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SKY (48), Shedge (36 n.o.) lead Mumbai to 2nd Syed Mushtaq Ali Trophy title with a 5-wkt win over MP. Rahane named player of series, P 19

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TIMES GLOBAL

THE TIMES OF INDIA, NEW DELHI | MONDAY, DECEMBER 16, 2024

FEAR DOESN'T EXIST ANYWHERE EXCEPT IN THE MIND – DALE CARNEGIE

JAMIE FOXX GETS STITCHES AFTER BEING HIT IN MOUTH WITH GLASS AT B'DAY DINNER, POLICE PROBE FIGHT AT CALIFORNIA RESTAURANT

JIM CARREY OPEN TO 'THE MASK' SEQUEL BUT IT HAS TO BE 'RIGHT IDEA', SAYS HE'S UNLIKELY TO RETIRE BUT ENJOYS 'POWER-RESTING'

Israel plans to double popn in Golan, cites threats from Syria

Strengthening Golan Is Strengthening State Of Israel, Says Netanyahu

Jerusalem: Israel agreed on Sunday to double its population on the occupied Golan Heights while saying threats from Syria remained despite the moderate tone of rebel fighters who ousted President Bashar al-Assad a week ago. "Strengthening the

Golan is strengthening the State of Israel, and it is especially important at this time. We will continue to hold onto it, cause it to blossom, and settle in it," PM Benjamin Netanyahu said in a statement.

Israel captured most of the strategic plateau from Syria in the 1967 Six-Day War, annexing it in 1981. In 2019 then-President Trump declared US support for Israeli sovereignty over the Golan, but the annexation has not been recognised by most countries. Syria demands Israel withdraw but Israel refuses, citing security concerns.

"The immediate risks to the country have not disappeared and the latest developments in Syria increase the strength of the threat — despite the moderate image that the rebels leaders claim to present," defence minister Israel Katz told officials examining Israel's defence budget, according to a statement. Netanyahu's office said the govt unanimously approved a more than 40-million-shekel (\$11m) plan to encourage demographic growth in the Golan. It said Netanyahu submitted the plan to the govt "in light of the war and the new front facing Syria, and



An Israeli army jeep drives in the buffer zone which separates Israeli and Syrian forces on the Golan Heights near the Druze village of Majdal Shams AP

Racy pix of Assad go viral, spark ridicule

Beirut: Bizarre and personal photos of ousted Syrian President Bashar Assad have surfaced from his abandoned residences, sparking ridicule among Syrians who only until recently were persecuted for criticising his leadership.

The images, reportedly discovered in photo albums from Assad's mansions in the hills of Damascus and Aleppo, painted an unflattering portrait of Bashar and his father, Hafez Assad, who had governed Syria with an iron grip for decades. They stripped away the carefully constructed image that the Assad family had cultivated.

One photo featured Hafez Assad in his underwear, striking a bodybuilder-like pose.

The unbecoming images of

out of a desire to double the population of the Golan".

Some 31,000 Israelis have settled there, said analyst Avraham Levine of the Alma Research and Education Center specialising in Israel's security challenges on its northern border. The Golan is home to 24,000 Druze, an Arab minority who

practice an offshoot of Islam, he said. Most identify as Syrian.

Syria's de facto leader, Abu Muhammed al-Jolani who leads HTS, said on Saturday that Israel was using false pretenses to justify its attacks on Syria, but that he was not interested in engaging in new conflicts as his country focuses on rebuilding.

US in direct contact with rebels behind Assad exit

US secretary of state Antony Blinken revealed Saturday that Washington had made direct contact with Hayat Tahrir al-Sham rebels, despite previously designating the group as "terrorists". Blinken would not discuss details of talks with HTS, which led a coalition of armed opposition groups that drove Assad into asylum in Russia. Blinken said the easing of sanctions on Syria would depend on "sustained action" by the rebel-installed interim govt. AP

Assad in various states of undress and odd scenarios quickly went viral, turning into an object of mockery. "What is it with the Assad family and being photographed in their underwear? Highly interested in knowing the fantasy behind," journalist Hussam Hammoud wrote on X.

One particularly peculiar shot showed Bashar in a Speedo aboard a boat, surrounded by other people. Another depicted him on a balcony overlooking the sea, teasing a girl sitting on his shoulders. In one photo, taken in a mountainous setting, Bashar is seen with a group, which included his reportedly maternal cousin, Ihab Makhlouf, who is wearing a T-shirt emblazoned with an image of Hitler. AP

Since Assad's fall, Israel has moved into a demilitarised zone inside Syria and carried out hundreds of strikes on strategic weapons stockpiles. The Syrian Observatory for Human Rights said Israel struck Syria 75 times in attacks that began Saturday night near Damascus, and cities of Hama and Homs. REUTERS

Hasina involved in enforced disappearance: B'desh panel

Dhaka: An inquiry commission set up by the interim govt in Bangladesh has said that it found evidence implicating deposed PM Sheikh Hasina and top-ranking military and police officials from her regime in alleged incidents of enforced disappearance.

The five-member commission of inquiry on enforced disappearances submitted an interim report titled "Unfolding The Truth" to chief adviser Muhammad Yunus on Saturday. The commission estimated that there would be more than 3,500 enforced disappearances.

Taking fight against rising seas to a whole new level

Mohita.Tewari@timesofindia.com

God made Earth, the saying goes, and the Dutch made the Netherlands. But they haven't stopped just there. The marvels of Dutch engineering go much beyond the protective barriers, or dikes, that stand guard against flooding in the vast swathes of the country that were reclaimed from the sea and lie below sea level.

In fact, one of those marvels is an office that needn't worry about rising sea levels at all — a palpable threat in an extreme weather world — since it's been built to float on water.

Floating Office

Made from recyclable materials and wood that can be reused, the Floating Office Rotterdam (FOR) is a carbon-neutral three-storey building that utilises various sustainable design principles. It sits on the Nieuwe Maas river and is designed to float if water levels rise due to climate change. FOR uses solar panels to generate its own energy and uses water from the Rijnhaven harbour for interior cooling. It appropriately houses the headquarters of the Global Centre on Adaptation (GCA), which works on solutions for climate change.

The makers might have thought of leaving nothing to chance when they came up with the idea for a climate-friendly floating office. But it is exactly the kind of comprehensive climate thinking that the Netherlands loves to practise. It may not be entirely wrong to say that some are actually eating and living it. Because the 'Green Village' on the Delft University of Technology (TU)



campus in Delft has a 'living lab' for sustainability where people can reside while testing innovations ranging from sustainable building and renovation to future energy systems and climate-adaptive cities.

If there's living space for environmental science, Netherlands has also created 'Room for the River'. It's a project that seeks to transform agricultural areas into flood plains to enhance water management and, in the process, reduce the risk of flooding by giving rivers more room to flood.

Future Ready

Thinking out of the box may not be a bad bet for coming up with ideas for sustainable living. It's even better if the box itself is designed to be future ready. Which is what the future residents of the Lanxmeer got down to do. They came up with the masterplan and every other detail of their unique neighbourhood in the town of Culemborg that incorporates principles of eco-towns and features reusable materials and an urban ecological farm. The residents themselves maintain a park in the neighbourhood

that's equipped with an integrated water concept featuring retention pools, helophyte filters, and WADIs (Water Drainage Infiltration).

Built on former farmland surrounding a protected drinking water extraction area, Lanxmeer brings together facilities for recreation, water extraction, and food production whilst showcasing sustainable urban planning.

The Dutch are confident that their learnings from climate adaptation will be helpful if widely shared, especially for a country like India, which faces its own share of environmental threats. Officials at the Netherlands Embassy in India said that "key organisations from both nations are exchanging ideas and best practices on water management, climate adaptation, and sustainability". Such collaborations show how Dutch innovation can contribute to India's, and the world's, long-term resilience in the face of climate change, they said.

The writer was in The Hague at the invitation of the Netherlands ministry of foreign affairs

US officials: Most drone sightings manned aircraft

Washington: Officials from the White House, FBI and DHS on Saturday stressed that most of the recent reported drone sightings in New Jersey and nearby states involved manned aircraft, and there was no evidence of any national security threat. An FBI official told reporters during an impromptu briefing that the agency was working with 50 local, state and federal partners to look into increased reports.

The official said less than 100 of the over 5,000 reported sightings had turned out to merit further investigation, and all of the large fixed-wing reported sightings so far involved manned aircraft. Extensive efforts were underway to probe the remaining cases, using interviews and analyses of radar and intelligence, the official said. AP

torture and keep victims in detention and deliberately segmented the operations. The commission simultaneously proposed the abolition of the RAB alongside scrapping or thoroughly amending the Anti-Terrorism Act, 2009.

Rights activist and commission member Sajid Hossain said they recorded 1,676 complaints of enforced disappearances and, so far, have examined 758 of them. Of these, 200 people or 27% of the victims never returned while those who returned were mostly shown on records as arrested. PTI

The report said the police's elite anti-crime rapid action battalion (RAB) had collaborated with each other to pick up,

viewed over 1.4 million times. Panahipour said: "Unfortunately we do not know the charges against Ahmaday, who arrested her, or her place of detention, but we will follow up on the matter through legal authorities." He also said two musicians in her band — Soheil Paghish Nasiri and Ehsan Beirazghdar — were arrested in Tehran.

Following the Islamic Revolution in Iran in 1979, women were banned at first from singing, then from singing or dancing solo before mixed-gender audiences.

Female vocalists could perform

for male audiences only as a part of a chorus. But they are allowed to sing in a hall for female-only audiences. Also, women are not allowed to appear without a hijab in front of men who are not related. AP

Ahmaday performed wearing a long black sleeveless and collarless dress, but no hijab. She was accompanied by four male musicians.

Ahmaday had posted her concert on YouTube the day before, saying: "I am Parastoo, a girl who wants to sing for the people I love. This is a right I could not ignore; singing for the land I love passionately."

The online concert has been

criticised for being a part of a "cultural appropriation" and for being "inappropriate". The announcement sparked some anger among critics of the govt in Italy, who have long opposed Italy's citizenship law for allowing people with distant Italian ancestry to get an Italian passport, but not granting citizenship to children of immigrants born in Italy.

Granting the Italian citizenship to President Milei is yet another slap in the face to

Milei, whose grandparents emigrated from Italy to Argentina, received the citizenship because of his bloodline, Italy's foreign ministry said this past week. The announcement sparked some anger among critics of the govt in Italy, who have long opposed Italy's citizenship law for allowing people with distant Italian ancestry to get an Italian passport, but not granting citizenship to children of immigrants born in Italy.

Boys and girls who were born here or live here permanently and have been waiting for citizenship for years and years, sometimes without any result," Riccardo Magi, a liberal opposition lawmaker, wrote on X.

Italy doesn't automatically grant citizenship to kids born in its borders, whether or not the parents are in the country legally.

Liberals have proposed a referendum to change the law, but Meloni's govt has resisted it. Milei has repeatedly expressed pride in his Italian ancestry, but hasn't explained why, as a head of state, he would seek the citizenship of another country. NYT

city's Roundabout Art Route, which features 27 installations made by artists from around the world. Among the installations that were hit: a family of deer, looking truly lost in the headlights; a 6-foot sphere that was brought to life and given a touch of whimsy; and a red ph-

Aus net migration drops by 16% to 4.5L; arrivals decline by 10% to 6.7L Indians Led Pack With 87,000 Arrivals Into Country During FY 2023-24

Lubna Kably | TNN

The number of people migrating to Australia fell for the first time since the country lifted its Covid-era border restrictions in early 2022. This fall was led by a drop in international student arrivals, according to data recently released by the Australian Bureau of Statistics (ABS).

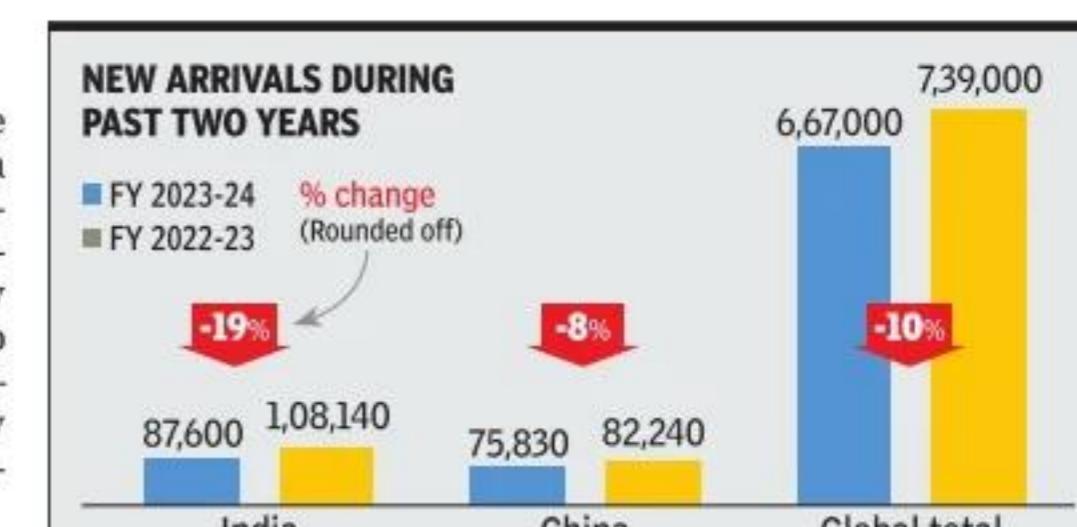
Net overseas migration fell to 4.5 lakh during the year ended June 30, 2024 — a drop of nearly 17% from the previous year's figure of 5.3 lakh. The data set explains that net overseas migration is the net gain or loss of population through international migration to and from Australia.

Historically, each year more people migrate to Australia than migrate away from the country. This trend temporarily reversed in 2020 and 2021 owing to pandemic related border closures. Fiscal year (FY) 2023-24 represents the first annual decrease in net overseas migration since the border restrictions were lifted.

India saw 75,830 Chinese enter Australia, a decline of nearly 8% from the previous year's figure. The net migration statistic stood at 49,720 for fiscal 2023-24, as compared to 59,530 in the previous year.

Cutting across all countries, the migrant arrivals to Australia decreased by nearly 10% to 6.7 lakh, down from 7.4 lakh in FY 2022-23. During the year ended June 30, 2024, the migrant departures increased by 8% to 2.2 lakh, as compared to 2.04 lakh in the previous year.

China was the second largest source country. FY 2023-24 were the



2.07 lakh international students. However, this was a significant drop of nearly 26% as compared to the previous year's inflow of 2.8 lakh international students. According to immigration experts, higher visa fees, a higher cost of living and the proposed cap on student inflow of 2.7 lakh are believed to have led to this decline.

The data set released by ABS does not provide country-wise data of inflow of international students. However, another data set released by Australia's Department of Education states that the total number of international students during the Jan-Aug 2024 period stood at 8.03 lakh. Of which 1.3 lakh were from India — a growth of 12%. As against this, there were 1.7 lakh Chinese students, showing a growth of 13%.

While the controversial bill seeking to cap the number of new international student enrolments to 2.7 lakh for 2025 has been blocked in the Parliament, it has denting Australia's image as a coveted destination for international students.

10 yrs since attack, Charlie Hebdo is again holding God cartoon contest

Paris: Ten years after a deadly attack on its office that shocked France, satirical magazine Charlie Hebdo is marking the anniversary with a cartoon contest mocking God, with Sunday the deadline for submissions.

The satirical weekly was targeted by two Islamic extremists on Jan 7, 2014, who gunned down eight members of staff including some of the country's most famous cartoonists inside its premises in central Paris. The attackers — two brothers who were later killed by police — targeted Charlie Hebdo after its decision to publish caricatures lampooning the Prophet Mohammed.

In typically provocative style, the magazine has invited cartoonists to submit the "funniest and meanest" drawings mocking God possible ahead of the anniversary. The magazine set a deadline of Dec 15. There was no immediate confirmation of how many had been sent for publication. AFP

Rare win for Trump in battle with US media: ABC to pay \$15m to settle defamation suit

Top allies Nunes and Grenell get key roles



ABC News is set to pay \$15 million to settle a defamation lawsuit brought by Donald Trump. The agreement was a significant concession by a top news group and a rare victory for the media-bashing politician.

As per the terms, ABC News will donate the \$15 million to Trump's future presidential foundation and museum. The network and its star anchor, George Stephanopoulos, also published a statement saying they "regret" remarks made about Trump during an interview in March. The outcome is an unusual win for Trump, who has frequently sued news groups for defamation and frequently lost, including in litigation against CNN, New York Times and Washington Post.

Trump sued ABC and Stephanopoulos after the anchor asked Rep. Nancy Mace, Republican, who has spoken publicly about being raped as a teen, why she had continued to support Trump after he was found "liable for rape. He was found "liable for rape. NYT

pe" in a 2023 civil case. In that case, a federal jury found Trump liable for sexually abusing and defaming writer E. Jean Carroll, but it did not find him liable for rape. NYT

DAILY PLANET



RUN, SANTA, RUN: Participants of a Santa-themed run in Kosovo

Googly eyes pasted on Oregon sculptures draw city's rebuke but become a viral hit

If you travel through Bend, Oregon, and have the feeling that you're being watched, it's not a stroke of paranoia: Googly eyes were affixed to eight public art sculptures around the city, to the chagrin of some local officials but to the delight of many residents. Beginning in Aug, the culprit or culprits, nicknamed the Googly Eye Bandit by local news outlets, placed the eyes on works of art in the



one of the oldest installations, which took on an air of bewilderment. "It costs money to remove them with care to not damage the art," the city wrote this month on social media. The city has so far spent \$1,500 on removing googly eyes from 7 of the sculptures. Some residents viewed Bend's



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ABC News agrees to donate \$15m to Trump's future presidential foundation and museum
to settle defamation lawsuit over its star anchor's on-air comments that the prez-elect had been found 'liable for rape'

Inquiry commission set up by B'desh interim govt claims former PM Sheikh Hasina and top-ranking military and police officers from her regime involved in over 3,500 enforced disappearances

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Travis Head, Steve Smith score contrasting tons as their 241-run partnership helps Australia reach a commanding 405/7 at stumps on Day 2 of 3rd Test against India. Rain predicted for next 3 days likely to impact game's outcome, P19

Govt to table bills on ONOE in LS tomorrow

Govt on Sunday evening dropped the two bills on one nation, one election from its revised list of business for Monday in Lok Sabha. Sources later said the two important bills will be introduced in the lower House by law minister Arjun Ram Meghwal on Tuesday. Sources cited the absence of home minister Amit Shah, who is on a two-day trip to Chhattisgarh, for the bills being deferred. P16

Snatcher held after shootout in city

Police arrested a snatcher following a shootout in Delhi's Aman Vihar late Saturday. Rajkumar, a resident of Sultanpuri, was involved in four cases of theft and snatching. When cornered, he fired at cops twice in a bid to flee. He took a bullet in his leg when they returned fire. P3

After HC rap, YEIDA chairman removed

Days after the Lucknow bench of Allahabad HC made critical observations regarding irregularities in YEIDA, UP govt removed its chairman Anil Kumar Sagar late Saturday. He was also relieved from his other charges and put on the waiting list for a new posting. P8

Sunil Pal case: Accused shot in leg

Aryan Karanwal, 26, main suspect in the recent abduction of Mumbai comedian-actor Sunil Pal, was shot in the leg after he allegedly tried to escape by snatching a cop's revolver and firing at the police team while being taken for a medical examination in Meerut Sunday. P12

IN THE COURTS

► Delhi court sentences man to 20-yr RI for sexual assault on a mentally challenged boy in 2014, says he doesn't deserve leniency | P 6
► Uttarakhand HC asks police to provide protection to OBC bride and SC groom after they allege threats from woman's family | P 11
► Karnataka court names baby 'Aryavardhana', reunites parents after they bicker over his name for more than 3 yrs, come close to divorce | P 12

Honeymooners, 2 others die in crash

A couple returning from their honeymoon were among four members of a family who lost their lives after their driver allegedly dozed off and the car collided head-on with a bus carrying Sabarimala pilgrims in Kerala's Pathanamthitta district early Sunday. P12

Scooterist hit by BEST bus, dies

A 25-year-old scooterist died after his two-wheeler was hit by a BEST bus at Govandi around 11.30pm on Saturday — the third fatal crash involving a BEST bus in the city in less than a week. The victim, Dikshit Vinod Rajput, worked as a peon at a college in Ghatkopar. TNN

UNCAPPED INDIANS MAKE A SPLASH IN WPL AUCTION

With most of the squads already set, 5 teams bid in a mini-auction on Sunday to fill 19 slots for 2025 Women's Premier League

TOTAL CRICKETERS AUCTIONED 19 **OVERSEAS PLAYERS** 5 **MONEY SPENT ₹9cr**

Snapped up by Gujarat Giants at ₹1.9cr, Mumbai batter **Simran Shaikh** is the costliest buy. Has a T20 strike rate of 127

All-rounder **Deandra Dottin**, 33, of WI Indies a veteran of 132 WT20Is, most expensive overseas player (₹1.6cr to Giants)

Hours after scoring 44 in India's win over Pak in U19 T20 Asia Cup, **G Kamalini**, 16-year-old TN wicketkeeper & batter, goes to Mumbai Indians for ₹1.6cr

Captain Heather Knight, seamer Lauren Bell, & former South Africa opener Lizelle Lee

► Most expensive WPL player ever: **Smriti Mandhana** (₹3.4cr to RCB in '23 auction)

FULL COVERAGE | P 19

► RCB, defending champs of WPL, snap up 23-year-old Uttarakhand all-rounder **Prema Rawat**, for ₹1.2cr
► No capped Indian, including veteran **Sneha Rana**, bought. No takers also for England

Give up violence, or face action: Shah to Maoists

HM Makes Appeal At Closing Of Bastar Olympics

Bharti.Jain@timesofindia.com

Jagdalpur: Home minister Amit Shah delivered a firm message to Left-wing extremists during the closing ceremony of Bastar Olympics Sunday, urging them to shun violence and choose rehabilitation.

► Give up the path of vio-

► **Atishi writes to Shah on Rohingya in city**, P 2

lence and we shall take care of your rehabilitation or ignore our appeal for surrender and face resolute action by the security forces... I appeal to you all with folded hands to surrender. Have trust in Prime Minister Narendra Modi and join the mainstream. If you give up arms, then your reha-



Atishi Shah is felicitated at Jagdalpur, Bastar, on Sunday

Security forces set up camp in Maoist commander's den

Anti-Naxals forces have set up a security camp in the den of Bastar's most-dreaded Maoist leader Madvi Hidma, commander of People's Liberation Guerrilla Army's 'Battalion No.1'. The base in Golla Konda on Bijapur-Sukma border was opened Saturday. Hidma is the mastermind of many attacks, including the 2010 Dantewada massacre in which 75 CRPF men were killed. P10

Naxals reaches their last bastion deep inside Abujhmad region in Chhattisgarh.

The action against Maoists is part of a decisive war to achieve the Modi govt's goal of a Left-wing extremism-free India by March 2026.

► **Fight intensified**, P 11

Kejriwal to contest New Delhi, Atishi Kalkaji in AAP final list

2 New Names In Roster Of 38, Other MLAs Repeated

Abhinav.Rajput @timesofindia.com

New Delhi: AAP on Sunday released its fourth and final list of 38 candidates for the upcoming Delhi Assembly elections. Party chief Arvind Kejriwal will contest from the prestigious New Delhi constituency while CM Atishi has fielded from Kalkaji.

Of the 38 candidates, 36 are sitting MLAs. The list includes health minister Saurabh Bharadwaj from Greater Kailash, Gopal Rai from Babarpur, Somnath Bharti from Malviya Nagar, Durgesh Pathak from Rajinder Nagar and Imran Hussain from Ballimaran. Satyendar Jain, who was in jail in a mo-

WHO'S CONTESTING FROM WHERE					
Arvind Kejriwal New Delhi	Atishi Kalkaji	Saurabh Bharadwaj Greater Kailash			
Gopal Rai Babarpur	Somnath Bharti Malviya Nagar	Satyendar Jain Shakur Basti			
Durgesh Pathak Rajinder Nagar	Imran Hussain Ballimaran	Pooja Naresh Balyan (wife of arrested MLA Naresh Balyan) Uttam Nagar			
Amanatullah Khan Okhla	Ramesh Pehlwan (joined party Sunday)	Kasturba Ngr			
Jarnail Singh Tilak Nagar	Som Dutt Sadar Bazar				

ney laundering case, will again contest from Shakur Basti.

After finalising the candidate in the political affairs committee, former CM Kejriwal said, "AAP has announced its candidates for all 70 seats. The party is contesting the elections with full confidence and thorough preparation. BJP is nowhere to be seen."

► **Faith in sr names**, P 2

B'luru techie suicide: Wife, 2 in-laws arrested on abetment charge

TIMES NEWS NETWORK

COMPLAINT BY BRO

► Techie Atul Subash died by suicide, leaving behind a 90-minute video, a 4-page handwritten note and about 44 pages stored digitally. He alleged harassment by his wife & in-laws

► On a complaint from Atul's brother, wife **Nikita Singhania** picked up from Gurgaon; her mother and brother from Prayagraj district

► Cops say Atul's internet history is being examined

her purported actions driving him to suicide. The IT professional, who works for an MNC, said she stayed apart from Atul for almost three years. "If I harassed him for money, why would I stay away?" investigators quoted her as saying.

► **4th suspect's role**, P 11

Suspect held for Parbhani riots dies in jail after 'chest pain'

Chhatrapati Sambhajinagar: A 35-year-old man arrested in one of seven cases of rioting and arson triggered by the alleged desecration of a replica of the Constitution in Maharashtra's Parbhani on Dec 11 died in judicial custody Sunday morning after reportedly complaining of severe chest pain, reports Mohammed Akhef.

DIG (Nanded) Shahaji Umaph told TOI Somnath Vyankat Suryavanshi was taken to the district civil hospital where he was declared dead on arrival. Nanalpath police station registered a case of accidental death that will be handed over to CID for further investigation. Parbhani SDPO Dinkar Dambarle said news of Somnath's death came around 7am.

► **Write to college**, P 11

Cleanest Dec first half in city, and coldest in 14 yrs

TIMES NEWS NETWORK

REASON: WIND

Strong northwesterlies have kept air clean & night temps low

Lowest Dec 1-15 Numbers

2019 AVG AQI Very Poor 321

2017 Very Poor 304

2022 Very Poor 301

2024 Poor 238

Avg Min Temp (°C, since 2011)

10 9.1 9.1 8.4 8.2

2018 2019 2020 2021 2022 2023

The main reason for both relatively clean air and colder nights — is strong northwesterly winds that have persisted for most days of Dec so far.

► **Averaged over 300**, P 5

US envoy: B'desh minorities must be protected

Expressing concern about the persecution of religious minorities in Bangladesh, US ambassador to India Eric Garcetti said on Sunday that Washington was closely monitoring the situation. "Protecting religious minorities must be a priority, regardless of the country they reside in," he said, adding US had been engaging with India and Bangladesh "to ensure that the voices of these minorities are heard and their rights protected." P10

PM urges states to lead reforms for ease of biz

PM Modi on Sunday asked state chief secretaries to lead in bringing reforms for ease of business and reducing compliance burdens to grab opportunities of overseas investment coming to India. Addressing chief secretaries at a three-day conference in Delhi, he also asked them to explore 'viability gap funding for recycling of e-waste. P16

Ustad Zakir Hussain in 'serious condition' in US, tributes pour in

My Uncle's Alive, Needs Prayers, Says His Nephew



The tabla maestro is admitted in a San Francisco hospital

► **Tributes flood social media**, P 16

ons of fans prayed across the world for the recovery of the 73-year-old ustad of percussion, social media was abuzz with rumours of his passing away late in the night.

Among those who posted tributes on X were politicians, industrialists, sports persons and film personalities. However, his nephew Amer

Stop blaming EVMs when you lose, Omar tells Congress

New Delhi: J&K CM Omar Abdullah's dismissal of Congress' allegations of tampering with EVMs and his assertions that he has never blamed the machines for election outcomes put his ally in the state and INDIA bloc on a sticky wicket.

Congress has been stepping up its attack on EVMs since its poll losses in Haryana and Maharashtra.

"When you get a hundred plus members of Parliament using the same EVMs, and you celebrate that as sort of a victory for your party, you can't then a few months later turn around and say... we don't like these EVMs because now the election results aren't going the way we would like them to," Abdullah said in a PTI interview. TNN

► **'Has to be earned'**, P 16

Fadnavis' Maha team: 39 sworn in, 12 previous ministers dropped

Vaibhav.Ganapure @timesofindia.com

MLAs

Previous Assembly	New Assembly
Shiv Sena 40	57
BJP 106	132
NCP 38	41

Ministers

Previous Mahayuti Ministry*	New Mahayuti Ministry
INCLUDING CM Ek Nath Shinde	Dy CM Ek Nath Shinde
Dy CM Devendra Fadnavis	CM Devendra Fadnavis
Dy CM Ajit Pawar	Dy CM Ajit Pawar
All were Cabinet Ministers	minister Devendra Fadnavis and his two deputies Ek Nath Shinde and Ajit Pawar.

Nagpur: The much-anticipated Maharashtra cabinet expansion unfolded at a grand ceremony in Nagpur's Raj Bhavan on Sunday with 39 ministers, including six junior ministers, sworn in by govern-

► **Ajit Pawar hints at 2.5-yr terms for ministers**, P 14

nor C P Radhakrishnan, signalling the first major event for the BJP-Shiv Sena-NCP Mahayuti alliance after its win.

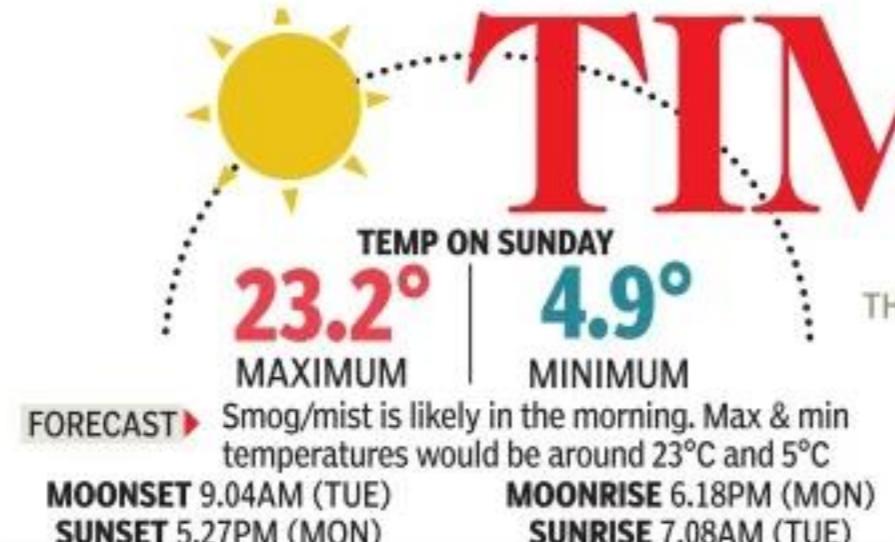
Twelve ministers from the previous govt, notably forest minister Sudhir Mungantiwar and senior NCP leaders

Chhagan Bhujbal and Dilip Walse Patil were dropped. The alliance left just one seat vacant in its jumbo cabinet — 43 members, including chief

minister Devendra Fadnavis and his two deputies Ek Nath Shinde and Ajit Pawar.



Here's why
urban trees
need regular
pruning | 4



Cold wave in
parts of city,
air quality
worsens | 5



City sees four-fold increase in
foreigners residing illegally | 9

In direct fight with BJP on 50 seats, says Cong

New Delhi: Congress is in a direct fight with BJP on 45-50 seats out of the 70 Assembly seats in Delhi, while AAP could emerge as the main rival in around nine constituencies, former MP and Congress candidate from New Delhi seat Sandeep Dikshit said on Sunday.

Talking about the possibility of facing Kejriwal in the Assembly elections, Dikshit said it will be a good contest that shall give him an opportunity to question the former CM on his lack of contribution to the constituency.

"I will present my report card as a former MP who has worked in the city for 10 years and question his performance," he said, expecting a high percentage of voting in the constituency.

Reflecting on the debate on the Constitution in Parliament over the past two days, Dikshit said the govt used attention diverting tactics by recounting failures of other parties rather than celebrating 75 years of the statute.

He slammed Prime Minister Narendra Modi for talking little about the Constitution and focusing more on the performance of previous Congress-led govs during the debate in Parliament.

Modi on Saturday tore into the Gandhi family and Congress for repeatedly amending the Constitution, alleging that once they "tasted blood" they wanted to do it again and again. IANS

In 4th List, AAP Places Faith In Senior Names

In All, 20 Sitting Legislators Have Failed To Secure Tickets

AAP READIES ITS ARSENAL FOR POLLS

38 candidates named in final list by AAP, 36 of them are sitting MLAs

With this list, AAP has declared names for all 70 seats in the capital

KEY PLAYERS

Arvind Kejriwal, New Delhi | The AAP chief defeated the then CM, late Sheila Dikshit, from New Delhi constituency in 2013 assembly polls by over 25,000 votes. In 2015, he again won from New Delhi, defeating the BJP candidate by 31,000 votes. His victory margin reduced to 2,000 votes in 2020 polls. This time, Kejriwal is pitted against BJP's Parvesh Verma, son of former CM Sahib Singh Verma, and Sandeep Dikshit, son of Sheila Dikshit.

Atishi, Kalkaji | The AAP functionary stepped in as CM in Sept after Arvind Kejriwal resigned owing to his incarceration in the excise policy case. The incumbent MLA from Kalkaji will be fighting her second Vidhan Sabha polls from the constituency. She also fought the Lok Sabha polls in 2019 but lost to cricketer Gautam Gambhir from East Delhi.

Satyendar Jain, Shakur Basti | He was elected to Delhi assembly from Shakur Basti in Feb 2015 and held several portfolios as minister, such as health, industries, home, PWD, power and urban development. In jail for over 18 months in a money laundering case lodged by ED, Jain walked out of Tihar on bail in Oct.

Durgesh Pathak, Rajendra Nagar | In 2022, Pathak won the Rajendra Nagar bypoll by defeating BJP's Rajesh Bhatia by over 11,000 votes. He was the party's co-convenor in Delhi during 2015 elections and co-in-charge for Punjab ahead of 2017 assembly polls.

Among those who have got a ticket are Naresh Balyan's wife Posh Balyan, alias Pooja Balyan, from Uttam Nagar seat. Balyan was arrested earlier this month for alleged links with gangster Kapil Sangwan

Saurabh Bharadwaj, GK | The health minister in Delhi govt, he has represented Greater Kailash constituency since 2013. As a prominent figure in the party and govt, he actively challenged Raj Niwas on multiple matters, particularly on conflicts with the bureaucracy.

Gopal Rai, Babarpur | Incumbent MLA and among the founding members of the party, Rai is a member of the political affairs committee of AAP and a cabinet minister. He is minister for employment, development, labour, general administration and irrigation. Rai is also the convenor of Delhi state unit of AAP, and a member of the party's national executive.

Somnath Bharti, Malviya Nagar | A lawyer and politician, Bharti has won back-to-back elections from Malviya Nagar since 2013 Delhi assembly elections. He was appointed minister for law, administrative reforms in Arvind Kejriwal-led Delhi govt that lasted only 49 days. He also contested Lok Sabha polls this year from new Delhi but lost.

CANDIDATES IN 4th LIST

Constituency	Candidate
Burari	Sanjeev Jha
Badli	Ajesh Yadav
Rithala	Mohinder Goyal
Bawana	Jai Bhagwan
Sultan Pur Majra	Mukesh Kumar Ahlawat
Nangloi Jat	Raghuvir Shokeen
Shahimar Bagh	Bandana Kumari
Shakur Basti	Satyendar Kumar Jain
Ballimaran	Imran Hussain
Sadar Bazar	Som Dutt
Tri Nagar	Preeti Tomar
Wazirpur	Rajesh Gupta
Model Town	Akhilesh Pati Tripathi
Matia Mahal	Shoaib Iqbal
Kondli	Kuldeep Kumar
Babarpur	Gopal Rai
Gokalpur	Surendra Kumar
Karol Bagh	Vishesh Ravi
Moti Nagar	Shiv Charan Goel
Rajouri Garden	Dhanwati Chandela
Hari Nagar	Raj Kumari Dhillon
Tilak Nagar	Jarnail Singh
Vikaspuri	Mahinder Yadav
Uttam Nagar	Posh Balyan*
Dwarka	Vinay Mishra
Delhi Cantonment	Virender Singh Kadian
Rajendra Nagar	Durgesh Pathak
New Delhi	Arvind Kejriwal
Kasturba Nagar	Ramesh Pehalwan
Malviya Nagar	Somnath Bharti
RK Puram	Pramila Tokas
Mehruli	Naresh Yadav
Ambedkar Nagar	Ajay Dutt
Sangam Vihar	Dinesh Mohaniya
Greater Kailash	Saurabh Bharadwaj
Kalkaji	Atishi
Tughlakabad	Sahi Ram
Okhla	Amanatullah Khan

*Pooja Naresh Balyan

Kondli, where he is the incumbent MLA.

The latest list also has a few names who have been at the centre of controversy recently. For the Uttam Nagar constituency, AAP has picked Posh Balyan alias Pooja Naresh Balyan, wife of Naresh Balyan who was held recently for alleged links to gangster Kapil Sangwan. For the Mehruli constituency, the party has retained Naresh Yadav, who was recently sentenced by a Punjab court in a Quran desecration case. In Kasturba Nagar, AAP has replaced Madan Lal, the sitting MLA, with newcomer Ramesh Pehalwan, who joined the party on Sunday.

AAP had swept the previous Assembly elections, winning 62 seats out of 70. BJP had won the remaining eight seats.

Atishi writes to Shah on Rohingya as AAP, BJP continue to spar

TIMES NEWS NETWORK

New Delhi: Chief minister Atishi on Sunday wrote to Union home minister Amit Shah on Sunday, accusing BJP-led Centre of settling "a large number of illegal Rohingya" in different parts of the city. Meanwhile, responding to AAP's claims that settling refugees here was a "conscious decision" of BJP-led NDA govt, Union minister Hardeep Singh Puri accused the party of indulging in "politics of diversion, false narratives and half-truths". BJP had earlier complained to Election Commission about illegal Rohingya and Bangladeshi registered as voters in Delhi "at the behest of AAP".

Citing two tweets by Puri in 2022, Atishi alleged that the Union govt settled a large number of illegal Rohingya in different parts of the capital by keeping the people and govt of Delhi in the dark. "This seems to be going on for the past several years. On Aug 17, 2022, Union urban development minister Hardeep Puri published two tweets that clearly show that it is a conscious decision and policy of BJP govt to settle these refugees in Delhi," she alleged in the letter to Shah.

"From the post of Puri, it seems they were settled into EWS flats of Bakkarwala. These flats were meant for the poor people of Delhi. It appears that the rights and facilities meant for the people of Delhi are being given away to migrants," Atishi claimed.

Puri hit back with an X post on Sunday saying, "AAP continues with its politics of diversion, false narratives and half-truths. Facts and actual position on illegal Rohingya migrants were immediately clarified through a tweet on the same day, which they selectively chose to ignore, and continue to do so." He added: "No Rohingya migrant has been given a govt house in Delhi. In fact, contrary to the drummed-up AAP rhetoric, they are actually the ones who play host to the illegal Rohingya in Delhi, have settled them in large numbers, give them electricity and water, and even pay them Rs 10,000," he alleged.

MP Basuri Swaraj said that the letter written by Atishi was proof of her administrative and political immaturity. "No Rohingya illegal migrant in Delhi has been allotted an EWS house. MHA clarified this matter in its press release on Aug 17, 2022. If, as CM, she is unaware of these facts, it is a matter of serious concern. And if she is aware, I appeal to her to stop spreading misinformation and creating divisions," she said.

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Atishi Chief Minister, Delhi



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Narendra Modi
Prime Minister

AAP's 4th list symbol of 'corruption' and 'misgovernance': BJP

TIMES NEWS NETWORK

New Delhi: BJP on Sunday called AAP's fourth list of candidates for Delhi assembly polls a symbol of "corruption and misgovernance". BJP's reaction came after AAP convener Arvind Kejriwal took a swipe at the saffron outfit for lacking a "CM face" and "vision".

Earlier in the day, AAP released its final and fourth list of 38 candidates for the polls due in Feb next year. BJP is yet to declare its candidates for the elections to the 70-member Delhi Assembly.

Kejriwal, in a post on X, said AAP was contesting the elections with full confidence and preparation. "BJP is missing. They have no CM face, no team, no planning, and no vision for Delhi. They have only one slogan, only one policy, and only one mission - 'Remove Kejriwal'. Ask them what they did in five years, and they reply, 'Kejriwal ko banhu gaali di', he claimed in the post.

Kejriwal's claim that he had development, vision and a capable team was utterly "ridiculous", Delhi BJP president Virendra Sachdeva said. "It would not be an exaggeration to say that Kejriwal's corrupt vision and teamwork have made Delhi a model of water and air pollution, dilapidated roads and sewers, crumbling transport, and dysfunctional health and education systems.

Snatcher shot in leg during encounter with cops, held

New Delhi: A snatcher was shot at during an encounter with police in Aman Vihar on Saturday.

The accused, identified as Rajkumar, a resident of Sultanpur, was involved in two snatching incidents that had occurred within 20 minutes. One of the accused, Rohit alias Datla, was arrested earlier. Interrogation revealed the name of Rajkumar as his accomplice in snatchings in the area.

Police received information on Saturday that the suspect would meet his associate at Central Park, Aman Vihar, late at night. A trap was laid, and a person was seen entering the park

SACHDEVA SAYS
In the last 10 years, Kejriwal's shallow vision and team have turned Delhi into the most polluted capital in the world

The biggest achievements of this teamwork are 'Sheesh Mahal' bungalow and liquor scam," he alleged.

The people of Delhi had made up their minds to teach AAP and its leader Kejriwal a political lesson in the Feb 2025 assembly polls, Sachdeva claimed. "In the last 10 years, Kejriwal's shallow vision and team have turned Delhi into the most polluted capital in the world. The Yamuna resembles a drain more than a river," Sachdeva alleged.

He claimed that the fourth list of AAP candidates exposed Kejriwal as a "symbol of corruption and misgovernance" as tainted leaders were rewarded with tickets to fight the elections. When Kejriwal announced the first 32 candidates for the assembly elections, it seemed that he was being cautious and putting the burden of his govt's anti-incumbency on the MLAs, Sachdeva added. However, the fourth candidate list clearly revealed that in the first three lists, only those MLAs who could not negotiate with the party were sidelined, he alleged.

Party Functionaries Visit Nearly 1,100 Clusters Over Weekend

TIMES NEWS NETWORK

New Delhi: Delhi BJP functionaries on the intervening night of Sunday and Monday stayed overnight in 1,100 slum clusters to interact with slum dwellers ahead of the Assembly elections, the party said in a statement.

"BJP leaders are directly interacting with people, especially the youth, in slum clusters to understand their problems and solutions directly from them," said Virendra Sachdeva, who stayed in a slum in Jhilmil Colony. "We understood the challenges faced by slum residents. We are committed to resolving the problems and ensuring that the upcoming BJP govt in Delhi will improve their lives through DUSIB," he said.

Apart from Sachdeva, national general secretary Dushyant Gautam visited Aram Bagh. Leader of Opposition in Delhi Assembly Vijender Gupta visited Badli Industrial Area. MP Ramveer Singh Bidhuri visited VP Camp in Tughlakabad. MP Yogendra Chandolia visited HMB Jhuggi. MP Kamaljeet Sahrawat visited Matiala Goyal Darya. MP Praveen Khandelwal visited Shriram Chowk in the



Delhi BJP chief Virendra Sachdeva with slum dwellers

Wazirpur industrial area. Bansuri Swaraj visited Bindas Camp in GK.

BJP functionary Kailash Gehlot visited the CISF camp in Bijwasan.

The jhuggi clusters, which have been among the biggest beneficiaries of the free electricity scheme of AAP govt, in the past Vidhan Sabha polls have been an AAP stronghold. The BJP is hoping to make a dent this time.

A senior BJP functionary said: "In the Lok Sabha elections, we got a lot of support from slum areas as well."

Sachdeva said BJP is the

first party whose leaders have been directly communicating with people, especially the youth, in all the jhuggi clusters in Delhi for the last five months, understanding their problems and solutions.

He said that party workers functioning as jhuggi vistars (volunteers) understood the life and problems of the residents of the jhuggi clusters. "We are participants in their lives, and the upcoming BJP govt in Delhi will ease their lives through DUSIB."

BJP functionary Dushyant Gautam said the leadership, from Jana Sangh founder

Pandit Deendayal Upadhyaya to Prime Minister Shri Narendra Modi, has always been dedicated to the principles of Antyodaya. The govt that we will form in Delhi in Feb 2025 will serve the last person living in jhuggis with the spirit of Antyodaya, he said.

Leader of Opposition in Delhi Assembly Vijendra Gupta said: "We have not only connected with our jhuggi residents for votes but also to bring about a change in their family life and provide quality education to their children."

MP Ramveer Singh Bidhuri said that BJP believes in improving, not dismantling, the jhuggi clusters. Our upcoming govt will create a separate department to ensure cleanliness in the jhuggi settlements.

AAP said, "Arvind Kejriwal, who left his prestigious IRS career to serve Delhi's jhuggis, has transformed the lives of residents by providing quality education, healthcare, free pilgrimages for seniors, free bus rides for women, and free electricity. Under his governance, children from jhuggis are breaking barriers... In contrast, the BJP engages in jhuggi tourism, feasting with residents one day and demolishing their homes the next."

Dedicated bus lanes planned to decongest Kashmere Gate ISBT

TIMES NEWS NETWORK

New Delhi: Public Works Department plans to start work on developing dedicated bus lanes and traffic control measures outside Kashmere Gate ISBT under Hanuman Setu flyover.

Earlier in May, a traffic trial was carried out in the area where temporary measures were taken by placing barriers in such a way that buses did not directly merge with cars while exiting the bus terminal on Ring Road. The area is prone to traffic congestion even during non-peak hours because of the buses entering and exiting the bus terminal.

According to officials, it has been suggested by CRRI that the unused footpath area may be recovered and used for the movement of buses bound towards Pataleshwar Mandir. Also, a layout is being prepared for directing buses towards Shastri Park DMRC depot on Grand Trunk Road so that congestion is not caused at the spot.

Kashmere Gate bus terminal, situated close to Civil Lines where residences of CM, LG and cabinet ministers are located, experiences heavy traffic congestion daily. Lala Hardev Marg, the main road running along Kashmere Gate Metro Station and ISBT, is where the Yudhistir Setu, coming from east Delhi areas such as Shahdara and Dilshad Garden, merges. The road also caters to trading areas, resulting in the movement of commercial vehicles stopping for loading and unloading of goods.

AAP, BJP making false promises to slum residents: Cong

New Delhi: Delhi Pradesh Congress Committee president Devender Yadav said on Sunday that AAP and BJP, who had both ignored slum dwellers over the past 10 years, were making false promises to them with the intent of winning their votes. He said that residents of jhuggi jhopri (JJ) clusters had resolved during the party's month-long Delhi nyay yatra that they would not vote for these parties but only for Congress in the upcoming Delhi Assembly elections. They have realised that Congress always protects their interests and welfare, he said. IANS

on a bike. When cops tried to catch him, he fired a gunshot to escape. The police team fired a warning shot in the air; but he fired another shot. In self-defence, cops fired a shot that hit him in the right leg. He was taken to hospital for treatment.

Rajkumar has a history of involvement in four cases of theft and snatching. A school dropout, he entered the life of crime in 2015. Unemployed, he committed crimes to sustain himself. A country-made pistol, two live cartridges, a stolen bike from Punjabi Bagh, and four empty cartridge shells were recovered from the scene. TNN

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CLEAN, GREEN SAFE, SECURE NOIDA

Why This Growth Story Needs Checking

Tree Pruning Key To Safety Of People & Property, But Must Be Done Scientifically

Priyangi.Agarwal
@timesofindia.com

New Delhi: Regular pruning of trees in cities is an important practice to ensure the health, safety and aesthetic appeal of urban trees. With Delhi High Court imposing a ban on pruning activities across the city until the forest department establishes a monitoring system for approved trimming, experts said that urban trees, unlike their forest counterparts, required regular trimming due to potential risks of heavy branches falling and causing harm to people or damaging property in populated city areas.

Globally, trees in urban areas are regularly pruned to maintain proper health and longevity. For instance, Singapore's National Parks Board (NParks) is known for its rigorous tree pruning schedule for trees in urban forests. In China, the 'topiary' practice is adopted, in which trees are clipped or pruned into decorative shapes, especially in temples and historical parks. Similarly, for trees in public spaces, Japan uses the traditional practice of 'Niwaki' to prune trees to give them a natural-looking shape.

Silviculturist Vijay Dhawan, a retired scientist from Forest Research Institute, said pruning of trees in residential colonies and roadsides was vital procedure. "Trees in residential areas that are not pruned cause obstruction to the buildings, and damaged or dead branches can fall on passers-by or objects. Similarly, trees on roadsides should be pruned to ensure that they do not cause hindrance to traffic lights or hoardings giving directions or other important information," said Dhawan.

He, however, added that pruning of trees should be done in the presence of experts or officials. "The frequency of pruning of trees depends on the species. Trees like Eucalyptus, which grow fast, are pruned every year. Slow-growing trees like Jamun and Babul have to be pruned once in three to four years, while fruit-bearing trees like mango have to be pruned when fruits have grown," said Dhawan.

Praveen Verma, a scientist at Forest Research Institute, said if trees were not pruned, the uneven growth could be dangerous for life and property. "Apart from enhancing the

IT'S NOT JUST ABOUT TREE HEALTH. HERE'S WHAT CAN BE DONE

Pruning is selective removal of dead or living parts of branches from a tree. It targets diseased, damaged, dead or unwanted branches to ensure trees remain healthy

Why pruning is necessary

Tree health | Removes dead, diseased or damaged branches, promoting healthy growth and longevity

Safety | Prevents dead or damaged branches from falling off on people and properties; makes road signage/traffic lights clearly visible

Tree structure | Makes the tree stronger by maintaining balanced growth and weight. Reduces the risk of trees getting uprooted during storms or heavy rain

Aesthetics | Enhances the visual appeal of urban landscapes due to proper shape, size and appearance of trees



Key practices of effective pruning

Engage arborists | Qualified arborists should be involved to ensure that pruning is done correctly and reducing damage to trees

Community Engagement | Arborists should be engaged to conduct workshops for the public on correct practices of pruning. Public should alert authorities if any damage is being caused to trees

Regular pruning schedules | Regular schedule of tree pruning should be maintained

Best practices in other countries

Singapore | National Parks Board (NParks) is known for its rigorous tree pruning schedule, ensuring healthy and longevity of trees in urban forest

United States | Arborists use techniques like crown reduction and selective pruning

Japan | Using traditional practice of Niwaki, arborists prune trees in gardens and public spaces

China | Adopts topiary practice involving clipping or pruning plants into decorative shapes, especially in temples and historical parks

Australia | Urban forestry guidelines focus on regular tree pruning

Canada | Arborists emphasise pruning to maintain tree health

Other benefits

- Stimulates growth of new, fruit-bearing branches
- Improves sunlight penetration
- Improves air quality and mitigates urban heat island effect as healthy trees absorb pollutants and trap heats
- Maintains trees' ecological functions, supports birds and ecosystem

aesthetics of the area, the pruning of trees is important for the good health of trees. After trees are pruned, a solution is also applied to trimmed branches to prevent diseases or pests," said Verma.

CR Babu, professor emeritus and head of Centre for Environment Management of Degraded Ecosystems (CMEDE), said trees in forests didn't require pruning. "For regulating the symmetry of the canopy of isolated trees in human settlements, tree pruning is required. In the absence of proper symmetry, a tree cannot stand firmly and may fall due to storms or

heavy rainfall," he said. Babu recommended that arboriculturists be engaged to ensure that trees were not pruned in an unscientific manner. "In the name of pruning, people end up damaging trees. However, arboriculturists can educate when to prune, which branches to cut, and can create guidelines. Even trees should not be pruned in Dec, and that should be done during the last showers of the monsoon season in Sept or Oct," said Babu.

In Delhi, many trees fell when strong winds blew in the city or during heavy rain. In many cases, people were hurt or vehicles damaged. In July last year, a 35-year-old labourer allegedly died after a tree fell on him at Asiad Village.

Delhi HC on Friday criticised Delhi forest department for not monitoring the pruning of trees after granting permission to ensure that directives are followed. However, the forest official said the department didn't have the manpower to monitor all trees.

"After we receive a request for tree pruning, a forest staff visits the site to ascertain if pruning is required or not and how much a tree should be pruned. It is the responsibility of the land-owning agency to ensure that all guidelines are followed at the time of pruning. The forest department has around 240 forest guards who also have to protect forests and wildlife, and they cannot patrol across the city to monitor the pruning process," said a forest official. The official added that if there was any violation, the tree officer sent a notice to the violator and directed them to do compensatory plantation or levy a fine.

Praveen Verma, a scientist at Forest Research Institute, said if trees were not pruned, the uneven growth could be dangerous for life and property. "Apart from enhancing the

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Uttarakhand Tourism

For residents, it's a constant shuttle between depts

Vibha.Sharma
@timesofindia.com

New Delhi: The arrival of winter brings heightened anxiety among residents about inadequate sunlight reaching their homes due to overgrown tree branches. Their concerns have only grown with Delhi HC putting a temporary stop to any kind of tree pruning in the city.

The court's decision followed an incident where MCD carried out excessive pruning in Jangpura, despite having permission only for light trimming of 40 trees from deputy conservator of forests, south zone. Kapil Kakkar, president of Jangpura Extension, expressed disappointment: "The work had started after pursuing the matter for so long with forest department and MCD and now everything has been put on hold again. We wrote to MCD on Aug 25 about branches hanging over vehicles and electric wires, and how these needed to be pruned heavily to avoid any eventualities. After a survey, horticulture department wrote to forest department for approval for light pruning in Nov. The work had hardly started on the ground on Friday and, on Saturday, this development took place. The court's decision will make things really difficult for all."

Residents expressed frustration over delayed MCD pruning operations due to complex procedures and reluctant forest department authorisations. Purushottam Sachdeva from Lajpat Nagar I Block C said: "I got at least 15 applications from residents, including senior citizens, about extended branches hindering sunlight to their flats in extreme winter days. After I shared these applications with MCD officials via our councillor, they stated on Saturday that a joint survey will be done to ascertain the latitude, longitude of trees or branches before moving the application to forest department."

A forest official explained their strict adherence to regulations, noting that proper surveillance and other material." Residents also express concerns about tree stability issues arising from insufficient maintenance, noting that untrained growth affects root stability and trunk positioning, leading to tree falls during adverse weather conditions.

Liquor vends on green belts: NGT notice to Haryana govt

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Gurgaon: The National Green Tribunal this month issued notices to Haryana govt, state's pollution control board and authorities in Faridabad over a petition that alleges illegal liquor vendors have set up shops on green belts in the NCR city.

The direction came on a plea by a Faridabad resident Narendra Sirohi, who said these encroachments should be immediately removed and environmental compensation should be sought from the shop owners.

"These shop owners have constructed wine/liquor shops and taverns (ahata/drinking places) without procuring the requisite permissions from relevant authorities. Despite numerous complaints to the authorities, no action has been taken to address the issue," the petition said.

Hearing the case on Dec 4, the bench of NGT chairperson Arun Kumar Tyagi and expert member Dr A Senthil Vel said notices must be issued within a fortnight to Haryana government, Faridabad deputy commissioner, Haryana State Pollution Control Board (HSPCB), municipal corporation of Faridabad, Haryana Water Resources Authority, department of industries and commerce, and the forest department.

"Prima facie, the averments made in the application raise substantial questions relating to environment arising out of the implementation of the Acts specified in Schedule I to the National Green Tribunal Act, 2010," the bench said.

It added: "Let notice of the application along with documents attached with the same be issued to the respondents requiring them to file their reply/response at least one week before the next date of hearing." The order was uploaded on Saturday, Dec 14.

The bench will take up the petition next on Mar 27, 2025.

Asked about NGT's order, a senior official of MCF said the corporation has received complaints about encroachments in green belts. "We will conduct a survey of the areas and will soon remove the encroachments," the official said.

KIND ATTENTION

RESIDENT WELFARE ASSOCIATIONS/ BUILDERS/ PROJECT PROPONENTS/ NGOs/ CITIZENS

AVOID OPEN BURNING
AVOID AIR POLLUTION

PROVIDE ELECTRIC HEATERS
AND WARM CLOTHING TO
SECURITY AND OTHER STAFF



- ✓ Avoid open burning of biomass & solid waste
- ✓ Do not use coal and wood for heating purpose

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