators filled Times Square in New York City, where police said they made "zero protest-related arrests" even as more than 100,000 people rallied peacefully across all five boroughs.

Events in Boston, Philadelphia, Atlanta, Denver, Chicago



and Seattle also drew crowds that each appeared to encompass thousands, if not tens of thousands, of people.

On the West Coast, more than a dozen rallies occurred around the Los Angeles area, including the primary site downtown. In Seattle, demonstrators filled a parade route that stretched for more than a mile from downtown through the Seattle Center plaza around the city's landmark Space Needle. More than 25,000 protested peacefully in San Diego, police said.

The protests reflected growing unease among many Americans, mainly on the ideological left, with developments such as the criminal prosecution of Trump's perceived political enemies, his militarized immigration crackdown and the sending of National Guard troops into US cities - a move Trump has said was aimed at fighting crime and protecting immigration agents.

As his administration has tried to rapidly implement its policies, Trump has installed inexperienced loyalists throughout the ranks of his administration and sought to apply pressure on the news media, law firms and universities.Saturday's rallies were boisterous but orderly, with police largely keeping a low profile.

Demonstrators filled a street in Washington, DC, to march toward the US Capitol, chanting and carrying signs, US flags and balloons, as a carnival-like atmosphere prevailed.

Aliston Elliot, wearing a Statue of Liberty headpiece and holding a "No Wannabe Dictators" sign, said: "We want to show our support for democracy and fighting for what is right. I'm against the overreach of power." In downtown Houston, US Marine Corps veteran Daniel Aboyte Gamez, 30, joined a crowd that officials said numbered about 5,000 at city hall.

Kevin Brice, 70, a military veteran among thousands of protesters streaming into the riverfront of Portland, Oregon, wore a black sweatshirt emblazoned with the slogan "No Kings since 1776" - referring to the year of the Declaration of Independence.

Napoleonic Jewels Stolen From Louvre In Paris In Daring Sunday Heist

Staff reporter, Napoleon, 19 October: The Louvre has closed for the day after Napoleon-era jewels were stolen from the iconic museum in Paris that is home to some of the world's most iconic historical artefacts, including the Mona Lisa. The robbers entered the museum using a hydraulic ladder and made away with "priceless jewellery," said France's Interior Minister Laurent Nunez, calling it a "major robbery".

The robbery occurred around 9:30 am. The intruders entered via the under-construction Seine-facing facade and used a hydraulic ladder to reach the Apollo gallery, reported French daily Le Parisien. The Apollo Gallery had a selection of the French Crown Jewels on display at that time.

They broke in by cutting the windowpanes with "a disc cutter," said Nunez, suggesting that a team had supposedly done scouting before the daring heist. The entire operation "lasted seven minutes," he said.

The robbers made away with "nine pieces" from the jewellery collection of "Napoleon and the Empress," according to Le Parisien. One stolen jewel was later found outside the museum, it said.The world-renowned museum is yet to comment on the incident. It has cited "exceptional reasons" for the sudden closure.

The Paris prosecutor's office has opened an investigation and is currently "assessing the damage."

France's Culture Minister Rachida Dati first reported the robbery this morning. No injury was reported, she said, adding that she was at the site with museum staff and police.

Visuals showed barricades erected outside the Louvre and a chaotic crowd waiting for the museum to open. Traffic has also been regulated around its premises.

The Louvre is the world's most visited museum, drawing up to 30,000 visitors a day. It houses over 33,000 artefacts, including antique items, sculptures, and paintings. The top attraction is the Mona Lisa, the world's best-known artwork, besides the Venus de Milo and the Winged Victory of Samothrace.

The museum has witnessed multiple thefts and attempted robberies over the years, including that of the Mona Lisa. The portrait by Leonardo da Vinci was stolen in 1911 by Vincenzo Peruggia, a former worker who had walked out of the museum with the painting hidden under his coat. It was recovered in Italy's Florence after two years.

The last notable theft at the Louvre was in 1983, when two Renaissance-era pieces of armour went missing from the museum. The stolen items were recovered in 2021.

In Xi Jinping's Message To Taiwan Opposition Leader, A "Reunification" Call

Staff reporter, Beijing, 19 October: Chinese President Xi Jinping called on Sunday for efforts to advance "reunification" in a message of congratulations to the new leader of Taiwan's main opposition party, whose election took place amid accusations of interference by Beijing.

Former lawmaker Cheng Li-wun, who will take over as leader of the Kuomintang (KMT) party on November 1, won Saturday's election at a time of rising tension with Beijing, which views the democratically governed island as its own territory. Taiwan's government strongly objects to China's sovereignty claims.

The KMT traditionally backs close relations with China and is Beijing's preferred dialogue partner. China refuses to talk to Taiwan President Lai Ching-te and his Democratic Progressive Party (DPP) administration, calling him a "separatist".

Xi, in a message in his role as head of China's Communist Party, told Cheng the two parties should strengthen their "common political foundation", the official Xinhua news agency reported.

Both parties should also "unite the vast majority of people in Taiwan to deepen exchanges and cooperation,



boost common development, and advance national reunification," he added.

Cheng, in her message to Xi, did not make any mention of union with Beijing, but said both sides of the Taiwan Strait were "members of the Chinese nation", using an expression in Chinese that refers to ethnicity rather than nationality.

"Both parties should, in light of the current situation, strengthen cross-Strait exchanges and cooperation on the existing foundation (and) promote peace and stability across the Taiwan Strait," Cheng said, according to a party statement.

While the KMT lost the presidential election last year, the party and its ally, the small Taiwan People's Party, together hold the most seats in parliament.

Cheng, 55, opposes Taiwan increasing defence spending, a key policy plank of Lai's, and won the leadership vote over the KMT establishment candidate, former Taipei mayor Hau Lung-bin.

Accusations of Chinese interference in the election by a key supporter of Hau's, the KMT's vice presidential candidate last year, Jaw Shau-kong, overshadowed the campaign. Jaw said social media accounts had spread disinformation about Hau.China said on Wednesday that the election was a KMT matter, and that online comments did not represent an official stance.

Writing on his Facebook account on Sunday, Jaw said the KMT must reduce pro-China influence and that the majority of Taiwanese desire peaceful relations and dialogue with China. "The KMT must recognise that elections are held in Taiwan, and voters are in Taiwan, not mainland China," Jaw added.

9 Days In, Gaza Truce Cracks As Israel, Hamas Trade Accusations

Staff reporter, Gaza, 19 October: Gaza's nine-day-old ceasefire came under strain Sunday after the Israeli army said it launched air strikes in the territory's south in response to attacks it claimed were carried out by Hamas against its forces.

Hamas, however, maintained it was adhering to the truce, with one official accusing Israel of devising "pretexts" to resume its own attacks.Israeli Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu instructed security forces to take "strong action against terrorist targets in the Gaza Strip", his office said in a statement, accusing Hamas of "a ceasefire violation".

The uneasy truce in the Palestinian territory, brokered by US President Donald Trump and taking effect on 10 October, brought to a halt more than two years of devastating war between Israel and Hamas. The deal established the outline for hostage and prisoner exchanges and was proposed alongside an ambitious roadmap for Gaza's future, but it has immediately faced challenges in implementation.

"Earlier today, terrorists fired anti-tank missiles and opened fire on IDF (army) forces operating to destroy terrorist infrastructure in the Rafah area in accordance with the terms of the agreement," the military said in a statement."The IDF responded with air strikes by fighter jets and artillery fire, targeting the Rafah area," the statement said.Earlier, an Israeli army official said Hamas fighters carried out "multiple attacks" on troops in territory under Israel's control.

Palestinian witnesses told AFP that clashes erupted in the southern city of Rafah in an area still held by Israel.

One witness, a 38-year-old man who asked not to be identified by name, said that Hamas had been fighting a local Palestinian gang known as Abu Shabab, but Hamas were "surprised by the presence of army tanks".

"The air force conducted two strikes from the air," he said.The clashes broke out as Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu held meetings with



government ministers. Afterwards, some ministers called for Israeli forces to resume their war against Hamas.

Earlier, national security minister and right-wing firebrand Itamar Ben Gvir urged the army to "fully resume fighting in the Strip with all force".

"The illusion that Hamas will repent, or even abide by the agreement it signed, is proving -- as expected -- dangerous to our security," he added, calling for Hamas to be "annihilated".

A statement from Izzat Al-Rishq, a member of Hamas' political bureau, reaffirmed the group's commitment to the ceasefire and said Israel "continues to breach the agreement and fabricate flimsy pretexts to justify its crimes".

Hamas' armed wing insisted on Sunday that the group was adhering to the ceasefire agreement with Israel and had "no knowledge" of any clashes in Rafah.

US peace envoy Steve Witkoff is expected in the Middle East next week to monitor progress in the ceasefire deal.Under Trump's 20-point plan, Israeli forces have withdrawn beyond the so-called Yellow Line, leaving them in control of around half of Gaza, including the territory's borders but not its main cities.Hamas, in turn, has released 20 surviving hostages and is in the process of returning the remaining bodies of those who have died.

The war, triggered by Hamas's October 7, 2023, attack on Israel, has killed at least 68,159 people in Gaza, according to the health ministry in the Hamas-run territory, figures the United Nations considers credible.

The data does not distinguish between civilians and combatants but indicates that more than half of the dead are women and children.

The health ministry has also said that since the ceasefire came into effect, 35 Palestinians have been killed by Israeli fire.Hamas's 2023 attack on Israel resulted in the deaths of 1,221 people, mostly civilians, according to an AFP tally based on official Israeli figures.On Sunday, Israel identified the latest two bodies returned overnight as Ronen Engel and Thai farmworker Sonthaya Oakkharasri.

Engel, a resident of Nir Oz kibbutz, was abducted from his home aged 54 and killed during the October 7 attacks, with his body taken to Gaza.He was a photojournalist and volunteer ambulance driver for Magen David Adom, the Israeli equivalent of the Red Cross, in the southern Negev region. A farmworker at the Beeri kibbutz, Oakkharasri, was also killed in the attack on Israel, and Hamas held his body in Gaza.



Today's Horoscope

ARIES : It's one of those days where it's better to hide away from the world, Aries. Tuesday's skies are contentious, as the heartfelt Cancer moon opposes emotionally raw Pluto.

TAURUS : Don't be surprised if you feel mental storm clouds gathering today, Taurus. imbuing the day with a palpable emotional intensity. In order to make the best of this energy.

GEMINI : Powerful moods are at play under Tuesday's skies, Gemini. Your ruling planet, quick-thinking Mercury, finds itself in a heated battle with self-assertive Mars.

CANCER: You can expect to encounter some turbulence under Tuesday's cosmic landscape, Cancer. The moon cruises through your sign, trying her best to help you tune in to both your emotional.

LEO : You're swimming in deep psychological waters today, Leo. Be extra gentle with yourself. The nostalgic Cancer moon digs up long buried feelings that need healing.

VIRGO : Can you feel the heat building, Virgo? Your ruling planet, mental Mercury, locks into an unsettling connection with fiery Mars today.

LIBRA : Intense moods are simmering just below the surface of Tuesday's skies, Libra. The peaceful Cancer moon finds herself embroiled in a tense connection with emotionally-raw Pluto.

SCORPIO : It's all too easy to get frustrated beneath Tuesday's cosmic landscape. Messenger Mercury locks into a quarrel with your ruling planet, self-motivated Mars.

SAGITTARIUS : As a Sagittarius, you rarely succumb to bouts of moody, broody touchiness. Yet, you may find that demeanor hard to escape today!

CAPRICORN : Brace yourself for some rocky terrain today, Capricorn. The connection-centered Cancer moon finds herself in an uneasy squabble with transformative Pluto today.

AQUARIUS : There's much to be done under Tuesday's skies, Aquarius. The trick is trying to stay sane and not to overdo it! prompting intense moods and strange.

PIECES : Powerful moods dominate Tuesday's skies, Pisces. prompting you to examine any unhealed wounds around friendship and group involvement.



People pay tributes at the statue of singer Zubeen Garg, a month after his death while swimming in the sea in Singapore, at Kahilipara in Guwahati.

'Bhanupriya Bhooter Hotel' Motion Poster Unveiled, Promises a Spine-Chilling Horror Comedy

Staff Reporter, Kolkata, 19 Octoberber: The much-anticipated Bengali horror comedy Bhanupriya Bhooter Hotel has officially released its motion poster, giving audiences their first eerie yet playful glimpse into what promises to be one of the most exciting regional film releases of the season. The motion poster was unveiled on social media by the makers on Friday, quickly drawing enthusiastic reactions from fans and film enthusiasts who have long awaited a fresh take on the horror-comedy genre in Bengali cinema.

The poster opens with a moody backdrop of an old, dimly lit hotel standing ominously against a stormy night sky. Thunder crackles, lights flicker, and a shadowy figure is seen at the window as a haunting laugh echoes faintly. But just when the tension builds, a mischievous twist in the background score hints at the film's comic undercurrent. The clever blend of horror and humor sets the tone for what the makers describe as a "rollercoaster of thrills, chills, and laughs."

Directed by a rising name in Bengali cinema, the film revolves around the mysterious Bhanupriya Hotel, a decaying but once-famous establishment in a quiet town that hides decades-old secrets. According to early promotional material, the story follows a group of unsuspecting visitors who arrive at the hotel for a vacation but find themselves entangled in a series of supernatural and absurdly comic events. The title itself, Bhanupriya Bhooter Hotel, plays on the classic "bhooter" or ghost theme beloved by



Bengali audiences, signaling a mix of nostalgia and contemporary storytelling.

The makers shared the motion poster with the caption, "Welcome to Bhanupriya Bhooter Hotel… Check-in is easy, but checking out may not be." The post quickly went viral, with thousands of shares, likes, and comments flooding in. Fans praised the artwork, the atmospheric sound design, and the quirky tone that seems to balance both horror and comedy—a combination that has historically been a favorite in Bengali entertainment.

The film's cast includes a mix of popular actors and talented newcomers, promising a lively ensemble. While the full cast list is yet to be officially revealed, sources close to the production hinted that the film will feature some well-known faces from both mainstream and alternative Bengali cinema. This strategy aims to bring a fresh energy to the genre, combining strong performances with a script that reportedly plays with classic ghost-story tropes in unexpected ways.

In recent years, Bengali cinema has seen a renewed interest in genre films, particularly horror comedies, which often strike a chord with audiences for their ability to offer both suspense and lighthearted entertainment. Classics like Goopy Gyne Bagha Byne and later cult favorites in the bhooter golpo (ghost story) tradition have left an indelible mark on Bengali popular culture. Bhanupriya Bhooter Hotel appears poised to carry that legacy forward while adding a contemporary visual flair.

Industry insiders believe that the motion poster's timing is strategic, as the film is expected to release during the upcoming festive season—a period when audiences flock to theatres and family entertainers thrive. The horror-comedy genre, in particular, has historically done well during such times, offering viewers an immersive theatrical experience. With its retro-modern aesthetic and a storyline rooted in Bengali ghost folklore, the film is likely to appeal to both older audiences who grew up on classic ghost tales and younger viewers drawn to slick production values.

The director, in a brief statement accompanying the poster release, said, "We wanted to create a world that is both spooky and fun, something that audiences can enjoy as a collective experience. Bengali ghost stories have always been rich with humor, irony, and warmth beneath the chills, and Bhanupriya Bhooter Hotel aims to celebrate that tradition in a modern cinematic language."

Fans have also speculated that the film may contain subtle social commentary—a hallmark of many successful Bengali ghost stories—though the makers have remained tight-lipped about plot specifics. The teaser trailer is expected to be released soon, building further anticipation for what is shaping up to be one of the most talked-about regional releases of the year.

Jeetu Kamal Extends Strong Support to Co-Star Ditipriya Roy During Her Difficult Time

Staff Reporter, Kolkata, 19 Octoberber: Bengali actor Jeetu Kamal has once again come out in firm support of his co-star Ditipriya Roy, who has recently been facing a challenging phase in her personal life. Known for their powerful onscreen chemistry and warm offscreen camaraderie, the two actors have often spoken highly of each other in public, but Jeetu's recent gesture has drawn special attention for its sincerity and grace. His words of encouragement have struck a chord with fans and industry colleagues alike, highlighting the importance of solidarity and empathy in the entertainment world.

The incident unfolded after Ditipriya, a beloved face on television and in films, posted an emotional message on social media that hinted at the stress she has been going through in recent weeks. While she did not disclose details, her note expressed vulnerability, speaking of difficult days, emotional fatigue, and the pressures that come with navigating the public spotlight at a young age. Within hours of the post, messages of concern and support began to pour in from fans and colleagues. Among the most notable came from Jeetu Kamal, who shared a heartfelt note reaffirming his support for his co-star.

Jeetu, who has worked with Ditipriya on multiple successful projects, took to his official social media handles to share her post, adding his own message. "Strength doesn't always mean fighting alone," he wrote. "Sometimes, it means knowing that people care and stand with you. Ditipriya, you are immensely talented and loved. You have always faced everything with courage and grace, and this too shall pass." His words were accompanied by a picture of the two from one of their recent shoots, symbolizing their professional bond and mutual respect.

The response from fans was immediate and emotional. Many praised Jeetu Kamal for standing up for Ditipriya not just as a co-star but as a friend and colleague who values human connection beyond the glamour of the industry. Messages flooded the comment section, with fans expressing admiration for the way the actor publicly extended support without sensationalizing the situation.Both Jeetu Kamal and Ditipriya Roy have built a strong fan base over the years, thanks to their performances and on-screen pairing in popular television shows and films. Jeetu, widely appreciated for his intense roles and nuanced performances, has often been described as one of the most grounded stars in the Bengali industry. Ditipriya, on the other hand, rose to fame as a child actor and has seamlessly transitioned into mature roles, winning accolades for her versatility and poise at a young age. Their pairing has become one of the most talked-about in contemporary Bengali entertainment.

Industry insiders have noted that Jeetu's show of support reflects not just personal warmth but also a growing sense of camaraderie among young actors who are navigating the pressures of public life together. Unlike in the past, when many personal struggles were kept away from the limelight, social media has now become a platform where celebrities sometimes open up to their audiences, seeking comfort and understanding. In such spaces, public support from colleagues can make a meaningful difference.

This is not the first time Jeetu Kamal has supported Ditipriya publicly. In previous instances as well, whether during professional challenges or moments of criticism, he has stood by her, earning praise for his steadfast loyalty. Their offscreen friendship has often been discussed by fans, who admire the genuine respect they seem to share.

Mental health and emotional well-being have increasingly become important conversations in the entertainment industry. Young actors like Ditipriya often face immense scrutiny and expectations, balancing demanding schedules with the pressure of constant public visibility. Jeetu's gesture underscores how crucial peer support can be during such times, especially in an industry where personal struggles are often overshadowed by public image. The entertainment fraternity has also rallied around Ditipriya, with several fellow actors and technicians sending her encouraging messages and reminding her of the admiration she has earned through her work.

Ishaan Khatter Praises Janhvi Kapoor While Talking About Oscar-Nominated Film 'Homecoming'

Staff Reporter, Mumbai, 19 Octoberber: The young star, known for his candidness and thoughtful take on cinema, lauded Janhvi's evolving craft and passion for performance, linking it to the kind of honest storytelling that films like Homecoming represent on the world stage. His comments have since sparked conversation across fan communities, film circles, and social media platforms.

Speaking at a recent film interaction event in Mumbai, Ishaan was asked about the changing nature of cinema and how Indian actors and filmmakers can take inspiration from global cinema. In response, he mentioned the emotional depth of Homecoming and how it reflects a kind of raw, unpolished truth that connects deeply with audiences worldwide. Ishaan remarked that such films remind him of why actors must constantly push their creative boundaries—a quality he believes Janhvi Kapoor has been steadily embracing in her career.

"I watched Homecoming recently, and it really moved me," Ishaan said. "It's the kind of film that doesn't depend on scale or glamour but purely on human emotion. I think that's the direction cinema should keep exploring. In our industry, too, we have actors who are genuinely evolving with their performances. Janhvi is one of them. I've seen her growth closely, and I admire the sincerity she brings to her roles."

His words come at a time when both actors have been making significant strides in their respective careers. Ishaan, who made an impressive debut in Beyond the Clouds and gained widespread popularity with Dhadak, has been experimenting with varied roles and working in international projects. Janhvi Kapoor, meanwhile, has been steadily moving away from the tag of being a star kid and building a reputation for herself as a serious performer, with films like Gunjan Saxena: The Kargil Girl, Good Luck Jerry,



and Bawaal earning her critical praise.

The mention of Janhvi in connection with a globally acclaimed film has particularly caught the attention of fans. On social media platforms like Instagram and X (formerly Twitter), users shared clips from Ishaan's interview, highlighting his warm praise for his Dhadak co-star. Many fans expressed nostalgia, recalling the on-screen chemistry the two shared in their debut film together, while others celebrated the fact that both actors continue to root for each other's artistic journeys even as they explore different career paths.

Janhvi Kapoor and Ishaan Khatter's camaraderie has been a subject of public curiosity ever since their debut together in Dhadak (2018), which was both a commercial success and a stepping stone for the young actors. Although their career trajectories diverged afterward, with Janhvi taking on more emotionally layered roles and Ishaan experimenting with global collaborations, their mutual respect has remained intact. Ishaan's recent comments are being widely seen as an acknowledgment of that bond, as well as a sign of how seriously young Bollywood actors are now looking at the craft itself, rather than just stardom.

The timing of his statement is also significant. Homecoming, which received multiple nominations at the Academy Awards, has been praised for its subtle storytelling and minimalist filmmaking, qualities often celebrated in world cinema but still relatively under-explored in mainstream Indian film industries.

Jackie Shroff Rebukes Paparazzi at Pankaj Dheer's Prayer Meet, Urges Respect for the Moment

Staff Reporter, New Delhi, 19 Octoberber: Veteran actor Jackie Shroff found himself in the spotlight on Thursday for a reason far removed from the silver screen. Attending the prayer meet of the late actor Pankaj Dheer, a long-time colleague and friend, Shroff sternly reprimanded a section of paparazzi and media personnel for their lack of restraint during the solemn gathering. His sharp words have since sparked an important conversation around boundaries, sensitivity, and media conduct at emotionally charged events.

The prayer meet was organized in Mumbai, drawing a large number of film fraternity members who came to pay their final respects to Pankaj Dheer, known for his iconic roles in both film and television. The atmosphere was somber, with many faces from the industry appearing visibly emotional. But the quietness of the event was soon disrupted by photographers and videographers crowding the entrance and repeatedly calling out to celebrities for pictures as they entered the venue. This prompted Jackie Shroff, who is known for his calm but candid demeanor, to intervene.

As cameras flashed continuously and paparazzi began raising their voices to get better angles, Shroff stopped, turned toward the crowd of photographers, and said firmly, "Thoda shanti rakho, yeh jagah photo khinchwane ki nahi hai." His statement, which translates to "Maintain some peace, this is not a place to click pictures," immediately drew attention. The actor then gestured for silence, reminding everyone of the nature of the gathering. Witnesses present at the venue said that the moment was powerful, as the star expressed what many attendees were feeling but chose not to say out loud.

The video of the incident quickly made its way to social media platforms, where it has been widely circulated. Many users have praised Jackie Shroff for taking a stand and highlighting the importance of respecting private grief, even when public figures are involved. Several netizens commented that the paparazzi culture has crossed lines on multiple occasions, especially at funerals and prayer meetings, where the focus should be on offering condolences rather than capturing exclusive photographs.

Industry colleagues, too, have supported Shroff's reaction. While few spoke publicly, insiders suggested that many celebrities feel uncomfortable with cameras being thrust into their faces during such emotionally sensitive moments. The issue has been debated before, most notably during the funerals and prayer meets of several prominent figures in the film industry, where celebrities were often seen covering their faces to avoid being photographed in grief.

Jackie Shroff, affectionately known as "Jaggu Dada" in the industry, has long maintained a reputation for his straightforward and unpretentious attitude. His friendship with Pankaj Dheer goes back decades, with the two having shared screens in several films during the 1980s and 1990s. Sources close to the actor revealed that Shroff was deeply affected by Dheer's passing and attended the prayer meet to quietly offer his respects. The intrusion of loud camera clicks and shouted name calls was, by all accounts, an unpleasant interruption to a moment of personal mourning.

Pankaj Dheer, best remembered for his portrayal of Karna in the iconic television series Mahabharat, had earned a special place in the hearts of both audiences and his colleagues. His contribution to Hindi cinema and television made him a well-respected figure in the industry. The prayer meet saw several actors, directors, and industry veterans in attendance, including his family members and close friends who preferred a private, dignified farewell.

The incident has once again brought to the forefront the debate around media decorum in India's entertainment industry. While paparazzi play an undeniable role in shaping celebrity culture and public perception, there has been growing criticism of the aggressive tactics often employed to capture moments that should remain private. Moments of loss and mourning, in particular, have increasingly become public spectacles, with celebrity attendees finding it difficult to express grief naturally under the constant gaze of cameras. Social media reactions following the video largely favored Shroff's stand.

Fans Upset as 'Dangal' Actress Zaira Wasim Hides Her Face in Wedding Pictures

Staff Reporter, Mumbai, 19 Octoberber: Bollywood actress Zaira Wasim, best known for her critically acclaimed performances in Dangal and Secret Superstar, has once again become the subject of widespread public conversation—this time not for her acting but for a personal milestone. News of her recent wedding broke on social media, but what captured public attention was the fact that Zaira chose to conceal her face in all the wedding photographs released online. This decision has sparked a wave of reactions from fans across platforms, many of whom have expressed disappointment, confusion, and, in some cases, support for her personal choice.

The photographs, which surfaced earlier this week, showed Zaira dressed in traditional wedding attire, surrounded by close family members and friends. However, unlike typical celebrity wedding posts, her face remained completely hidden under a veil, and none of the images offered even a partial glimpse. This was in line with the lifestyle she has chosen since stepping away from the film industry in 2019, citing her desire to focus on her faith and personal journey.

For many of her fans, however, the images were a bittersweet surprise. They had long awaited any news about her personal life, especially since she has largely kept herself away from the public eye. Social media platforms like X (formerly Twitter), Instagram, and fan pages dedicated to the actress quickly filled with mixed reactions. Some expressed sadness at not being able to see their favorite star on such a special occasion, while others defended her right to privacy, emphasizing that it was her personal choice to live life on her own terms.

Zaira, who rose to fame at the age of 16 through her role as the young Geeta Phogat in Aamir Khan's Dangal, became a national sensation overnight. Her performance won her widespread acclaim, including the National Child Award for Exceptional Achievement. She followed it up with another hit, Secret Superstar, which cemented her reputation as one of the most promising young talents in the film industry. However, in June 2019, at the peak of her rising career, she announced her decision to quit Bollywood, stating that the profession was interfering with her faith and her relationship with religion. Her decision drew both praise and criticism at the time, making her a subject of intense national discussion.

Since then, Zaira has maintained a very low profile. She deleted her Instagram photos, avoided media appearances, and rarely made public statements. Her wedding, therefore, marks one of the rare moments when her life returned briefly to the spotlight. The choice to cover her face at the ceremony aligns with the path she has chosen over the past few years—a quiet, private life away from the glamour and expectations of the film world.

While many fans said they felt "heartbroken" at not seeing their favorite actress's wedding look, a considerable number of voices online reminded others to respect her decision. Supporters pointed out that Zaira had made it clear in the past that she wished to step away from the public gaze and that marriage, being a deeply personal event, should be celebrated on her own terms. Some admirers also congratulated her, flooding comment sections with blessings and warm wishes despite the absence of a visible image.

This incident also sheds light on the evolving relationship between celebrities and their fans in the age of social media. In a world where celebrity weddings are often treated as grand spectacles, with glossy magazine spreads and live-streamed ceremonies, Zaira's choice to keep hers private stands in sharp contrast. It reflects a conscious decision to reclaim personal boundaries in a culture that often blurs the line between public and private lives.

There has been no official statement from Zaira Wasim or her representatives about the wedding or the photographs. Those close to the actress have reportedly said that the ceremony was intimate and attended only by family and close friends. As news of the wedding continues to spread, it has reignited conversations about her earlier decision to leave the film industry and how she has consistently chosen to stay true to her beliefs, regardless of public reaction.

Editorial

Dunia Diary: A Mirror to the World We Live In

Dunia Diary stands as a quiet yet powerful reminder that the world is best understood not through soundbites, but through stories. The idea behind Dunia Diary is not merely to report events but to capture the pulse of human experience—how people live, how societies change, and how, beneath the grand narratives of politics and economics, the simple stories of ordinary lives shape the real world. At its heart, Dunia Diary is a reflection of our shared global condition, a record not just of what happened, but why it matters. The power of a diary lies in its intimacy. It does not shout. It observes. It records the small details that history books often overlook. Similarly, Dunia Diary offers a way to understand the shifting landscapes of our time through lived experiences rather than statistics alone. It presents the world not as a cold map of power blocs and economic trends but as a living, breathing organism—where the joy of a festival in a small village, the fear of a conflict zone, the hope of a migrant worker, or the silence of a classroom can all coexist in a single narrative space. It is in these human details that the true story of our age resides. In recent years, as global events have become increasingly interconnected, journalism has struggled to balance immediacy with depth. Breaking news updates often leave little space for context. Headlines flash across screens and disappear within hours, leaving behind fragments of understanding. Dunia Diary attempts to mend this fracture by chronicling the everyday—by giving weight to the quiet moments that define our collective reality. It is a space where the farmer's worry over unseasonal rains carries as much weight as a parliamentary debate, where the conversations at a neighborhood tea stall reveal as much about a society's mood as a formal report. The value of such storytelling is immense. At a time when polarization is rising across continents, and when communities are increasingly sealed off in their own echo chambers, storytelling that humanizes rather than divides is not just meaningful—it is essential. Dunia Diary provides that bridge. By documenting the world through diaries, testimonies, and observations, it creates a shared space where individuals from vastly different geographies can see themselves reflected in others. A student in Kolkata may find resonance with a street vendor in Cairo, a teacher in Nairobi may share the anxieties of a factory worker in Dhaka. In this recognition lies the beginning of understanding. But Dunia Diary is not simply a catalogue of feelings. It is also an instrument of subtle resistance—resistance against the flattening of reality into sensational headlines. When the world is presented as a sequence of crises, it is easy to lose sight of its complexity. Yet, diaries do not simplify; they complicate. They reveal nuance. They remind us that no society is defined by a single narrative, that every event has a human face behind it, and that progress or pain is never uniform. It is in this refusal to flatten the world that Dunia Diary finds its most profound strength. There is also a philosophical element at work. Diaries are personal, yet they become political when shared. A refugee writing about a lost home, a child describing a flooded schoolyard, a doctor recounting a night shift during a pandemic—these are not just stories; they are testaments. They challenge official narratives and statistics. They make it harder to ignore suffering, easier to recognize resilience. In this way, Dunia Diary performs one of the most crucial functions of journalism: it bears witness. To bear witness is not merely to observe; it is to remember. Memory is a powerful tool. Societies that forget are doomed to repeat their mistakes. By keeping track of the daily, the seemingly ordinary, Dunia Diary builds a collective memory of our time. It resists the amnesia that comes with digital speed. It says: this happened, and it mattered—not because it was loud, but because it was real. In a broader sense, Dunia Diary also questions what counts as "news." Traditionally, news has been defined by the exceptional—the crisis, the breakthrough, the scandal. But what about the rhythms of everyday life that shape how societies evolve? What about the small acts of kindness, the slow-moving changes in culture, the silent struggles that rarely make it to the front page? These too are news, even if they do not fit neatly into a headline. By giving space to these stories, Dunia Diary expands our understanding of journalism itself.

Kali Puja:

A Living Philosophy Beyond Rituals



Every year, as the moonless night of Kartik Amavasya descends, Bengal lights up in a spectacular glow. While the rest of India celebrates Diwali with the worship of Lakshmi, Bengalis turn to the fierce yet compassionate form of Shakti—Goddess Kali. But Kali Puja is more than just a festival of lamps, offerings, and chants. It is a living philosophy that reflects Bengal's unique spiritual temperament, its complex cultural evolution, and its deep engagement with the idea of divine power. In its essence, Kali Puja is not merely about fear or reverence. It is a profound meditation on life, death, creation, and liberation. The figure of Kali stands in sharp contrast to most other representations of the divine feminine in Indian spirituality. While Lakshmi and Saraswati embody prosperity and wisdom, Kali represents the raw, unfiltered force of the cosmos. Her garland of skulls, her lolling tongue, her dark complexion, and her unbridled energy often unsettle the uninitiated. Yet, for her devotees, Kali is not a deity of terror. She is the mother who protects, the destroyer of ego, the embodiment of time itself. To understand Kali Puja is to step into this layered worldview—where destruction is not evil, but a pathway to regeneration; where darkness is not absence, but a presence pregnant with possibility. The philosophical core of Kali worship is rooted in the Tantric traditions of Bengal. Tantric philosophy does not shy away from the darker, chaotic aspects of existence. Instead, it embraces them as part of the divine play. Kali, in this view, represents the boundless energy of creation and dissolution. Her image standing over the inert body of Shiva is not a scene of domination, but a symbolic balance: the dynamic principle of the universe dancing upon the static principle. She is Shakti, the energy without which even the supreme consciousness remains passive. This image is a reminder that the world is sustained not by stillness alone but by the constant movement of life, death, and rebirth. Kali Puja, therefore, is a night of acknowledging the power of that movement. It is no coincidence that the festival takes place on the darkest night of the lunar month. Darkness here is not an enemy to be vanquished but a space where one finds the infinite. Tantric texts often speak of Kali as the "Mother of Time," the ultimate reality beyond form and illusion. To sit before her idol, illuminated by flickering earthen lamps, is to confront that darkness and, in turn, confront oneself. It is an act of both devotion and philosophical reflection. Historically, Kali's worship was not always a mainstream practice. In the pre-colonial and early colonial period, her rituals were closely tied to Tantric sects, ascetics, and rural traditions. Over time, particularly in the 18th and 19th centuries, Kali Puja began to spread across Bengal's urban landscape. Landlords and zamindars began organizing community worship, transforming a once esoteric ritual into a popular festival. Even then, the undercurrent of philosophical intensity remained. Figures like Ramakrishna Paramahamsa, who saw Kali not just as an idol but as a living presence, brought this devotion into a modern spiritual framework. His interpretation of Kali—as both terrifying and tender—became a defining element of Bengal's religious consciousness. Today, the festival has grown into a grand spectacle. Cities and towns are adorned with elaborate pandals, idols are crafted with artistic brilliance, and processions fill the streets. Firecrackers pierce the night sky, and the sound of dhak drums creates a pulse that runs through the city. But beneath the surface celebration lies the quiet, enduring philosophy that has defined this festival for centuries. Every devotee who stands before the goddess is engaging—knowingly or unknowingly—with a centuries-old idea: that life's chaos, darkness, and unpredictability are not enemies to be conquered but truths to be embraced.

This perspective offers a strikingly different worldview from the more sanitized, prosperity-driven celebrations of the season. In Lakshmi Puja, the focus is on wealth and abundance. In Kali Puja, the focus shifts inward—to the acceptance of impermanence and the ultimate power of time. It is a festival that does not promise comfort but compels reflection. It asks its devotees to bow not to something safe and soft, but to something wild, uncontrollable, and real. In a society increasingly driven by superficial celebrations, consumerism, and glittering displays, Kali Puja stands out as a reminder of something deeper. The rituals of lighting 108 diyas, offering hibiscus flowers, and reciting mantras are not mere formalities. They are symbolic gestures pointing to an inner journey. To light a lamp in darkness is to declare that one is unafraid. To offer red flowers to the dark mother is to accept the mingling of beauty and terror in existence. To chant her name through the night is to surrender to time itself. What makes Kali Puja particularly unique is its democratic nature. Kali is a goddess who belongs not to the elite alone but to the masses. She is worshipped with equal fervor in opulent urban temples and humble rural shrines. She is a goddess who speaks to the downtrodden, the marginalized, and the rebellious as much as to the devout and the privileged. In her darkness, everyone is equal, for time spares no one. This inclusivity is not accidental—it is embedded in the very philosophy of the goddess.

In a modern context, this inclusivity carries profound meaning. As societies grapple with rising divisions, fears, and insecurities, Kali Puja offers a vision where darkness itself becomes a unifier. It teaches that what is feared can be understood, what is chaotic can be embraced, and what is inevitable can be transformed into strength. It is this philosophical resilience that has kept the worship of Kali vibrant through centuries of change, colonialism, modernity, and globalization. Yet, the challenge today lies in preserving this essence. As commercialization seeps deeper into cultural life, festivals risk becoming hollow spectacles, stripped of their deeper significance. To ensure Kali Puja does not meet that fate, we must remind ourselves of its roots—not in noise, but in silence; not in fear, but in understanding; not in mere ritual, but in philosophy. Kali is not simply a goddess to be appeased once a year. She is a symbol of time, of death, of renewal—a reminder that everything, no matter how powerful, eventually dissolves into the cosmic dance. On this Amavasya night, when the world is wrapped in darkness and the lamps burn bright, the message of Kali Puja becomes clear. It is not a festival of denial, but of confrontation. It is not about seeking comfort, but about embracing truth. In a world that fears darkness, Kali Puja stands as a luminous act of courage—a celebration of the eternal dance of life and time.

Memories of the Metro Rail: A Journey Through Time Beneath the City's Skin



Cities grow, but they also remember. Beneath the hum of traffic and the sprawl of concrete, there are arteries that carry not just people but the memories of an era. For Kolkata, the metro rail is one such artery—more than just a mode of transport, it is a living chronicle of the city's modern evolution. To speak of the metro is not merely to speak of speed or convenience, but of how a city learned to move differently, and how, in doing so, it redefined its own identity.When the first metro train rolled out on October 24, 1984, from Esplanade to Bhowanipore (now Netaji Bhavan), it was more than an engineering feat. It was a quiet revolution. India had never seen an underground rapid transit system before. Kolkata, a city steeped in history, became the pioneer. The world above was chaotic—buses, trams, hand-pulled rickshaws—but below the surface, a new rhythm was born. It was clean, quiet, and disciplined. For many who witnessed that first journey, stepping onto the platform felt like stepping into a different future. The metro carried with it a certain kind of wonder. Children clutched their parents' hands, peering at the sleek carriages with wide-eyed fascination. Office workers, who had spent years battling traffic snarls, found in the metro a promise of punctuality. Students, workers, shoppers, tourists—everyone found a new way to belong to the city. The metro was not just transportation. It was an experience. Its clean platforms, the polite announcements in Bengali and English, the whoosh of doors sliding open and shut—these became part of the collective soundscape of Kolkata. Over the years, this rail network has silently chronicled the city's changes. Stations like Kalighat and Park Street have witnessed millions of footsteps—of people rushing to work, of lovers meeting under the quiet buzz of fluorescent lights, of artists carrying their canvases, of weary travelers returning home at dusk. Each station became a microcosm of the city above it, carrying its mood, its pace, its anxieties and hopes. While the world above changed—buildings rose, traffic multiplied, technology invaded daily life—the metro remained a steady presence, like a friend who listens without interruption. What makes the metro unique in Kolkata is its emotional imprint. Unlike a newly built transport network that enters a city as a utility, this one has grown with the city's people. Those who rode it as students now travel with their children. For many, the first independent journeys of youth were not on highways but through the cool tunnels of the metro. It was where first jobs began, where farewells were said, where the rhythm of everyday life was silently synchronized to the chime of arriving trains.

The aesthetics of the metro too played a role in shaping its memory. The early coaches, with their distinctive blue and cream, became iconic. The tiled walls of stations bore the marks of time. Advertisements changed, announcements grew more automated, yet there was something deeply familiar in the way a train approached the platform—an audible heartbeat that generations came to recognize instinctively. The metro's timetables became as much a part of people's lives as their calendars. But this is not a story of nostalgia alone. The metro has also reflected the city's struggles and ambitions. For years, expansion projects were slow, delayed by administrative hurdles, funding gaps, and political complications. The original North-South line took nearly two decades to fully materialize. And yet, the city persisted. With each new extension, the network inched outward, embracing more neighborhoods, reaching deeper into the lives of its people. The recent expansion to New Garia, Dakshineswar, and the east-west corridor are not just infrastructural achievements—they are markers of a city that refuses to stand still. What gives these memories their power is their intimacy. Everyone who has lived in Kolkata has a metro story. A hurried morning, a missed train, a stolen moment of silence between stations, a sudden burst of music in a college student's earphones. These are not spectacular tales; they are small, lived experiences. But it is precisely in these small moments that a city's soul is often preserved. Unlike the flyovers or the new expressways that have risen with a certain facelessness, the metro retains an old-world familiarity. It is infrastructure with memory.This is also why its preservation and modernization must go hand in hand. The metro cannot remain frozen in the past, but its expansion should not erase the spirit that made it special. As gleaming new stations and air-conditioned trains come online, as digital ticketing replaces tokens, the challenge is to hold on to the ethos of accessibility, punctuality, and quiet dignity that defined the metro's earliest years. Infrastructure, after all, is not just about speed.

Firecrackers: A Spark from History, A Symbol of Shared Celebration

As the festival season approaches, the night skies of India prepare to erupt in color and sound. Firecrackers have long been a part of this landscape—an unmistakable sound of celebration that accompanies Diwali, Kali Puja, New Year's Eve, and countless weddings and processions. But behind this spectacle lies a story that stretches across centuries, a history deeply intertwined with cultural exchange, technological innovation, and a shared sense of festivity. Firecrackers are not merely an indulgence of noise and light. They are a cultural artifact, carrying with them echoes of history, harmony, and evolving traditions.The story of firecrackers begins far from the Indian subcontinent. Their origins trace back to China, where gunpowder was invented in the 9th century. Initially, it was not a weapon of war but a tool of joy and protection. People lit bamboo stalks filled with the powder to chase away evil spirits and welcome good fortune. As trade routes expanded and empires met, this simple technology made its way to other parts of the world, including India. Here, it blended seamlessly with local traditions, festivals, and a deep cultural affinity for spectacle and sound. Over centuries, firecrackers became a part of the Indian festive imagination—not foreign anymore, but a shared legacy of global exchange.The arrival of firecrackers in India was also intertwined with moments of historical change. During the Mughal period, fireworks became symbols of imperial grandeur. Royal celebrations were marked by elaborate pyrotechnic displays that lit up the night sky. Festivals, coronations, and military victories were all accompanied by fireworks, which became emblems of power and prosperity. What began as an imported invention evolved into a local art form, with skilled craftsmen in cities like Sivakasi and Kolkata producing intricately designed firework displays. Gradually, the fireworks that once dazzled royal courts became accessible to common people, finding their way into neighborhoods and households.But firecrackers have always been more than entertainment. They are deeply woven into the symbolic language of festivals. In Hindu traditions, bursting crackers during Diwali is believed to drive away darkness and evil spirits, mirroring the triumph of light over shadow. During Kali Puja in Bengal, the explosive sounds are often seen as a way to invoke Shakti, the primal energy. In weddings, fireworks symbolize the joyous union of two families. In New Year's celebrations, they herald the beginning of new possibilities. Across religions and regions, fireworks have served as a universal language of joy. What makes this association particularly fascinating is its power to unify. Festivals in India are famously diverse,



yet firecrackers have found a place in almost all of them. The bursting of fireworks during Eid processions, Gurpurabs, Christmas, or even sporting victories is not unusual. The shared use of this single symbol across faiths and communities reveals something essential about the human need for collective expression. In their brightest moments, fireworks are not about division but about shared wonder. A spark that shoots up into the night sky is not claimed by one community alone; everyone who looks up can marvel at it.Of course, any serious reflection on firecrackers must also acknowledge the contemporary debates surrounding them. In recent years, concerns about air pollution, noise, and health impacts have rightly taken center stage. Urban smog, already choking cities, is exacerbated during festive seasons. Crackers contribute to particulate pollution, affecting vulnerable populations, including children and the elderly. The loud explosions also disturb animals, patients, and those seeking quiet. These concerns cannot be dismissed as mere inconvenience—they are urgent and real. The air we breathe, after all, is a shared resource.But to address this challenge effectively, it is crucial to understand what firecrackers represent before dismissing them entirely. They are not simply a habit but a tradition with deep historical and cultural significance. Attempts to regulate their use must balance environmental responsibility with cultural sensitivity. Blanket bans without dialogue risk alienating communities and erasing a part of their heritage. Instead, the conversation should focus on adaptation rather than erasure. Cleaner, greener fireworks, community-controlled displays, and time-bound celebrations can allow the spirit of festivity to continue without overwhelming public health. It is also worth remembering that firecrackers historically evolved alongside technological innovation.

Meesho Files Updated IPO Draft with ₹4,250 Crore Fresh Issue and 17.56 Crore Share OFS

Bengaluru, Oct 19 — Indian e-commerce unicorn Meesho has taken another major step toward its highly anticipated initial public offering (IPO). The Bengaluru-based company has filed updated draft papers with the Securities and Exchange Board of India (SEBI), proposing a fresh issue of equity shares worth ₹4,250 crore along with an offer-for-sale (OFS) of up to 17.56 crore shares by existing shareholders. The revised filing marks Meesho's second attempt to go public, signaling the company's readiness to tap into the stock market amid renewed investor optimism around Indian technology startups. The updated draft red herring prospectus (DRHP) reflects both regulatory compliance updates and the company's strengthened financial performance over the past year.According to the updated documents, the IPO will consist of two main components — a fresh issue of shares aimed at raising new capital for business expansion, and a sizable OFS portion allowing early investors and promoters to partially offload their holdings. The fresh issue of ₹4,250 crore is expected to be utilized primarily for funding growth initiatives, expanding Meesho's technology infrastructure, and strengthening its supply chain and logistics capabilities. The company also



plans to use part of the proceeds for marketing, new product development, and potential acquisitions in the digital commerce ecosystem. Meesho, founded in 2015 by IIT-Delhi alumni Vidit Aatrey and Sanjeev Barnwal, began as a social commerce platform enabling small sellers and micro-entrepreneurs to sell products through social media networks such as WhatsApp and Facebook. Over the years, the platform has evolved into a full-fledged e-commerce marketplace offering a wide range of categories, including apparel, beauty, home products, and electronics, catering mainly to value-conscious consumers across Tier-II and Tier-III cities.With more than 140 million active users and a seller base exceeding 1.5 million, Meesho has emerged as a significant challenger to major players such as Amazon, Flipkart, and Reliance's JioMart in India's competitive e-commerce sector.

The offer-for-sale (OFS) component of 17.56 crore shares will see participation from some of Meesho's early investors, including venture capital giants such as SoftBank Vision Fund, Peak XV Partners (formerly Sequoia Capital India), Prosus Ventures, and Elevation Capital. Founders Vidit Aatrey and Sanjeev Barnwal are also expected to sell a small portion of their holdings as part of the OFS.Market analysts suggest that the move will allow existing investors to unlock partial value from their long-term stakes, while still retaining a significant shareholding post-listing.Though Meesho has not disclosed the IPO valuation or price band in the updated filing, market sources indicate that the company could be eyeing a valuation in the range of $6–7 billion, depending on market conditions and investor sentiment at the time of listing. The timing of Meesho's updated IPO filing coincides with a period of improving financial performance.

In FY24, the company significantly reduced its net losses while increasing revenue from operations. The company's focus on operational efficiency, customer retention, and logistics optimization has yielded positive results, marking a turning point after years of heavy cash burn typical of high-growth startups. According to industry reports, Meesho's gross merchandise value (GMV) grew substantially in the last fiscal year, driven by strong consumer demand in smaller towns and rural regions. The company has also managed to maintain one of the lowest average order fulfillment costs in India's e-commerce landscape, giving it a competitive edge.

Meesho's decision to move forward with its IPO aligns with a broader trend of Indian startups returning to the capital markets after a period of caution. With companies like Ola Electric, FirstCry, and Swiggy also preparing for listings in 2025, the market is witnessing renewed momentum following the subdued IPO environment of the past two years. Market experts believe that Meesho's offering could become one of the most closely watched tech IPOs in recent years, given its vast consumer base and improving financial discipline. "Meesho has managed to build a sustainable business model in an intensely competitive market. If the company can demonstrate consistent profitability trends, investor demand for its shares could be strong," said an investment banker familiar with the matter.

Following SEBI's review of the updated draft papers, Meesho is expected to file its final red herring prospectus (RHP) in the coming months, with the IPO launch likely in the first half of 2025. The company is also in talks with several domestic and international investment banks to act as book-running lead managers for the issue. If successful, Meesho's IPO could serve as a major milestone for India's digital retail sector, showcasing the potential of homegrown technology-driven platforms that cater to the mass market.

RBI Sets Redemption Date for SGB 2020-21 Series-VII, Investors to Earn Over 150% Return

The Reserve Bank of India (RBI) has officially announced the redemption dates for the Sovereign Gold Bond (SGB) 2020-21 Series-VII, marking a significant milestone for investors who have held the bonds since their issuance. This series of SGBs, initially launched in October 2020, has now matured, offering investors a remarkable return of over 153 percent, a testament to both the surge in gold prices and the structured benefits of the government-backed investment. SGBs, introduced by the RBI as an alternative to physical gold purchases, have gained popularity among investors seeking a secure and interest-earning avenue linked to gold. Unlike traditional gold investments, these bonds not only track the price of gold but also provide a fixed annual interest of 2.5 percent, payable semi-annually. The combination of market appreciation and guaranteed interest has contributed to the significant total returns for Series-VII bondholders.

According to the RBI's latest notification, the redemption date for the Series-VII bonds has been fixed as October 20, 2025. The redemption price will be calculated based on the simple average of the closing prices of 999-purity gold over the three business days preceding the redemption date, as published by the India Bullion and Jewellers Association (IBJA). This methodology ensures that investors receive a fair market-linked price at the time of redemption, reflecting the prevailing trend in the gold market. Investors who purchased these bonds in October 2020 would have bought them at a price of around ₹5,051 per gram. With the surge in gold prices over the past five years and the added interest payments, the effective return on investment is now estimated at approximately 153.26 percent. This exceptional performance underscores the enduring value of gold as a hedge against inflation and market volatility, particularly in periods of economic uncertainty. Financial experts note that SGBs offer multiple advantages over holding physical gold. Investors avoid storage costs, risk of theft, and purity concerns, while still benefiting from the underlying price movements of gold. Moreover, the capital gains arising from redemption of SGBs are exempt from income tax for individual investors, adding an additional layer of appeal to this investment instrument. The fixed interest component provides regular income, distinguishing it from pure gold holdings, which only appreciate in value without offering periodic returns.

Redemption can be facilitated through the banks or financial institutions where the bonds were originally purchased. Investors opting for premature redemption, as allowed under RBI rules after the fifth year, must submit redemption requests through their respective banking channels.

The process is straightforward, ensuring that bondholders can efficiently access the maturity proceeds.

Foreign Investors End Three-Month Withdrawal Streak, Pump ₹6,480 Crore into Indian Equities in October



Mumbai, Oct 19 — After three consecutive months of net outflows, foreign portfolio investors (FPIs) have returned to Indian equities with renewed confidence, infusing ₹6,480 crore in October so far. The turnaround reflects growing optimism over India's economic resilience, easing global inflation pressures, and improving corporate earnings outlook. According to data from the National Securities Depository Limited (NSDL), FPIs, who were consistent net sellers from July to September, have once again turned buyers amid stabilizing global bond yields and a moderation in U.S. interest rate hike expectations. The inflow comes as a positive sign for domestic markets, which had been witnessing volatility due to persistent foreign capital outflows over the past quarter.In the previous three months, FPIs had cumulatively withdrawn over ₹47,000 crore from Indian equities, largely due to global risk aversion, rising U.S. Treasury yields, and a stronger dollar. October, however, marks a reversal of that trend, with foreign investors finding renewed appeal in India's robust macroeconomic fundamentals and resilient stock market performance.Analysts attribute this inflow to several factors, including expectations that the U.S. Federal Reserve has likely reached the end of its rate-hike cycle, a decline in U.S. bond yields, and a softening dollar index. These developments have reignited risk appetite across emerging markets, with India emerging as a favored destination due to its consistent economic growth and stable political environment. "After months of cautious behavior, FPIs appear to be regaining confidence in Indian equities. The combination of a strong earnings outlook and improving global liquidity conditions is driving the inflows," said Vinod Nair, Head of Research at Geojit Financial Services. Market data shows that FPIs have been particularly active in sectors such as financial services, automobiles, capital goods, and information technology (IT). Financial stocks, which had faced significant selling pressure earlier, are once again attracting foreign money on the back of robust quarterly results and strong credit growth in the banking sector. The auto sector has also benefited from rising demand and improving rural sentiment, while IT companies are gaining traction amid hopes of a recovery in global technology spending. Analysts note that FPIs have selectively picked large-cap and growth-oriented stocks with healthy balance sheets and strong earnings visibility. "Foreign investors are showing preference for quality names in banking and IT, which have corrected to attractive valuation levels. The focus has shifted toward companies demonstrating consistent profitability amid global uncertainty," said a senior portfolio manager at a global investment fund. The latest reversal in FPI flows is closely tied to global financial conditions. The yield on the U.S. 10-year Treasury, which had surged past 4.7% earlier this year, has since moderated, easing pressure on emerging market assets.

The softening of bond yields has weakened the dollar, leading to a partial revival in cross-border investment flows into developing economies. Moreover, India's relative stability amid global turbulence has made it a preferred choice among emerging markets. While countries like China continue to grapple with economic slowdown concerns and property sector stress, India's steady GDP growth, expanding manufacturing base, and domestic consumption-driven economy have positioned it as a long-term investment magnet. The renewed foreign buying has lent strength to Indian equity benchmarks. The Nifty 50 and the Sensex have both climbed over 2% so far in October, with midcap and smallcap indices also witnessing sustained inflows. Domestic institutional investors (DIIs), who have been steady buyers for the past few months, continue to support the market, creating a strong liquidity base. "Foreign inflows combined with steady domestic participation are helping sustain the positive momentum in equities," said Deepak Jasani, Head of Retail Research at HDFC Securities. "As long as global financial conditions remain benign and corporate earnings deliver on expectations, FPIs are likely to maintain their positive stance." While FPIs have turned net buyers in equities, the debt market has witnessed marginal outflows this month, amounting to around ₹1,200 crore. Analysts suggest this could be temporary as foreign investors await clarity on India's inclusion in global bond indices.

India's expected entry into the JPMorgan Emerging Market Bond Index in 2025 is seen as a potential game-changer for attracting long-term debt inflows. Experts believe that once the inclusion takes effect, FPIs could allocate a significant portion of their portfolios toward Indian debt instruments. While October's turnaround offers optimism, analysts caution that the sustainability of FPI inflows will depend on global macroeconomic developments, particularly U.S. inflation data, crude oil prices, and geopolitical tensions in the Middle East.

If global risk sentiment remains stable, India could continue to attract strong inflows through the rest of the fiscal year, particularly as earnings season progresses and companies report stronger margins. "The structural growth story of India remains intact," said Nair. "Barring external shocks, foreign investors are likely to stay bullish on India over the medium to long term." As of mid-October, the total FPI inflow into equities stands at ₹6,480 crore, marking a much-needed reversal after a turbulent quarter. For the Indian markets, it's a welcome sign — suggesting that global investors are once again betting on India's long-term growth story.

Sitting Drawing, Dance, Recitation Competition and Blood Donation Camp at Patharpratima Police Station



Patharpratima: On the occasion of Shyama Puja, a sitting drawing, dance and recitation competition for students started on Sunday morning at the Patharpratima Police Station premises on the instructions of the Sundarbans Police District. A total of 165 students from Division A, Division B, Division C and Division D participated in the sitting drawing competition. 160 participated in the dance competition. 52 participated in the recitation competition. In addition, a blood donation camp was started at the police station premises from 10 am today to help children, pregnant mothers and sick patients affected by thalassemia to meet the blood shortage. A total of 105 people, including police personnel and civic volunteers, donated blood in that blood donation camp. Police officers including Namkhana CI Suman Das, Pathar Pratima Police Station OC Partha Sarkar and other police officers were present to encourage the blood donors.

Prabhudas Lilladher Unveils Diwali 2025 Stock Picks: HAL, ICICI Bank, ITC, SBI, Apollo Hospitals, Britannia Among 11 Buys with Up to 93% Upside

Mumbai, Oct 19 — As the festive season ushers in a wave of optimism in the markets, brokerage firm Prabhudas Lilladher (PL) has unveiled its list of top stock picks for Diwali 2025, highlighting 11 high-conviction ideas across diverse sectors. The brokerage expects potential upside returns of up to 93% over the next 12 months, underpinned by strong fundamentals, earnings growth visibility, and favorable sectoral trends. The Diwali special report titled "Samvat 2082 – India's Decade: Investing in Structural Growth Stories" identifies a balanced mix of large-cap and mid-cap companies that the firm believes are well-positioned to benefit from India's economic expansion and policy-driven growth momentum. Among the top recommendations are Hindustan Aeronautics Ltd (HAL), ICICI Bank, ITC, State Bank of India (SBI), Apollo Hospitals, Britannia Industries, Doms Industries, Eris Lifesciences, and KEI Industries, alongside two other mid-cap names representing manufacturing and consumption-driven sectors. Leading the pack is Hindustan Aeronautics Ltd (HAL), which PL projects could deliver an impressive 93% upside from current levels. The brokerage cited HAL's strong order book, government focus on defense indigenization, and sustained execution momentum as key drivers for future growth. "With its robust cash position, rising exports, and superior return ratios, HAL remains one of the most attractive defense plays in the Indian market," the report stated. The brokerage also expects steady earnings visibility driven by the Tejas fighter jet, helicopters, and maintenance contracts pipeline.In the financial space, PL maintains a bullish stance on ICICI Bank and State Bank of India (SBI) — both among its preferred picks in the large-cap segment. The brokerage expects continued credit growth, margin resilience, and healthy asset quality to support valuation re-rating in the sector. ICICI Bank, which has consistently reported industry-leading return on equity (ROE), is projected to generate solid double-digit returns over the next year. SBI, on the other hand, is seen as a value pick with improving loan growth, better asset quality, and a robust digital push that could enhance profitability. "The banking sector remains one of the most promising segments in the Indian equity market, supported by strong balance sheets and a revival in private investment," PL said in its note. Defensive consumer stocks ITC and Britannia Industries also feature prominently in PL's Diwali 2025 list. The brokerage expects both companies to maintain steady earnings growth, supported by brand strength, pricing power, and efficiency-driven margin expansion.ITC, which has outperformed the FMCG index in recent months, is expected to benefit from its diversified business portfolio, including hotels, paperboards, and cigarettes. Britannia, on the other hand, continues to gain market share in biscuits and bakery products, backed by innovation and distribution expansion."Consumer staples are set to regain momentum as rural demand improves and input cost pressures ease," the report said, adding that these stocks offer stability amid market volatility. In the healthcare segment, Apollo Hospitals and Eris Lifesciences have emerged as top choices. PL highlighted Apollo's integrated healthcare model, strong occupancy rates, and rising contribution from digital health initiatives as catalysts for sustained growth. Eris Lifesciences, focused on chronic therapies such as diabetes and cardiovascular drugs, is expected to benefit from its strong brand recall and steady expansion into new therapeutic areas.

Name Change

I, Sahabuddin Salauddin Shaikh (old name) son of Sk Salauddin, residing at 118, Nur Mahammad Munshi Lane, P.S – Howrah, Howrah – 711101, West Bengal, have changed my name and shall henceforth be known as Sk Sahabuddin (new name) as declared before the Notary Public at Kolkata dated 18/10/2025. Sahabuddin Salauddin Shaikh and Sk Sahabuddin both are same and one identical person.

Name Change

I, Sk Sahabuddin on behalf of my minor son Shaikh Faizan Hussain Shaikh Sahabuddin (old name), residing at 118, Nur Mahammad Munshi Lane, P.S – Howrah, Howrah – 711101, West Bengal, have changed his name and shall henceforth be known as Shaikh Faizan Hussain (new name) as declared before the Notary Public at Kolkata dated 18/10/2025. Shaikh Faizan Hussain Shaikh Sahabuddin and Shaikh Faizan Hussain both are same and one identical person.

Name Change

I, Mehjabeen Sahabuddin Shaikh (old name) wife of Sk Sahabuddin, residing at 118, Nur Mahammad Munshi Lane, P.S – Howrah, Howrah – 711101, West Bengal, have changed my name and shall henceforth be known as Mahajabeen Sk (new name) as declared before the Notary Public at Kolkata dated 18/10/2025. Mehjabeen Sahabuddin Shaikh and Mahajabeen Sk both are same and one identical person.

Name Change

I, Nazima Begam (old name) wife of Sekh Abdul Rasul, residing at Vill: Kasra Mollapara, P.O – Anulia, P.S – Amta, Dist: Howrah, Pin: 711401, West Bengal, have changed my name and shall henceforth be known as Najima Begam (new name) as declared before the Notary Public at Kolkata dated 17/10/2025. Nazima Begam (old name) and Najima Begam (new name) both are same and one identical person.

Name Change

I Rajkumari Ghosh w/o Pradip Kumar Ghosh Army No 14497886N Rank-Ex-Hav Name. Pradip Kumar Ghosh Presently residing at vill Sitanagar P.O. Bajua, PS-Goghat Dist-Hooghly (W.B) Pin-712602 have change my name from Rajkumari to Rajkumari Ghosh and date of Birth 30-06-1970 vide affidavit SL No 3321 dated 15-10-2025 Sworn before the 1st class Judicial Magistrate at Arambagh court Hooghly.I, Daliya Begam (old name) wife of Sk Md Nuruzzaman, residing at Vill: Basantapur Nechapara, P.O –Manikura, P.S – Penro, Dist: Howrah Rural, Pin: 711410, West Bengal, India, have changed my name and shall henceforth be known as Daliya Begam (new name) as declared before the Notary Public at Kolkata dated 17/10/2025. Daliya Begam (old name) and Daliya Begam (new name) both are same and one identical person.

Name Change

OLD NAME RAMJAN SHAIKH S/O ASAN SHAIKH R/O VILL + PO MAHAT PUR PS - CHAPRA DIST NADIA W. B. HAVE CHANGED MY NAME RAMJAN SHAIKH S/O ASAN SHAIKH TO RAMJAN SEKH S/O ASAN SHAIKH MY WIFE BEAUTI SHAIKH TO BEAUTI SEKH, MY MOTHER HALEMA SHAIKH TO HALEMA SEKH ALL ARE SAME PERSON AS DECLARED BEFORE THE NOTARY PUBLIC AT KRISHNARAR VIDE AFFIDAVIT SL NO 14/25 DATED 15/10/25 .

Name Change

OLD NAME AVIJIT SEN S/O ASIT BARAN SEN R/O TAHERPUR J/2 P.O + P. S. TAHERPUR DIST NADIA DO HEREBY DECLARRE THAT I HAVE CHANGED MY NAME AVIJIT SEN TO ABHIJIT SEN AND HENCE FORTH I SHALL BE KNOWN AS ABHIJIT SEN IN ALL PURPOSE, VIDE AFFIDAVIT NO 12/25 SWORN BEFORE THE NOTARY PUBLIC AT KRISHNAGAR ON 21/07/25 AVIJIT SEN AND ABHIJIT SEN BOTH ARE SAME AND ONE IDENTIFAL PER SON.

Name Change

I, Sahabuddin Salauddin Shaikh (old name) son of Sk Salauddin, residing at 118, Nur Mahammad Munshi Lane, P.S – Howrah, Howrah – 711101, West Bengal, have changed my name and shall henceforth be known as Sk Sahabuddin (new name) as declared before the Notary Public at Kolkata dated 18/10/2025. Sahabuddin Salauddin Shaikh and Sk Sahabuddin both are same and one identical person.

Name Change

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Name Change

I, Nazima Begam (old name) wife of Sekh Abdul Rasul, residing at Vill: Kasra Mollapara, P.O – Anulia, P.S – Amta, Dist: Howrah, Pin: 711401, West Bengal, have changed my name and shall henceforth be known as Najima Begam (new name) as declared before the Notary Public at Kolkata dated 17/10/2025. Nazima Begam (old name) and Najima Begam (new name) both are same and one identical person.

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Name Change

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I, Nazima Begam (old name) wife of Sekh Abdul Rasul, residing at Vill: Kasra Mollapara, P.O – Anulia, P.S – Amta, Dist: Howrah, Pin: 711401, West Bengal, have changed my name and shall henceforth be known as Najima Begam (new name) as declared before the Notary Public at Kolkata dated 17/10/2025. Nazima Begam (old name) and Najima Begam (new name) both are same and one identical person.

Name Change

I, Daliya Begam (old name) wife of Sk Md Nuruzzaman, residing at Vill: Basantapur Nechapara, P.O – Manikura, P.S – Penro, Dist: Howrah Rural, Pin: 711410, West Bengal, India, have changed my name and shall henceforth be known as Daliya Begam (new name) as declared before the Notary Public at Kolkata dated 17/10/2025. Daliya Begam (old name) and Daliya Begam (new name) both are same and one identical person.

Name Change

I Rajkumari Ghosh w/o Pradip Kumar Ghosh Army No 14497886N Rank-Ex-Hav Name. Pradip Kumar Ghosh Presently residing at vill Sitanagar P.O. Bajua, PS-Goghat Dist-Hooghly (W.B) Pin-712602 have change my name from Rajkumari to Rajkumari Ghosh and date of Birth 30-06-1970 vide affidavit SL No 3321 dated 15-10-2025 Sworn before the 1st class Judicial Magistrate at Arambagh court Hooghly.

Name Change

I, Sourav Mandal (Old Name) S/O–Asan Ali Mandal resident of Nowapara, Bundainagar, Nowda, Dist-Murshidabad , West Bengal, Pin- 742175 do hereby declared that I have changed my name from Sourav Mandal to Subraj Ali Mondal and henceforth I shall be known as Subraj Ali Mondal (new name) in all purpose, vide an affidavit sworn before the notary public Berhampore court on 17/10/2025. My name Subraj Ali Mondal & Sourav Mandal both are same and one identical person.

Name Change

I, Rahima Khatun, my father's (Old Name) Hazi Md Jiaur Rahaman & Md Ziaur Rahman & Ziaur Rahman S/O–Khaled Mia resident of Village – Komnagar, P.O. & P.S. – Hariharpara , District – Murshidabad , PIN – 742166, do hereby declared that I have changed my father's name from Hazi Md Jiaur Rahaman & Md Ziaur Rahman & Ziaur Rahman to Md Jiaur Rahaman and henceforth my father's name shall be known as Md Jiaur Rahaman (new name) in all purpose, vide an affidavit sworn before the notary public Berhampore court on 26/09/2025. My father's name Md Jiaur Rahaman (new name) & (old Name) Hazi Md Jiaur Rahaman & Md Ziaur Rahman & Ziaur Rahman both are same and one identical person.

Name Change

I, Uttam Kumar Sarkar, my father's (Old Name) Bhusan Chandra Sarkar resident of Tulsidanga , Gazole, Dist-Malda , West Bengal, Pin- 731224 do hereby declared that I have changed my father's name from Bhusan Chandra Sarkar to Bhushan Chandra Sarkar and henceforth my father's name shall be known as Bhushan Chandra Sarkar (new name) in all purpose, vide an affidavit sworn before the notary public Berhampore court on 17/10/2025. My father's name Bhushan Chandra Sarkar & Bhusan Chandra Sarkar both are same and one identical person.

Name Change

I, Abdul Ajim Sk & Md Abdul Ajim Sk (Old Name) S/O–Seru Sekh residing at Vill-Khidirpur , PO-Baruipara , PS-Hariharpara , Murshidabad , West Bengal, Pin-742165 do hereby decrale that I have changed my name from Abdul Ajim Sk & Md Abdul Ajim Sk to Azim Sekh and hencefort I shall be known as Azim Sekh (new name) in all purpose, vide an affidavit sworn before the notary public Berhampore court on 17/10/2025.My name Azim Sekh (new name) & (old name) Abdul Ajim Sk & Md Abdul Ajim Sk both are same and one identical person.

Name Change

I, Ajit Sarkar , my father's (Old Name) Aakhil Sarkar resident of Vill- Purba Aptair , Po & Ps-Hili , Dist-South Dinajpur , West Bengal, Pin-733126 do hereby declared that I have changed my father's name from Aakhil Sarkar to Akhil Sarkar and henceforth my father's name shall be known as Akhil Sarkar (new name) in all purpose, vide an affidavit sworn before the notary public Berhampore court on 17/10/2025. My father's name Akhil Sarkar & Aakhil Sarkar both are same and one identical person.

Name Change

I, Md Abdur Razzaque (Old Name S/O–Belat Sekh residing at Vill-Beldarpara , PO-Chhatai , PS-Ranitala , Murshidabad, West Bengal Pin- 742302 do hereby decrale that I have changed my name from Md Abdur Razzaque to Abdur Razzaque and hencefort I shall be known as Abdur Razzaque (new name) in all purpose, vide an affidavit sworn before the notary public Berhampore court on 17/10/2025.My name Abdur Razzaque & Md Abdur Razzaque both are same and one identical person.

Suvendu Adhikari Faces Protest, Alleges Attack by TMC Workers During Kali Puja Visit

Staff reporter, Raidighi, 19 October: West Bengal's Leader of the Opposition, Suvendu Adhikari, faced dramatic resistance on Sunday while on his way to inaugurate a Kali Puja in South 24 Parganas. His convoy was reportedly surrounded by Trinamool Congress (TMC) women workers, leading to a confrontation that has sparked a fierce political blame game between the ruling Trinamool and the Bharatiya Janata Party (BJP).

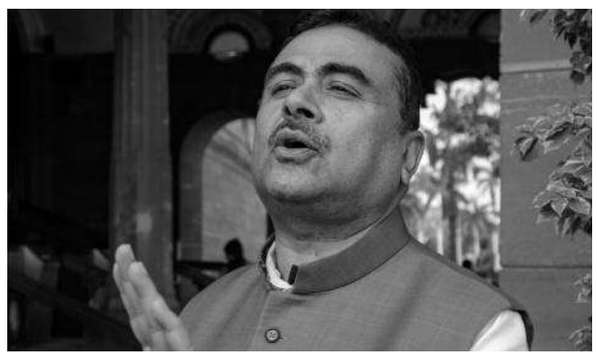
The incident occurred near Dakshin Bishnupur crossing in the Satghara area under the Raidighi Assembly constituency. Eyewitnesses said a group of TMC's women activists blocked the road holding placards and chanting slogans against Adhikari, accusing him of spreading communal hatred and neglecting the issues of Bengal's poor.

Placards carried by the demonstrators read slogans such as, "Stop exploiting Bengal's workers before doing politics," and "Give the people their due wages under the 100-day scheme before seeking votes." The protesters alleged that Adhikari and the BJP were engaged in divisive politics and demanded accountability from the Opposition leader.

Adhikari's convoy was halted briefly amid the chaos. BJP supporters accompanying him claimed that attempts were made to block and even attack his vehicle. Later, while inaugurating the Kali Puja ceremony, the Nandigram MLA accused the TMC of orchestrating a deliberate attack on him.

Speaking to reporters, Adhikari alleged that not only was he obstructed, but there were two direct attempts to harm him. "It wasn't just my car that was attacked — I was attacked. I was inside the vehicle, which is why I escaped unharmed. These people are barbaric," he said.

The BJP leader went a step further, claiming that the attack was carried out by "Bangladeshi infiltrators" sheltered by the ruling party. "These are not mere party



workers. These are infiltrators who have entered Bengal and are being used by TMC to threaten Opposition leaders. I had come here not for politics but to inaugurate a religious ceremony. Even that is not allowed now," Adhikari alleged.

Accusing the state police of inaction, he questioned their neutrality. "The police stood by and watched as my convoy was attacked. In Mamata Banerjee's Bengal, law and order have completely collapsed," he added.

Adhikari further claimed that the incident reflected a larger trend of intolerance against Hindu religious practices in the state. "In West Bengal today, Hindus are not allowed to perform their religious duties peacefully. I was here to inaugurate a Kali Puja, not to hold a political rally. Yet, I was targeted," he said, calling upon the people of South 24 Parganas to unite for their safety.

The Trinamool Congress, however, dismissed Adhikari's claims and accused him of politicising the incident for electoral mileage. Party leaders said the protest was spontaneous and peaceful, staged by local women angered by BJP's "divisive politics" and "false promises."

"TMC does not believe in violence. Our women workers were only expressing their democratic right to protest against a leader who constantly maligns Bengal and its people. Suvendu Adhikari is trying to create communal tension by calling ordinary protesters 'Bangladeshi infiltrators'," a senior TMC functionary from Raidighi said.

The party accused the BJP of manufacturing a narrative of "victimhood" ahead of the 2026 Assembly elections. "Instead of addressing the real issues — such as unemployment and the Centre's denial of 100-day wages — the BJP leadership is resorting to divisive rhetoric," the leader added.

TMC's South 24 Parganas unit also condemned Adhikari's comments as "an insult to Bengal's women." They alleged that BJP leaders were attempting to turn every minor scuffle into a national controversy to deflect attention from their failures in the state.

The BJP's state leadership came out strongly in Adhikari's defence. Party president Shamik Bhattacharya condemned the incident, calling it part of a "pattern of attacks" on Opposition leaders in Bengal.

"Just yesterday, BJP MP Raju Bista's convoy was attacked in North Bengal, and today the Leader of the Opposition has been assaulted in South Bengal. This shows that political terror against Opposition voices has become systematic in Mamata Banerjee's regime," Bhattacharya said in a statement.

He demanded immediate action against those responsible and called upon the Election Commission to take note of the deteriorating law-and-order situation in the state. The confrontation in Raidighi has further heightened tensions between the TMC and BJP as the state gears up for another high-stakes election in 2026. Adhikari has already announced plans to return to the area after Jagaddhatri Puja — this time, with BJP flags in hand — a move that hints at escalating political confrontation in the days ahead.



Devotees carry an idol of Goddess Kali on the eve of the 'Kali Puja' festival, in Kolkata

Political Speculation Soars Ahead of Bengal Polls: Arjun Singh Meets Ex-TMC Leader Achhelal Yadav in Uttarpara

Staff reporter, Kolkata, 19 October: The political landscape of Hooghly district is once again abuzz with speculation over possible party-switching. The latest stir came after senior BJP leader and former Barrackpore MP Arjun Singh met Achhelal Yadav, the former Kanaiyapur Panchayat chief and ex–vice-president of the Uttarpara-Sreerampore Panchayat Samiti, on Friday.

The meeting has sparked renewed chatter in political circles about potential realignments within the ruling Trinamool Congress (TMC) camp, particularly in the Uttarpara-Konnagar belt of Hooghly. Achhelal Yadav, notably, is the elder brother of Dilip Yadav, the current TMC chairman of Uttarpara Municipality — a fact that has further intensified speculation over the timing and implications of the meeting.

Sources revealed that Arjun Singh, who was in Sreerampore to attend a BJP programme alongside state party president Sukanta Majumdar, stopped by Yadav's office in Kanaiyapur on his return journey. The brief but high-profile visit immediately set off political murmurs across Hooghly district, with observers suggesting that the BJP may be attempting to woo local heavyweights ahead of the polls.

While both leaders have downplayed the significance of the meeting, its political overtones are hard to ignore. Speaking to the press, Achhelal Yadav clarified that the encounter was merely a courtesy visit. "I am not active in politics at the moment. Arjun Singh and I have known each other for many years. He was in the district, so he stopped by for a friendly visit. There was nothing political about it," he said.

However, when pressed about whether he might consider joining the BJP in the future, Yadav remained cautious. "I do not wish to comment on that right now. Let time decide what happens," he said, leaving the door open for speculation.

Party insiders claim that Yadav has been inactive in TMC affairs for quite some time and has maintained a low profile since stepping down from his official posts. "He hasn't been attending party meetings or public programmes for months," said a local TMC functionary. "But his influence in Kanaiyapur and adjoining areas remains strong, especially among the Yadav community and grassroots workers."

The Trinamool leadership, however, sought to dismiss any suggestion of internal unrest. Arindam Guin, the TMC's Hooghly–



Sreerampore organisational district president, said he had no knowledge of the meeting and described Yadav's current status as inactive. "I don't know why he met Arjun Singh or what was discussed. Achhelal Yadav no longer holds any position in the party. He is not actively involved in our organisational activities," Guin told reporters.

Despite such statements, whispers within TMC ranks suggest that all may not be well in the local unit. Over the past few months, murmurs of discontent have emerged among certain leaders in Konnagar and Kanaiyapur, particularly after organisational reshuffles and ticket disputes during the last civic polls. Some insiders believe the BJP is attempting to capitalise on this disaffection to strengthen its base in Hooghly — a district where it had shown promise in the 2019 Lok Sabha elections but struggled to maintain momentum in the 2021 Assembly polls.

Arjun Singh's visit is being seen by many as part of the BJP's broader strategy to rebuild its organisational strength ahead of 2026. Known for his political agility and influence in the Barrackpore–Hooghly region, Singh has recently been making frequent visits across constituencies where the BJP hopes to regain lost ground.

Political observers note that Singh has a history with the Yadav brothers. Before the 2024 Lok Sabha elections, he had reportedly held a similar meeting with Achhelal Yadav, though no formal political move followed. His latest visit, therefore, has reignited talk that a realignment could finally be in the works — one that could shift local dynamics in a key battleground area.

"The BJP is clearly reaching out to leaders who are influential at the grassroots level but feel sidelined in the TMC. Even a few symbolic crossovers before the polls can make a psychological impact," said a political analyst based in Chandannagar. The Uttarpara–Konnagar region has historically been a TMC stronghold, but the BJP made significant inroads there in recent years. With local issues like industrial decline, urban civic grievances, and intra-party factionalism at play, the area could once again become a political hotspot as the Assembly elections approach. For now, both sides are treading carefully. While the TMC leadership publicly shrugs off the speculation, the BJP appears content to keep its cards close to the chest.

Dev Confident Ghatal Masterplan Will Fulfil Mamata's Dream, Says Project Progressing Rapidly

Staff reporter, Ghatal, 19 October: Actor-turned-Member of Parliament Dev (Deepak Adhikari) has once again expressed strong confidence that Chief Minister Mamata Banerjee's long-cherished vision for the Ghatal Masterplan will soon become a reality. Speaking at a meeting held at the Ghatal Town Hall, the Ghatal MP said that significant progress has already been made on the long-delayed flood control and infrastructure project, which promises to bring lasting relief to one of West Bengal's most flood-prone regions.

"I am satisfied with the way the Ghatal Masterplan work is moving ahead. A lot has already been accomplished. Very soon, the dredging of rivers and canals will begin. Surveys for the construction of several concrete bridges are also underway. I am confident the work will be completed on time. Didi (Mamata Banerjee) had promised me this project would happen — and she is keeping her word," Dev told reporters after the meeting.

The high-level review meeting was attended by Minister Shiuli Saha, MLAs Mamata Bhuniya and Arup Dhara, Sub-Divisional Officer Suman Biswas, and several senior administrative officials. The discussion focused on the status of ongoing works, upcoming tender processes, and coordination between departments involved in the implementation of the masterplan.

Later in the day, Dev also participated in a Vijaya Sammilani organised by the Ghatal Lok Sabha Trinamool unit at the Vidyasagar High School ground. He then attended a meeting to form the Ghatal Utsav and Shishu Mela Committee, where SDO Suman Biswas was appointed chairman, while Dev and municipal chairman Tuhinkanti Bera were made joint secretaries.

Over 100 Fall Ill After Consuming Khichuri at Village Feast in West Midnapore: Food Poisoning Suspected

Staff reporter, Daspur, West Midnapore, 19 October: Panic gripped Suratpur village under Daspur police station in West Midnapore district on Sunday morning after more than a hundred villagers fell ill with symptoms of food poisoning. The incident occurred following a community feast organised during a Mansa Puja celebration on Saturday night, where villagers had gathered to eat khichuri as part of the ritual offerings.

According to local sources, within hours of the feast, several residents — including women and children — began complaining of severe stomach pain, vomiting, and diarrhoea. What started as mild discomfort soon turned into a medical emergency as dozens of villagers fell sick almost simultaneously. By Sunday morning, nearly 100 people were reported ill, with some in serious condition requiring hospitalisation.

District health officials were immediately alerted. A 15-member medical team rushed to the affected village from the West Midnapore health department. The team set up a temporary medical camp in Suratpur to provide treatment and monitor the situation.

Dr. Soumyashankar Sarangi, Chief Health Officer of West Midnapore district, confirmed the outbreak and said, "Around 110 people have shown symptoms consistent with food poisoning. Two of them are currently under treatment at the Daspur Rural Hospital, while others have been given primary medication and released. Samples of food, water, and stool have been collected for laboratory testing."

The incident took place in Suratpur, under the Rajnagar Gram Panchayat of Daspur Block 1. Villagers had organised a large communal feast in honour of Goddess Mansa, attended by nearly 300 people from Suratpur and neighbouring villages such as Kharda Bishnupur and Rupnarayanpur. The menu included traditional khichuri served as bhog (offering), along with other vegetarian dishes prepared collectively by local volunteers.

However, soon after dinner, several villagers began to feel uneasy. "It started late at night — people began complain-



ing of stomach pain and vomiting. By midnight, many of us were too weak to stand. We didn't know what was happening," said a local resident who received treatment at the camp.

By early morning, the number of patients had surged, prompting panic across the village. Some residents sought immediate help from local practitioners, while others were taken to the nearby rural health centre.

Block Development Officer (BDO) Dipankar Biswas and Rajnagar Gram Panchayat deputy chief Chinmoy Chakraborty visited the village early Sunday to oversee the relief operations. They were accompanied by senior officials from the block health department. Medical teams conducted house-to-house visits to identify anyone showing symptoms and distributed oral rehydration salts (ORS) and medicines to affected families.

Health department officials collected samples of the khichuri served during the feast, as well as drinking water and stool samples from the patients. Preliminary suspicion points to food contamination, possibly due to improper storage or handling of cooked food in humid conditions. The exact cause will be determined after laboratory analysis.

Authorities have also ordered a thorough inspection of the village's drinking water sources amid fears that contaminated water might have contributed to the outbreak. "We are not ruling out the possibility of bacterial infection through water. The test results will clarify whether it was purely foodborne or a combination of both," an official from the district health office said.

While most of the affected villagers have recovered after receiving primary treatment, health workers continue to monitor the area. A permanent medical camp has been set up in Suratpur for the next few days as a precautionary measure. Officials are also conducting awareness drives, advising residents to boil drinking water and maintain hygiene in food preparation.Local authorities have assured that the situation is under control.

Fourteen Fishermen from West Bengal Detained in Bangladesh Waters After Engine Failure

Staff reporter, Kolkata, 19 October: Fourteen fishermen from South 24 Parganas district in West Bengal have been detained by Bangladeshi authorities after their fishing trawler reportedly drifted into Bangladeshi waters following an engine failure. The incident has left the coastal community of Kultali in deep anxiety as families await word on the fate of their loved ones.

According to local sources, the fishermen—all residents of Shankijahan village in Kultali—set out to sea on October 13 aboard a trawler named FB Shubho Yatra for their routine fishing expedition. What began as a regular fishing trip turned into a nightmare when the vessel's engine broke down in rough seas on Saturday. Unable to steer the vessel back to Indian waters, the trawler was carried adrift by strong tides and high waves, eventually crossing into Bangladesh's maritime boundary.

Reports suggest that shortly after entering Bangladeshi territory, the trawler was intercepted and seized by the neighbouring country's Coast Guard and naval personnel. The fishermen were taken into custody for allegedly violating Bangladesh's maritime limits.The families of the detained fishermen learned about the incident not through official channels, but via social media posts and circulating photographs showing the trawler and its crew in the custody of Bangladeshi authorities. The sudden flood of information has plunged the small fishing community into panic and despair. Attempts by the families to contact the crew through phone calls have failed, intensifying fears for their safety and well-being.

"These men are the only earning members in most of the families here. With Durga Puja just over and the festive season still on, we are shattered. We only hope both governments act quickly to bring them home," said a distraught family member of one of the detained fishermen.

The FB Shubho Yatra is a well-known trawler operating out of Kultali's fishing harbour, often venturing deep into the Bay of Bengal for multi-day expeditions. Local fishermen say that due to unpredictable weather and weak mechanical conditions of many fishing trawlers, such accidents are not uncommon. However, crossing international maritime boundaries, even inadvertently, can have serious diplomatic and legal repercussions.

Members of the Kultali Fishermen's Association have appealed to both the Indian and Bangladeshi governments for immediate intervention to ensure the safe release of the detained men.



The association has also sought the assistance of the Indian Coast Guard and the Ministry of External Affairs to open a channel of communication with their Bangladeshi counterparts.

"This is not the first time something like this has happened. Every year a few boats go missing or accidentally cross the border due to technical failure or stormy weather. The fishermen never intend to violate international boundaries—they are simply trying to survive in harsh sea conditions," said a representative of the association.

Local administrative officials confirmed that the matter is being investigated. "We are aware of the situation. Efforts are being made through the appropriate diplomatic channels to gather details about the fishermen and ensure their early release," said a senior district official.Bangladesh's authorities have not yet issued a formal statement, but sources suggest that the fishermen are currently being questioned by local maritime enforcement agencies. Under international maritime law, crossing into another country's waters without permission constitutes a violation, though such incidents involving small-scale fishermen are often resolved through diplomatic negotiations.

Back in Kultali, the atmosphere remains tense. Families are spending sleepless nights, waiting for any update. The once-lively fishing village is now gripped by anxiety and uncertainty. With their primary breadwinners detained in a foreign country, many fear a financial crisis if the situation prolongs. "This is a humanitarian issue, not a criminal one," said a local community leader. "We urge both nations to handle it with compassion and ensure that the men are safely repatriated before the situation worsens."

As of now, no official confirmation has been received regarding when or whether the 14 fishermen will be released. Meanwhile, efforts continue at both administrative and diplomatic levels to bring the men back home to their families in West Bengal.

"Why Spend on Lamps?" — Akhilesh's Diwali Dig Sparks BJP Backlash

Staff Reporter, New Dlehi, 19 October: Akhilesh Yadav, leader of the Samajwadi Party (SP), on Sunday questioned the government's lavish expenditure on lighting up the festival of lights. His comments, directed at the upcoming grand celebration in Ayodhya, found instant push-back from the Bharatiya Janata Party (BJP), which accused him of insulting religious sentiment and denigrating a cultural tradition.

Speaking ahead of the government's flagship Deepotsav event — where 26 lakh clay lamps are set to illuminate the banks of the Sarayu River in Ayodhya — Akhilesh questioned whether such massive spending on decorative lighting was justified. "I can offer one suggestion, in the name of Lord Ram," he said in a statement. "Cities around the world get festooned with lights at Christmas, and the illumination lasts for many months. We should learn from that." Then adding a rhetorical question: "Why must we spend so much money on lamps and candles? Why all the fuss?"

His remarks immediately drew criticism from several Hindu organisations and BJP leaders alike, who charged him with being hostile to "sanatana" traditions. BJP national spokesperson Shehzad Poonawalla accused Akhilesh of indulging in anti-Hindu rhetoric, pointing to his track record of opposing the Ayodhya Ram Temple movement and now speaking against Deepotsav. In a pointed retort, he said that the SP chief was attempting to undermine a celebration tied to Lord Ram and Ayodhya's cultural significance. The Vishwa Hindu Parishad (VHP) too weighed in, criticising the statement as being insensitive and questioning whether Akhilesh was equating Diwali or Deepotsav with Christmas.

Observers say the episode feeds into a larger political narrative, especially as Uttar Pradesh gears up for future contests. The Ayodhya Deepotsav is being framed by the BJP as a flagship cultural-festival initiative, spotlighting the government's organisational might and religious credentials. Akhilesh's critique can thus be seen as an attempt to shift the discourse to priorities of public expenditure and the common citizen's interest. By questioning the spending, he seeks to resonate with voters who feel the state's resources could be better directed.

Yet, critics argue that his comments disregard the cultural and emotional value of festival traditions, and risk alienating a voter base that counts on religious symbolism and identity. By prompting a sharp reaction from BJP and Hindu organisations, Akhilesh may have unleashed a controversy that could overshadow his original message.



For his part, Akhilesh seems to be doubling down on the underlying point: questioning not the festival itself, but the scale of government spending. He subtly shifted the focus from religious extravagance to fiscal prudence — suggesting that the state's finances could be better channelled for long-term development rather than ephemeral lighting displays. While he invoked an international analogy of Christmas lighting to make his point globally relatable, his core argument remained local: why subject taxpayers to expense when priorities could differ.

On the BJP side, the response was unequivocally defensive: the Deepotsav is not merely a display of lamps but a reaffirmation of Ayodhya's heritage, the return of Lord Ram, and the spirit of Diwali. They argued that the event boosts tourism, local income, and cultural prestige — and therefore merits the investment. The lamp-lighting becomes symbolic of light triumphing over darkness, a foundational motif of Diwali which in Ayodhya is amplified manifold.

Political analysts note the timing of the exchange is significant. With the Diwali season offering high visibility moments, and with the BJP eager to showcase its cultural-festival governance, Akhilesh's remarks insert a different prism — that of austerity, questioning of big spend festivals, and a contrast narrative to the ruling party's grand-festival approach. Whether this becomes a sustained critique or remains a flashpoint depends on how both sides navigate the coming days.

Meanwhile, ordinary citizens and festival organisers in Ayodhya are watching closely. Some see Akhilesh's remarks as a needed reality check in a time of rising costs and modest incomes; others view them as an unnecessary politicisation of religious festivity. The lamps, the celebration, the crowds — all are on track for Deepotsav, and the festival mood appears set. But now, the debate around cost, symbolism and governance has added its own glow — albeit one of contention rather than celebration.

As the clay lamps are readied on the Sarayu banks and the city prepares for its festival crescendo, the public will not just measure brightness of lights but also brightness of political sparks. In Uttar Pradesh's ever-charged electoral atmosphere, even a question about lamps has become a lens into governance, identity and priorities.

Court Clears RSS March in Priyank Kharge's Turf After Ban Demand — Political Battle Heats Up in Karnataka

Staff Reporter, Bengaluru, 19 October: In a dramatic turn of events in Karnataka's politically charged landscape, the Rashtriya Swayamsevak Sangh (RSS) has secured legal permission to hold a grand procession in Chittapur, the home constituency of state minister and Congress leader Priyank Kharge. The decision came just days after Kharge had publicly called for a ban on the Sangh's activities across the state — a demand that triggered a fierce political storm and drew sharp criticism from the opposition.

The Karnataka High Court's order, delivered on Saturday, is being seen as a major moral victory for the RSS and a symbolic setback for the ruling Congress. The court directed the state government to allow the procession to take place on November 2, while ensuring that law and order are maintained during the event. The RSS had earlier planned to hold its march on Sunday but was denied permission by the local administration, which cited security concerns.



Chittapur, part of the Kalaburagi district and considered Priyank Kharge's stronghold, has now become the epicenter of a confrontation between the state government and the Sangh. The administration had rejected the RSS's initial plea for a rally, arguing that multiple organizations, including the Bhim Army and Dalit groups, had sought permission for processions on the same route and day, raising the risk of possible clashes. However, the Sangh maintained that it had followed all legal procedures and accused the Congress government of political bias.

RSS leader Ashok Patil, representing the Kalaburagi unit, filed a petition in the Karnataka High Court after the rejection. During the hearing, Patil's counsel argued that the denial of permission was arbitrary and politically motivated. The court observed that the petitioner had addressed all concerns raised by the authorities and that the right to peaceful assembly could not be restricted without adequate justification. After deliberation, the bench allowed the march to proceed, albeit on a later date, and directed the local police to ensure public safety during the event.

The ruling has stirred up fresh controversy within Karnataka's political circles. The Congress government, led by Chief Minister Siddaramaiah, had recently moved to tighten rules on public gatherings, particularly targeting the use of government-owned property by political or ideological organizations. The cabinet's new directive requires prior approval for any rallies or events held on public grounds or in educational institutions — a regulation reportedly initiated at the insistence of Priyank Kharge.

Priyank Kharge, the Minister for Rural Development and IT/BT, had earlier sparked outrage when he called for a complete ban on RSS activities in Karnataka, claiming that "no government property should be used for political indoctrination."



People gather at Anand Vihar bus depot to reach their hometowns on the eve of the 'Diwali' festival, in New Delhi, Sunday.

"Forgotten Their Roots": DK Shivakumar On Kiran Majumdar-Shaw's Criticisms

Staff Reporter, New Delhi, 19 October: There seems to be no end in sight to the online standoff between Karnataka Deputy Chief Minister DK Shivakumar and Kiran Mazumdar-Shaw over the crumbling infrastructure in Bengaluru, as the Congress leader on Sunday took a swipe at the Biocon chief for "forgetting" her "root".

Shivakumar said he is open to criticism but some "people are doing it too much", and he will remain unfazed by such things.His remarks came a day after he asked Shaw to develop roads if she wanted to.

The developments came at a time when the state government has come under criticism over the "poor state of roads and traffic issues in the city", with industry veterans like former Infosys CFO Mohandas Pai and Shaw repeatedly openly asking for intervention.

"Those who have started businesses here, have grown. After growing big, they have forgotten from what stage they have grown into what stage now. If you forget the root, you will not get the fruit. Some have forgotten and are criticising by tweeting," he told a gathering in the state capital.

"I welcome all the criticism, no problem. Criticism increases the value of democracy. But some are doing it too much and these things won't bother me. People have given us an opportunity and we want to serve them," he added.

Home Minister G Parameshwara also raised concerns over the impact of public statements on the city's infrastructure. "We are not saying don't criticise, because they (industry leaders) have a role in alerting us. What message will Dr Kiran Mazumdar-Shaw's statement send in business and industry circles, that's our concern," he said, adding that the government is working on fixing the issues.

Mahagathbandhan in Turmoil: JMM Quits Bihar Alliance as Deputy CM Slams Opposition Bloc

Staff Reporter, Mumbai, 19 October: Bihar's opposition landscape is witnessing unprecedented turbulence as the Jharkhand Mukti Morcha (JMM) announced its decision to quit the Mahagathbandhan, citing disagreements over seat-sharing and alliance priorities. The move has thrown the alliance's electoral strategy into disarray just months ahead of the Bihar assembly elections, raising questions about its cohesion and ability to present a united front against the ruling BJP-led NDA.

The resignation of JMM from the coalition was confirmed late on Saturday, with party leaders citing "irreconcilable differences" and dissatisfaction over how key decisions were being made within the bloc. JMM, which had been a junior partner in the alliance along with Rashtriya Janata Dal (RJD), Congress, and other smaller regional parties, reportedly felt sidelined in discussions over candidate allocation and campaign management. The party has indicated that it may now contest independently in select constituencies, a move likely to split votes in areas where Mahagathbandhan had hoped to consolidate anti-BJP support.

Bihar Deputy Chief Minister and senior BJP leader Samrat Chaudhary seized upon the announcement to criticize the opposition. Speaking to reporters in Patna, Chaudhary remarked, "This is yet another instance of confusion and conflict within the opposition. When parties cannot even work together in the Mahagathbandhan, how can they govern the state effectively? The people of Bihar see through this chaos." He went on to suggest that the infighting signals an inability of the opposition to form a stable government, portraying the NDA as the only credible alternative capable of ensuring development and governance.

Political analysts note that the exit of JMM could have far-reaching consequences for the opposition bloc. The Mahagathbandhan had relied on smaller partners to consolidate anti-BJP votes, especially in constituencies with a mix of tribal, backward, and minority voters. JMM's departure threatens to dilute this strategy, potentially fragmenting votes in critical seats and strengthening the NDA's prospects. Some observers point out that the alliance's internal disagreements have been simmering for months, particularly around the prioritization of constituencies for RJD and Congress candidates,



as well as the management of campaign resources and outreach strategies.

The timing of JMM's exit adds to the volatility. With campaigning set to intensify in the coming weeks, the opposition bloc faces the twin challenges of recalibrating its alliances and reassuring voters of its stability. RJD president Tejashwi Yadav, who has been at the forefront of the Mahagathbandhan's campaign efforts, has yet to issue a formal statement on the JMM decision, but party sources suggest that efforts are already underway to reach out to smaller allies and explore alternative arrangements to minimize electoral damage.

Observers also point to the broader implications for national politics. Bihar has long been a bellwether state in India's political landscape, and the stability of opposition coalitions here is closely watched by parties across the country. The JMM's withdrawal could embolden the BJP to campaign aggressively on the theme of opposition disunity, a narrative that has proven effective in other states. Meanwhile, smaller regional players within the Mahagathbandhan may face pressure to realign themselves, weighing the benefits of staying in a fragmented coalition against the potential electoral risks of contesting independently.

In addition to political calculations, there is also a question of voter perception. Citizens observing the rapid exit of a key alliance partner may interpret the move as a sign of instability and infighting, potentially undermining the opposition's credibility. Analysts suggest that the Mahagathbandhan now faces an urgent need to project unity, articulate a coherent policy platform, and reassure voters that it can deliver governance if elected. As the dust settles on JMM's exit, attention is shifting to how remaining partners in the Mahagathbandhan will respond. Will Congress and RJD be able to negotiate with remaining regional parties to patch the alliance, or will the bloc enter the polls fragmented, risking a repeat of past electoral setbacks? The coming weeks are likely to see intense negotiations, strategic recalibrations, and political maneuvering, all under the public eye.

Ticket Denied, Clothes Torn': RJD Leader's Roadside Protests Outside Lalu's Home Spark Storm

Staff Reporter, Patna, 19 October: In a dramatic and emotionally charged confrontation outside the residence of Lalu Prasad Yadav in Patna, a senior leader of the Rashtriya Janata Dal (RJD), identified as Madan Shah, tore his kurta and collapsed onto the road, accusing his party of denying him an election ticket because he refused to pay an alleged bribe. The incident has thrown fresh light on brewing dissatisfaction within the RJD's grassroots and exposed deep-seated fault-lines in candidate selection ahead of the impending Bihar assembly elections.

The spectacle unfolded on Sunday morning as Madan Shah arrived at Lalu's Rajendra Nagar residence seeking redress. According to onlookers and video footage that quickly went viral, his emotions overcame him: he unbuttoned and tore off his kurta in front of the crowd that gathered, then slumped onto the pavement and wept openly. Within moments, his agitation escalated — he even chased after Lalu's car, demanding an explanation. He accused party insiders of treating him unjustly, saying: "Because I did not give money, I have been denied the ticket."

Shah's allegation centres on the bid to contest from the Madhuban constituency, where he claimed that he had fulfilled all party requirements but refused to meet a demand of ₹2.7 crore, which he said was invoked as a condition for the ticket. "I spent years working on the ground for the people, yet when the list came, they sidestepped my service," he told reporters shortly thereafter.

Sources within the RJD admit the episode has raised eyebrows; though the party leadership has not publicly responded to Shah's claims, the optics are unflattering. They note that this show of defiance outside Lalu's personal residence is rare and signals a deeper sense of betrayal among rank-and-file leaders who feel sidelined in favour of newer entrants backed by money or influence. The leadership, however, is yet to issue any formal statement addressing the protest or the allegations of ticket "sale" outlined by Shah.

Political analysts suggest that Shah's dramatic gesture is symptomatic of a larger malaise within the RJD's internal organisation.

The party's alliance arrangements under the Indian National Development Inclusive Alliance (INDIA) bloc remain fluid, with seats still under negotiation among partner parties. Under such pressure, ticket-distributions have led to conflicts, resentment and claims of favoritism. As one observer put it: "In this atmosphere, the worn-out loyalty of long-time cadres is colliding with fresh money-power entrants."

The public nature of Shah's protest — repairing no filters in front of cameras and onlookers — is particularly concerning for the party because it undermines the disciplined image the RJD has sought to project ahead of the polls. With the BJP and other rival parties keenly watching, any sign of internal fissure could be exploited as evidence of fragmentation and weakening resolve. After the roadside drama, Shah's supporters were seen chanting against party leaders, raising slogans of "justice for workers" and hinting at further action if their grievances went unaddressed.

BJP Accuses Congress of Supporting Terrorists While Targeting RSS, Amidst Karnataka's Political Turmoil

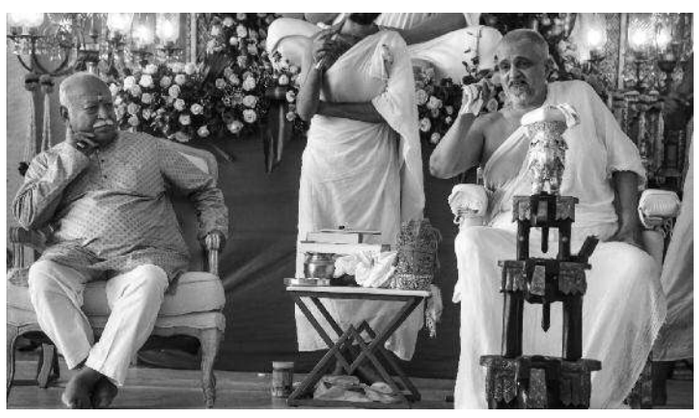
Staff reporter, Mumbai, 19 October: The Bharatiya Janata Party (BJP) has accused the ruling party in Karnataka of supporting terrorist organizations while simultaneously targeting nationalist groups like the Rashtriya Swayamsevak Sangh (RSS). This accusation comes in the wake of the Karnataka government's decision to restrict RSS activities in public spaces, a move that has ignited a fierce political debate across the state.

BJP National Spokesperson Shehzad Poonawala condemned the Congress for allegedly aligning with organizations such as the Social Democratic Party of India (SDPI) and the Popular Front of India (PFI), both of which have been identified by the National Investigation Agency (NIA) for their alleged involvement in anti-national activities. Poonawala remarked, "Congress is the most intolerant organization. They have no problem with SDPI, PFI... They bat for terrorists who have been identified by the NIA. They are the ones who will cry for Batla House, Afzal, Yakub."

The controversy intensified when Congress leader Priyank Kharge, son of party president Mallikarjun Kharge, called for a ban on RSS activities in government institutions and public spaces in Karnataka. This call was met with immediate backlash from the BJP, which accused the Congress of undermining the constitutional rights of citizens and suppressing nationalist sentiments.

In response to the government's restrictions, the RSS approached the Karnataka High Court, seeking permission to hold a route march in Chittapur, the home constituency of Minister Priyank Kharge. The court directed the RSS to submit a fresh petition for the march, signaling a legal endorsement of the organization's right to assemble peacefully.

The BJP has seized upon this legal development to further criticize the Congress. Former Karnataka Chief Minister Basavaraj



Bommai alleged that the state government was curbing RSS activities due to the organization's growing popularity, particularly among the youth. Bommai linked this move to political insecurity and accused the government of appeasing minorities while sheltering anti-social elements. "The RSS is nearing its centenary and attracting many new volunteers, especially in urban areas. This has unsettled the Congress, which thrives on minority-based politics," he stated.

The BJP's criticism extends beyond Karnataka's borders. Maharashtra Chief Minister Devendra Fadnavis also weighed in, drawing parallels between the current situation and historical events. Fadnavis reminded that previous attempts to ban the RSS, including during the Emergency under then Prime Minister Indira Gandhi, had failed and even contributed to the fall of her government. He labeled Kharge's proposal as politically motivated and accused the Congress of repeating historical mistakes without learning from them.

The Congress, on the other hand, has defended its actions, asserting that the restrictions on RSS activities are necessary to maintain public order and ensure communal harmony. Chief Minister Siddaramaiah emphasized that "no organization should disturb people in public places," underscoring the government's commitment to regulating organizational activities that could potentially interfere with public life.

The political temperature in Karnataka continues to rise as both parties prepare for upcoming elections. The BJP has launched a campaign titled "Those who love Bharat, they love RSS," aiming to rally support for the organization and counter the Congress's stance. The outcome of the legal proceedings and the public's response to these developments will likely play a significant role in shaping the political landscape in the state in the coming months.

As the situation unfolds, it remains to be seen how the Congress will respond to the BJP's allegations and whether the RSS will be able to resume its activities without further hindrance. The ongoing debate highlights the deepening ideological divide between the two major political parties in Karnataka and sets the stage for a contentious electoral battle ahead.

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Shubman Gill Refuses To Defend Virat Kohli And Rohit Sharma, Puts Himself In Same Boat After 1st ODI Loss vs Australia

Staff Reporter, New Delhi, 19 Octoberb: India's start to the Australia white-ball Tour was far less than ideal. Stand-in captain Mitchell Marsh blew away India with his unbeaten 46 in a rain-curtailed game to steer Australia to a seven-wicket triumph (DLS method) at the Optus Stadium in Perth on Sunday. In the three-match series opener, rain interrupted the contest on four occasions, which didn't help India's cause. Australia remained disciplined throughout the chase, hardly faced any setbacks, and effortlessly hunted the paltry target.

This is India's first defeat in ODIs in 2025, and their run of eight successive wins has come to an end with this.

Batting first, India lost three wickets for just 25 runs inside nine overs. The top 3 - Rohit Sharma (8), Shubman Gill (10) and Virat Kohli (0), failed to leave an impact.

"Yes, I mean, when you lose three wickets in the powerplay, you're always trying to play a catch-up game (on the rain delays and the poor start). A lot of learnings for us from this game and a lot of positives for us as well. We were defending 130 and we took the game, not till the very end, but pretty deep. We were very satisfied with that. We are very fortunate (on the crowd support). The fans turned up in huge numbers and hopefully they'll be able to cheer us on at Adelaide as well," Shubman Gill said after the match ended.Australian bowlers used the extra bounce on the Optus Stadium pitch to get rid of two old foes. Rohit (8), who was also playing his 500th match for India, walked in alongside new captain Shubman Gill to loud cheers from the Perth crowd, but his stay was snapped after just 14 balls.

Rohit played a sumptuous straight drive off Mitchell Starc, which offered a heady time travel back to the glory days.But that was it for the day for the Mumbai man, as Josh Hazlewood's ability to find steep bounce from the quarter-length ended his tenure. The ever-rising ball kissed the sticker of Rohit's bat and travelled to debutant Matthew Renshaw at second slip.

Kohli walked in amid even louder cheers, but the familiar ODI greatness was nowhere to be seen. In a pre-match chat, Kohli had detailed how Australia had often brought the best out of him as a batter.

KL Rahul and Axar Patel Rescue India with Resilient Stand Against Australia

Staff Reporter, New Delhi, 19 Octoberb: In a rain-affected encounter at Optus Stadium, Perth, India managed to post a challenging total of 136/9 in their allotted 26 overs against Australia in the first One Day International (ODI) of the series. The innings, though marred by early setbacks, saw KL Rahul and Axar Patel stepping up to anchor the innings and provide the much-needed stability.

Opting to bat first, India found themselves in early trouble as the Australian bowlers, led by Mitchell Starc and Josh Hazlewood, exploited the overcast conditions to perfection. Rohit Sharma and Virat Kohli, both key figures in the Indian lineup, were dismissed cheaply, leaving the team at a precarious 37/3. The pressure mounted as Shubman Gill also fell soon after, bringing the middle order under intense scrutiny.

At this juncture, KL Rahul and Axar Patel joined forces, displaying commendable composure and technique. Rahul, known for his adaptability across formats, anchored the innings with a well-crafted 38 runs off 31 balls. His knock included timely boundaries and a couple of well-placed sixes, stabilizing the innings and providing a platform for the lower order.



Axar Patel, the all-rounder, played a crucial supporting role, contributing 31 runs. His innings was marked by calculated aggression, rotating the strike effectively and finding the boundaries when required. The duo's partnership was instrumental in resurrecting India's innings, taking the score past the 100-run mark.

As the innings progressed, debutant Nitish Kumar Reddy added some late fireworks, hitting two sixes in the final over to push India's total to 136. However, the innings was not without its challenges. The frequent rain interruptions disrupted the batting rhythm, and the Indian team had to contend with the revised target of 131 runs for Australia under the DLS method.

Australia's response began with a swift chase, led by Mitchell Marsh, who took on the Indian bowlers with aggressive strokes. Despite losing Travis Head early, Marsh's 22-run knock, including three sixes, kept the required run rate in check. The Indian bowlers, including Arshdeep Singh and Axar Patel, provided breakthroughs, but Australia's chase remained on course.

The match, though still in progress, has highlighted the importance of partnerships and adaptability in challenging conditions. India's ability to recover from early setbacks, thanks to Rahul and Patel's efforts, has set the stage for an intriguing contest as both teams vie for supremacy in this closely contested series.

As the game unfolds, cricket enthusiasts are witnessing a display of resilience and skill, with both teams showcasing their strengths and strategies. The outcome remains uncertain, but the performances of Rahul and Patel have certainly added an exciting dimension to the encounter.



India's Deepti Sharma, third left, celebrates with teammate the wicket of England's Amy Jones during the ICC Women's Cricket World Cup match between India and England in Indore, India, Sunday.

Shubman Gill and Rohit Sharma Share Lighthearted Moment, Enjoy Popcorn Amidst Cricket Action

Staff Reporter, New Delhi, 19 October: In a rare and heartwarming display of camaraderie, Indian cricket stars Shubman Gill and Rohit Sharma were spotted enjoying popcorn together during a break in a recent match, reminding fans that even elite athletes take moments to relax and share lighthearted experiences off the pitch. The candid moment, captured by media cameras, instantly went viral, showing a side of professional cricketers that rarely makes headlines — their human, relatable side.

The incident took place during a high-profile match in which both players were actively involved in strategizing and performing for their respective teams. Amid the intensity and focus that professional cricket demands, Gill and Sharma took a brief pause on the sidelines, opening a pack of popcorn and engaging in a casual conversation. Observers noted the ease and camaraderie between the two players, highlighting that even in the competitive world of cricket, moments of levity and team bonding are crucial.

Fans on social media were quick to respond to the images and videos, with many sharing lighthearted comments about the "popcorn break" and praising the stars for showing their down-to-earth personalities. Cricket enthusiasts remarked that it was refreshing to see superstars like Gill and Sharma enjoying ordinary pleasures, demonstrating that despite the pressures of international cricket, they are capable of relatable, spontaneous interactions. The images sparked a flood of memes, tweets, and posts across platforms, with fans celebrating the lighter side of the game.



Shubman Gill, often recognized for his composed and methodical batting style, appeared relaxed and cheerful, chatting casually with Rohit Sharma while snacking. Rohit, the seasoned captain and a pillar of Indian cricket, complemented the scene with his trademark smile, further endearing the duo to fans. Analysts noted that such moments are important for team morale, especially during tournaments and long seasons where mental resilience is as vital as physical skill. By enjoying small joys like popcorn, players can decompress and recharge for the challenges ahead.

The playful moment also underscores the evolving culture of cricket, where players are increasingly visible to fans both on and off the field. With media coverage and social media attention, the personalities behind the helmets are being celebrated as much as their performances. Moments like these humanize athletes and offer a glimpse into their everyday lives, bridging the gap between fans and icons. For young cricketers and aspiring athletes, such interactions provide valuable lessons in balancing professionalism with personal enjoyment.

Experts suggest that informal breaks, such as the one shared by Gill and Sharma, can significantly impact team chemistry. "Cricket is not just about talent and skill; it's also about relationships, trust, and shared experiences," said a former national coach. "When senior and junior players share these lighthearted moments, it builds rapport, improves communication, and strengthens the collective spirit of the team." The popcorn moment, though seemingly trivial, fits perfectly into this broader context, emphasizing the importance of bonding beyond the boundary lines.

Off the field, both players continue to excel in their careers, representing India in multiple formats and contributing significantly to team successes. Yet, it is glimpses of their lighter side — the laughter, casual conversation, and shared snacks — that endear them to fans in ways statistics alone cannot. In an era dominated by digital coverage and instant news, these humanizing moments resonate widely, providing a refreshing contrast to the usual focus on performance metrics, match results, and tactical analysis.As the match resumed and the players returned to their professional roles, the popcorn break remained a memorable interlude for spectators, both in the stadium and online. It highlighted not only the approachable personalities of Gill and Sharma but also the importance of small moments of joy in high-pressure environments.

East Bengal Coach Oscar Bruzon Slams Debjit Mazumder's Decision as Misjudged

Staff Reporter, Kolkata, 19 Octoberb: East Bengal head coach Oscar Bruzon criticized goalkeeper Debjit Mazumder's recent decision on the field, calling it "wrong and untimely." The remarks come after a high-stakes match in the Indian Super League (ISL) that saw East Bengal facing unexpected challenges, leaving fans and pundits debating the split-second decisions that can influence the outcome of a game.

Speaking to the media after the match, Bruzon expressed his disappointment while maintaining a professional tone, emphasizing the importance of decision-making in high-pressure situations. "In football, every action counts. Debjit's choice in that particular moment did not reflect the situation appropriately. It was not aligned with what we had trained for," Bruzon said. He acknowledged Mazumder's abilities as a goalkeeper but highlighted that even the most experienced players can make errors when under pressure.

The incident occurred during a critical phase of the game when East Bengal was pushing for control in the midfield and looking to capitalize on counter-attacks. Mazumder, who has been a reliable figure for the team in recent seasons, opted for a decision that Bruzon believed compromised the team's defensive structure. The coach elaborated that the choice exposed the defense to vulnerabilities and disrupted the flow of the team had been building throughout the match.

Bruzon's comments have ignited debate among the East Bengal fan base, with supporters divided over the assessment. While some appreciate the coach's transparency and insistence on accountability, others feel that public criticism of a key player could affect team morale. Football analysts have weighed in, noting that such moments, although regrettable, are part and parcel of competitive sports where split-second choices can define outcomes. They argue that Bruzon's remarks may serve as a lesson in situational awareness and decision-making under pressure, crucial attributes for any player at the professional level.



East Bengal, a club with a storied legacy in Indian football, has been focusing on building a cohesive squad that can consistently perform at the top tier. Bruzon, known for his tactical acumen and structured coaching approach, has been emphasizing discipline, positioning, and situational intelligence in training sessions. His critique of Mazumder reflects his broader philosophy of continuous improvement, where players are encouraged to analyze their actions critically and learn from mistakes without fear of retribution.

The coach also underlined that mistakes are inevitable in a team sport and should be used constructively to enhance performance. "We win as a team and we lose as a team. Critiquing a decision is not about blaming a player; it is about understanding the moment and ensuring we make better choices collectively in future matches," Bruzon remarked. His comments suggest a strategic approach where feedback is immediate, transparent, and aimed at long-term development.

In the aftermath of Bruzon's statement, discussions within the club are reportedly focusing on improving communication between the goalkeeper and defenders, refining defensive strategies, and simulating high-pressure scenarios in training.

Messi Clinches MLS Golden Boot with Hat-Trick; Ronaldo Strikes 949th Career Goal in Al Nassr Triumph

Staff Reporter, Madrid, 19 Octoberb: Lionel Messi and Cristiano Ronaldo once again proved that age is no barrier for greatness. While Messi secured the MLS Golden Boot with a scintillating hat-trick for Inter Miami, Ronaldo delivered yet another memorable moment by scoring his 949th career goal for Al Nassr in Saudi Arabia, reminding fans why these two icons remain the gold standard of modern football.

In Fort Lauderdale, Messi's artistry was on full display as Inter Miami faced Nashville SC in a highly anticipated Major League Soccer clash. The game began with Messi showcasing his trademark vision and technique. In the 34th minute, he opened the scoring with a sublime left-foot strike from outside the penalty area, following a perfectly weighted pass from teammate Jordi Alba. The goal demonstrated not just precision but the calm brilliance that has defined Messi's career across continents.

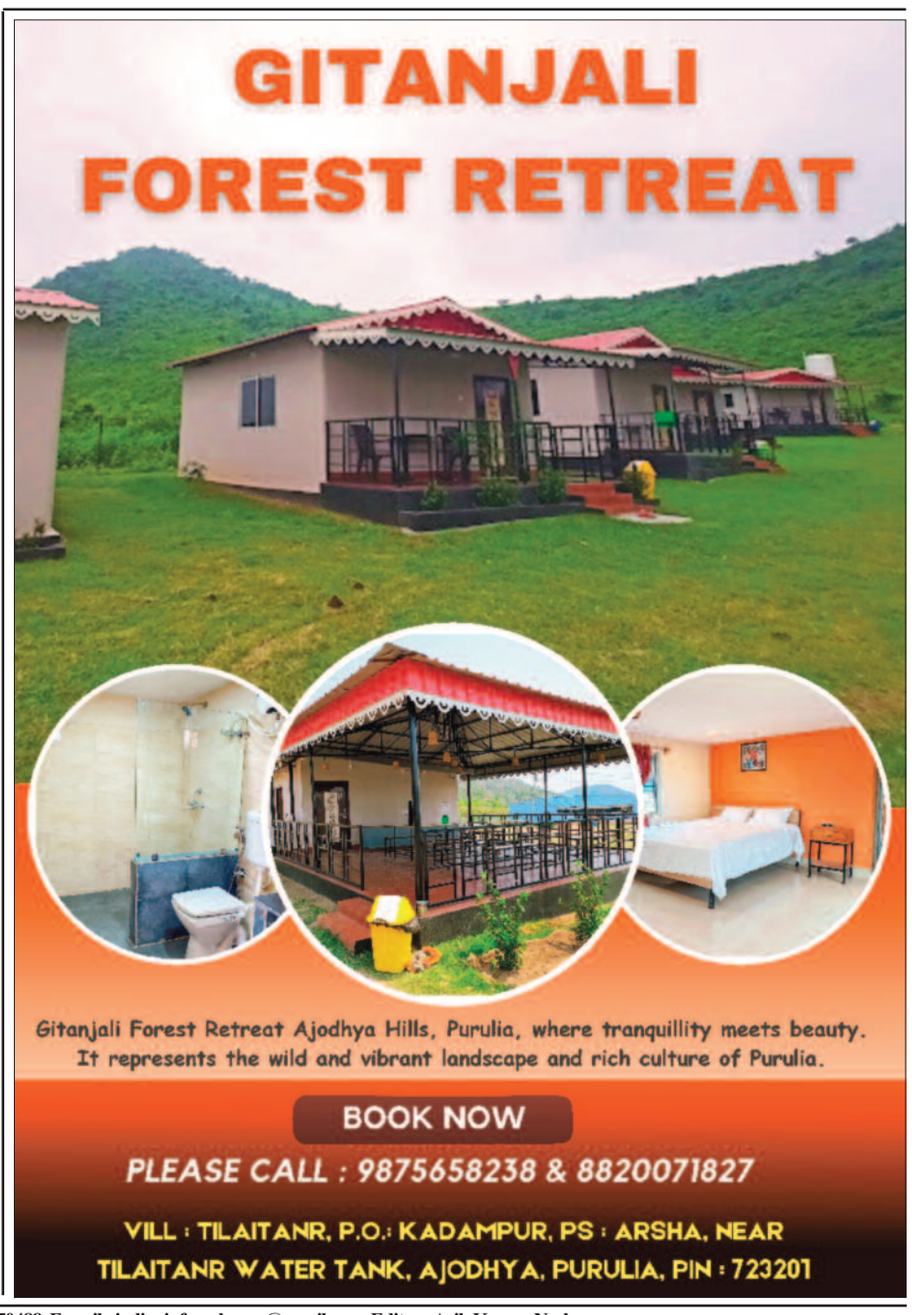
Nashville SC, however, responded with two quick goals, taking a temporary 2-1 lead and testing Miami's resilience. The stadium erupted as Messi stepped up in the 63rd minute to convert a penalty, equalizing the score and reigniting his team's momentum. Fans held their breath as Messi's anticipation and composure shone through once again. Then, in the 81st minute, he completed his hat-trick with a perfectly curled left-foot shot, leaving the goalkeeper with no chance. The goal not only sealed a 4-2 victory for Inter Miami but also elevated Messi's MLS season tally to 29 goals, ensuring the Golden Boot returned to the Argentine maestro's collection. The night was a testament to Messi's enduring brilliance and ability to dominate games even after a storied career across La Liga and Ligue 1.



Thousands of miles away, in the Saudi Pro League, Cristiano Ronaldo was scripting his own narrative of excellence. Representing Al Nassr, the 40-year-old Portuguese superstar faced Al Fateh in what became a showcase of his undiminished skill and determination. In a dramatic turn, Ronaldo missed a penalty in the 59th minute, a rare lapse that could have rattled a lesser player. Yet, true to his legendary status, he rebounded instantly. In the very next minute, he unleashed a long-range, precision strike that found the back of the net, silencing any doubts and securing his 949th career goal. Al Nassr went on to win the match convincingly, 5-1, with Ronaldo's goal underscoring his relentless drive towards the milestone of 1,000 career goals.

The performances of Messi and Ronaldo on the same night serve as a reminder of their enduring impact on global football. Despite being in the later stages of their careers, both players continue to mesmerize fans, lead their teams, and define moments with unmatched skill and leadership. While Messi's hat-trick brought glory and personal accolades in MLS, Ronaldo's goal highlighted his commitment and precision in the Saudi league, reinforcing his reputation as a player capable of extraordinary feats at any age. For Inter Miami supporters, Messi's achievement has cemented his status as a transformative figure in MLS, attracting global attention and elevating the profile of American football. Meanwhile, Ronaldo's feat in Saudi Arabia underscores his unwavering ambition, as he continues to chase historical records and inspire a new generation of players.

As football enthusiasts around the world celebrate these moments, the narrative is clear: Lionel Messi and Cristiano Ronaldo remain icons not merely because of their past achievements, but because every time they step onto the pitch, they remind the world of the magic, precision, and drama that only legends can produce. On Saturday night, from Fort Lauderdale to Riyadh, the beautiful game witnessed its brightest lights in action.



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