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Bengaluru Family Murder Case: All Seven Bodies Recovered From Forest Locations 02

Tata Steel Q2 Profit Rises 18.2% As Indian Operations Drive Growth 03



Brent Crude Suffers Historic 17% Weekly Plunge As Iran War Fears Ease 04





NEWS BRIEF

Former Bangladesh PM Sheikh Hasina Seeks Fresh Passport



Former Bangladesh Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina has reportedly sought a fresh Bangladeshi passport and national identity card from the Bangladesh High Commission in New Delhi, marking a significant development in her prolonged stay in India. The request, made through her London-based legal representatives, is reportedly connected to her stated intention to return to Bangladesh in December 2026 and appear before a court. Hasina has been living in India since August 5, 2024, when she left Bangladesh following the student-led uprising that brought an end to her government.

According to reports, lawyers from the London-based legal firm Matrix Chambers sent a communication to Preeti Rahman, the acting High Commissioner of Bangladesh in New Delhi, requesting the issuance of fresh travel and identity documents. The lawyers reportedly referred to the cancellation of Hasina's existing passport and national identity card by the authorities.

Modi's 'Dimagi Naxals' Remark Sparks



Political tensions intensified in India following Prime Minister Narendra Modi's remarks about the continued influence of what he described as "Dimagi Naxals", prompting a sharp response from Congress leader Rahul Gandhi. A separate controversy also emerged after Congress president Mallikarjun Kharge described Diwali as an "Eid of happiness", drawing criticism from the Bharatiya Janata Party (BJP). The two exchanges triggered a fresh round of political accusations, with leaders from both parties defending their statements and questioning the intentions of their opponents.

The first controversy began on November 8, when Modi celebrated Diwali with security personnel involved in anti-Maoist operations in Chhattisgarh's Bastar region. Addressing the personnel, the Prime Minister described the festival as particularly significant, saying that against Naxalism.

PM Modi Speaks With Zelenskyy As India Offers Support For Ukraine Peace



NEW DELHI: Prime Minister Narendra Modi held a telephone conversation with Ukrainian President Volodymyr Zelenskyy on Monday, November 9, 2026, reaffirming India's commitment to supporting diplomatic efforts aimed at ending the ongoing Russia-Ukraine conflict. The discussion focused on the latest developments in the war, humanitarian concerns, international peace initiatives and opportunities to strengthen bilateral relations between India and Ukraine. Modi reiterated that dialogue and diplomacy remain the way forward for resolving the conflict and conveyed India's readiness to contribute to all efforts directed towards a peaceful settlement.

According to an official statement from the Prime Minister's Office, Zelenskyy shared his assessment of recent developments related to the conflict during the conversation. The Ukrainian President briefed Modi on the diplomatic situation and the challenges facing Kyiv as it continues to pursue negotiations. Modi reaffirmed India's human-centric approach and emphasised the importance of finding a peaceful solution that addresses the humanitarian consequences of the prolonged war.

Following the conversation, Modi described the exchange as productive in a post on social media platform X. He said the two leaders reviewed their wide-ranging bilateral cooperation and agreed to further strengthen India-Ukraine relations. The Prime Minister also thanked Zelenskyy for sharing his perspectives on the ongoing conflict, its humanitarian dimensions and the different initiatives being pursued to restore peace. He reiterated India's willingness to contribute in every possible way towards a peaceful resolution.

RBI Extends Abhyudaya Cooperative Bank Board Supersession



Mumbai: The Reserve Bank of India (RBI) has extended the supersession of the board of directors of Mumbai-based Abhyudaya Co-operative Bank for another year, continuing its direct regulatory oversight of the lender amid concerns over corporate governance. The extension will take effect from November 24, 2026, and remain in force for a further 12 months. The central bank announced the decision on November 9, following a review of the bank's administrative and governance arrangements, stating that continuing the existing supervisory structure was necessary in the public interest.

The RBI had originally superseded the bank's board on November 24, 2023, for a period of one year after identifying material concerns arising from poor governance standards. The decision was taken under Section 36AAA, read with Section 56, of the Banking Regulation Act, 1949, which provides the regulatory framework for such action involving cooperative banks. The move placed the bank's management under an RBI-appointed administrator rather than its elected board of directors.

The initial period of supersession was extended in November 2024 for another year, followed by a second extension effective November 24, 2025. The latest decision marks the third consecutive annual extension since the original intervention. The RBI said that, after reviewing the situation, it considered it necessary to continue the arrangement beyond the close of business on November 23, 2026. The regulator's latest order therefore ensures that the bank will remain under the existing administrative structure until November 2027. Under the latest arrangement, Satya Prakash Pathak will continue as the Administrator responsible for managing the bank's affairs. Pathak, a former Chief General Manager of the State Bank of India, was appointed when the RBI first superseded the board in 2023. He will continue to receive assistance from the existing Committee of Advisors, comprising Venkatesh Hegde, Devendra Kumar and Suhas Gokhale.

Supreme Court Rules Commercial Farming Cannot Claim Protection Under Forest Rights Act

Supreme Court Excludes Commercial Farming From Forest Rights Act Protection



NEW DELHI: The Supreme Court of India has clarified that commercial cultivation of crops inside reserved forest areas cannot, by itself, be treated as a protected forest right under the Forest Rights Act (FRA), 2006. The observation came in proceedings concerning extensive silk cotton cultivation in the Megamalai forest region of Tamil Nadu, which forms part of the ecologically sensitive Agasthyamalai landscape. A Bench of Justices Vikram Nath and Sandeep Mehta said that planned or commercially promoted cultivation is fundamentally different from the traditional collection of naturally occurring forest produce recognised under the law. In its order dated November 6, 2026, the Court examined whether silk cotton cultivation could be classified as minor forest produce under Section 3(1)(c) of the FRA. The provision recognises the rights of eligible forest-dwelling communities to collect, use and dispose of minor forest produce traditionally gathered from forest areas. However, the Bench observed that this protection cannot automatically be extended to planned commercial cultivation of crops. It stated that commercial farming cannot be recognised as a forest right to justify occupation or continued presence within forest land.

The proceedings arose from concerns over encroachments, cultivation activities and ecological degradation in the Megamalai forest region. The Tamil Nadu government had argued that silk cotton cultivation had historical connections with the area and that government authorities had encouraged the activity in the past. The State also sought consideration of the crop as traditional minor forest produce. The Supreme Court, however, found that the material placed before it did not establish that cultivated silk cotton had been officially recognised as minor applicable forest laws.

Delhi Notifies New Public Services Law To Penalise Officials For Delays



NEW DELHI: The Delhi government has notified a new law aimed at ensuring the timely delivery of public services and fixing direct accountability on government officials responsible for unnecessary administrative delays. The Delhi (Right of Citizens to Time-Bound and Easy Delivery of Services) Act, 2026, introduces financial penalties, digital application tracking and an automatic grievance escalation mechanism. The legislation is intended to make government departments more transparent, responsive and citizen-focused by ensuring that eligible applicants receive services within officially prescribed deadlines.

The new law, notified on November 9, replaces the earlier Delhi Right to Citizen to Time Bound Delivery of Services Act, 2011. Under the updated framework, the government will identify the public services covered by the legislation and specify the maximum time allowed for delivering each service. A designated officer will be made responsible for handling every notified service, making it easier to identify the official accountable whenever an application remains pending beyond the prescribed period. One of the most significant provisions is the introduction of monetary penalties for officials who fail to deliver services within the stipulated timeframe without a valid reason.

BJP And Congress Clash Over Kharge's Diwali Greeting Sparks Political Storm



NEW DELHI: A fresh political controversy erupted between the Bharatiya Janata Party (BJP) and the Congress after Congress president Mallikarjun Kharge described Diwali as "Khushiyon Ka Eid" while extending festive greetings to the people. The remark, made during his interaction with reporters over the weekend, triggered sharp criticism from BJP leaders, who accused the Congress chief of disrespecting Hindu traditions and attempting to engage in appeasement politics. The exchange quickly developed into a wider political confrontation over religion, cultural identity and the language used by political leaders during major festivals.

Kharge made the statement while wishing people across the country on the occasion of Diwali. He described the festival as one of India's major celebrations and said it was a festival of happiness that brought people together. Using the phrase "Khushiyon Ka Eid".

Raiganj Rape And Murder Suspect Shot Dead In Police Encounter



KOLKATA: A prime suspect in the rape and murder of a minor girl in Raiganj, West Bengal, was shot dead during an exchange of fire with police while allegedly attempting to escape towards Bihar. The accused, identified as Dilip Roy, was tracked down by a police team in the early hours of November 9 near the West Bengal–Bihar border in Uttar Dinajpur district. According to police officials, Roy allegedly opened fire at the personnel attempting to arrest him, prompting retaliatory firing in which he sustained fatal injuries.

The incident followed a four-day search operation launched after the body of the minor girl was recovered from the Kulik forest area near Raiganj on November 5. The girl had reportedly gone missing on November 3 after leaving home for a tutorial class. Her disappearance prompted a search by family members and local residents before her body was discovered in the forest. A case involving rape and murder was subsequently registered, and investigators began pursuing suspects linked to the crime. Police identified Roy as a prime suspect and began searching for him after the recovery of the girl's body.