



## FEROZEPUR GOVT HOSPITAL SANS REGULAR EYE SPECIALIST

The eye hospital has turned into a 'white elephant' in the absence of specialist doctors. **P3»**



## PATWARIS TO HELP FARMERS SHUN STUBBLE BURNING

A campaign has been launched to sensitise farmers to burning stubble in Malerkotla. **P3»**



## ACTRESS ALIA BHATT DAZZLES AT PARIS FASHION WEEK DEBUT

Bollywood star Alia Bhatt looked gorgeous as she made her Paris Fashion Week debut. **P4»**



# Ministry asks Addl Chief Secy to act on major design flaws on Smart City Road

**MANAV MANDER**  
TRIBUNE NEWS SERVICE  
LUDHIANA, SEPTEMBER 24  
Acting upon a complaint filed by the Council of Engineers (CoE) regarding major design flaws on Smart City Road, the Ministry of Housing and Urban Affairs (MoHUA) has asked Additional Chief Secretary (Urban Development) of the Punjab Municipal Infra-



A stretch of Smart City Road (Malhar Road) in Ludhiana. TRIBUNE PHOTO: HIMANSHU MAHAJAN

Complaint filed by Council of Engineers

structure Development Company (PMIDC) to take appropriate action in the matter. The CoE had raised some important issues, including the appointment of the consultant, who was lacking knowledge of basic IRC code for design of roads, and undue benefit given to the contractor by change in work of scheduled items, etc. The Council of Engineers through its president Er Kapil

Dev in the complaint submitted had mentioned that despite raising the issue of major flaws (violation of the IRC code) in design of Smart City Road (Malhar Road), the project started without removing discrepancies, resulting in traffic jams due to missing slipways, illegal parking on cycle track, decrease in width of road, etc, and hence, was against its prime motive. Now, the work of disman-

ting/removing RCC balusters and curves made with kerb stones along roadsides, constructed under the project, has been started. Besides such major changes, Ludhiana Smart City Limited company earlier continued to fix interlocking tiles within prohibited areas around trees by going against the directions of the National Green Tribunal (NGT) and now, those tiles are also being removed,

resulting in financial losses for the second time. "Therefore, it's a matter of investigation for corruption, technical as well as financial audit," Kapil Dev said. He questioned how and why the design of such important project having major flaws in violation of the IRC code was designed by the consultant and approved by the SPV and when the matter was highlighted at the time of the

commencement of civil works, why such changes/corrections were not made by officials to remove the flaws? He asked how the consultant, who is not having basic knowledge of IRC codes of civil engineering, of the project was selected and now, why changes are being made without getting prior approval from the higher authorities? Further in his complaint he stated that why the department did not plan electrical works at the time of finalising the detailed project report, resulting in extra benefit to the contractor due to change in work of scheduled items.

"Were such changes made to give undue benefit to the contractor to save him from the penalty due to delay in the project? The portion of the road has not been constructed but claimed to be completed by Ludhiana Smart City firm. A probe should be conducted into the matter and action be taken," said Er Kapil Dev.

## DEATH OF 11-YEAR-OLD BOY

# It's a murder, allege kin; autopsy confirmed suicide, say police

TRIBUNE NEWS SERVICE

LUDHIANA, SEPTEMBER 24

While the parents of a 11-year-old boy, Abhishek Kumar, who reportedly died by suicide, alleged that their son could not end his life and it was a murder, the police claimed that the post-mortem report clarified that the boy died after hanging himself. At the same time, the police also stated that his parents had denied having any personal enmity. Assistant Commissioner Police (North) Devinder Chaudhry said the police had reached the conclusion that the boy had died by suicide and the lone witness, another minor boy, who saw the vic-

tim hanging from an iron rod attached to a shop, told the deceased's parents that he saw Abhishek hanging on the rod and the parents of the victim misunderstood that someone hanged their son. "We have gone through the CCTV camera footage also in which a boy was seen roaming alone in the grain market. Nobody was with him," the ACP said. On Sunday night, Abhishek was reportedly found hanging from an iron rod in the grain market near Jalandhar Bypass. His body was seen by another boy, who told the victim's parents about the matter. Abhishek's parents, who are daily wagers, said they believe their son could not

die by suicide as he was not having any issues. They said when they saw the body of their son, his feet were touching the ground. Hence, it could not be a suicide. The parents said Abhishek had gone to the grain market to get milk around 8 pm on Sunday and when he did not return, his mother started searching for him. It was then that a minor boy came running and told them that two men had taken Abhishek on a motorcycle. They strangled him and hanged him from an iron rod at the grain market. But the police stated that CCTV cameras did not capture anyone and only Abhishek was seen in the footage.

## Four of robbers' gang arrested

TRIBUNE NEWS SERVICE

LUDHIANA, SEPTEMBER 24

The police have busted a gang of robbers who were active in looting valuables from passers-by and arrested four of its members. On September 23, when a team of the Division Number 2 police station was on a routine checking, they got a tip-off regarding four youths who were going to sell snatched mobiles. They were coming from Cheema Chowk side and going towards Suffiyana Chowk. The police stopped the suspects, Rohit Kumar from Vijay Nagar, Rohit Yadav from Dholewal, Sumit Kumar from Shankar Colony and Rahul Pal from New Preet Nagar, and seized two iron rods and looted items, including one motorcycle and one Honda Activa from them. They were arrested and a case has been registered against them. — TNS

## Thefts on rise, miscreants target locked houses

SHIVANI BHAKOO

TRIBUNE NEWS SERVICE

LUDHIANA, SEPTEMBER 24

There has been a rise in number of theft cases in the city. In the past 24 hours, three incidents were reported in which thieves targeted houses. These were reported at the Sarabha Nagar, Model Town and Tibba police stations. In two of the incidents, house owners were not available at home. In the first case, Sanjay Aggarwal of New Rajguru Nagar, along with his wife, had gone to meet his son in Canada on May 24. When he returned home on September 8, he found windows of his bedroom and kitchen broken. In his complaint to the police, he stated that his valuables, including two gold bangles, three pairs of gold earrings, two gold rings, 10 silver coins, LEDs, a laptop, five silver idols,

three watches and two silver plates, were stolen from the house. The CCTV footage showed that the incident took place on the intervening night of August 23 and 24. The police have registered a case against the unidentified miscreant(s). A 72-year-old man, Subhash Bali, a resident of Model Town, complained that he had gone to Chandigarh on September 21 and when he returned home on September 23, he found locks broken and Rs 3,10,000 and \$1,950 missing from his house. A case has been registered. In the third incident, the Tibba road police have registered a case on the basis of a complaint filed by Hardeep Singh of New Shastri Nagar. He said thieves stole valuables, including two gold rings, one gold kara, Rs 60,000 in cash, a gold set, five bangles and a mobile, from his house. A case has been registered. — TNS

## College student ends her life

LUDHIANA, SEPTEMBER 24  
A BA student of CT University, Jagraon, died by suicide by jumping from the fourth floor of the university. The victim was taken to a hospital where she was declared brought dead. She has been identified as Kirandeep Kaur (20) of Moga. The police were informed about the incident and a probe was started in the matter. Sources said she was on medication for depression. She looked restless even today before taking the extreme step. Her father said the girl was under depression but stable. — TNS

# Three nabbed in snatching, loot incidents

5 mobiles, four motorcycles recovered from suspects

TRIBUNE NEWS SERVICE

LUDHIANA, SEPTEMBER 24  
The Ladhawal police have arrested three persons, Manpreet Singh, alias Mann, a resident of Chitti Colony, Jaswinder Ram, alias Jassa, of Nawanshahr and Mohammad Shaka, alias Kaka, a resident of Phillaur, Jalandhar, for snatching and looting residents.

The police recovered five mobile phones of different makes, one CD Deluxe motorcycle, one Splendor motorcycle, one Pulsar motorcycle and one Platina motorcycle from their custody. A case was registered against the suspects under Sections 303 (2), 304, 317 (2) and 3(5) against them. Against Shaka, a criminal case is already registered by the Phillaur police.

The suspects in police custody in Ludhiana. >>>



## FIRST-TIME MLAs FROM LUDHIANA IN MANN CABINET

# Rewarded for loyalty to party: Mundian

Accountability, transparency, responsiveness top on agenda of hotelier

NITIN JAIN

TRIBUNE NEWS SERVICE

LUDHIANA, SEPTEMBER 24

"I have been rewarded for my loyalty and commitment towards the party," new Cabinet Minister Hardeep Singh Mundian has said while expressing gratitude towards party supremo Arvind Kejriwal and Chief Minister Bhagwant Mann for inducting him into the Council of Ministers.

The Aam Aadmi Party's (AAP's) another new face and party hopper Mundian (48) had also scripted history by winning the rural Assembly seat of Sahnewal in Ludhiana district by defeating the two-time sitting Shiromani Akali Dal (SAD) MLA and former minister Sharanjit Singh Dhillon, who had ended third in a triangular contest in the high-stakes 2022 Punjab Assembly elections.

In an interaction with The Tribune, here on Tuesday, the new minister said he would work hard with zeal and honesty to discharge the big responsibility, which the party leadership had assigned to him, and come up to the high expectations of the public.

Mundian, who was sworn in as Cabinet Minister in Chandigarh on Monday,



Newly inducted Minister Hardeep Singh Mundian being welcomed at Circuit House in Ludhiana. ASHWANI DHIMAN

was given the portfolios of Revenue and Rehabilitation, Disaster Management, Housing and Urban Development, and Water Supply and Sanitation. "I will review the working of all departments assigned to me and bring necessary changes in the present system to facilitate the public at large and cut red-tapism, if any," he expressed. Asserting that the public was supreme, the new minister said accountability, responsiveness and transparency in the public delivery system will be on top of his agenda. Except the SAD and the Congress nominees, all other 16 candidates in the 2022 poll

fray had lost their security deposits as they had failed to garner even 16.67 per cent of the total polled votes. A matriculate businessman, dealing in building material and running a hotel, Mundian, who had switched over to the AAP few months before the February 2022 state poll after his previous stints in the Congress, the Lok Insaaf Party (LIP), and also contesting as an Independent candidate in the past, had polled 61,515 votes, which accounted for 34.33 per cent of the total 1,79,196 votes polled. He had defeated Congress nominee Vikram Singh Bajwa, son-in-law of former CM Rajinder Kaur

Bhattal, who had got 46,322 votes, constituting 25.85 per cent of the total votes polled. "The new state Cabinet will act tough against corruption and provide pro-people governance to fulfill all the pre-poll promises made by us," the new minister said. He said: "I had got a massive response from the people as they were fed up with the bad governance and corrupt system during the successive governments run by traditional parties." "We will also introduce public-friendly initiatives in the public delivery system, especially pertaining to the Revenue and Housing departments, and upgrade the water supply and sanitation infrastructure, besides ensuring better basic civic amenities to all," the first-time minister added. Sahnewal, which was part of Koom Kalan and Ludhiana Rural Assembly segments till 2007, before being carved out as an independent constituency following the delimitation in 2009, had elected SAD's Sharanjit Singh Dhillon in the past both elections held in 2017 and 2022 before Mundian wresting control over the rural constituency in 2022.

# 'Ministry is sewa, will perform with humility'

A businessman, Sond vows to come up to high expectations of public

TRIBUNE NEWS SERVICE

LUDHIANA, SEPTEMBER 24

Calling the Cabinet berth assigned to him as sewa (service), new Cabinet Minister Tarunpreet Singh Sond has said he would strive hard to perform with all humility and dedication. Aam Aadmi Party (AAP) first-timer Sond had scripted history by trouncing the then Industries Minister Gurkirat Singh Kotli from the Congress citadel Khanna, famous for Asia's largest grain market, in the high-stakes 2022 Punjab Assembly poll. Inducted in the 30-month-old Bhagwant Mann Cabinet during the fourth expansion held in Chandigarh on Monday, a young businessman, Sond (40), was assigned the portfolios of Industries and Commerce, Investment Promotion, Rural Development and Panchayats, Labour, Tourism and Cultural Affairs and Hospitality. Speaking to The Tribune on Tuesday, the new minister said he would attract new industry to the state, especially Ludhiana, which is the industrial and business capital of the state, and at the same time, help facilitate the existing industry to prosper by resolving their



New Cabinet Minister Tarunpreet Singh Sond gets a rousing welcome in Khanna on Tuesday.

genuine issues. "By bringing a legislation against contesting the ensuing panchayat poll on party symbols, I believe that our government has paved the way for electing majority of the sarpanches unanimously and in turn most of the village panchayats will also be formed with mutual agreements," Sond expressed while hoping that it would ensure the all-round progress of villages by getting additional grants for development. Sond had joined the AAP in January 2012 and had been active in politics since 2014 after he was inspired by reading AAP supremo Arvind Kejriwal's book, 'Swaraj'.

"Traditional parties that had ruled the state since Independence had failed to fulfil aspirations of the public following which voters brought about a change by voting AAP to power in 2022," the new minister said. The 12th pass Khanna resident had polled 62,425 votes, which accounted for 48.55 per cent of the total polled votes, while Kotli, grandson of slain Chief Minister Beant Singh and cousin of Union Minister Ravneet Singh Bittu, had even lost his security deposit by failing to get even the minimum required 16.67 per cent vote share. Kotli, who was the lone MLA to win two consecutive elections from Khanna in 2017 and 2022 till 2022, had

secured only 20,305 votes, constituting 15.79 per cent vote share. Sond, who had tasted success in his maiden election, said he was inspired by the anti-corruption movement spearheaded by Anna Hazare, in which Kejriwal also took a prominent part. "I worked at the grass-roots level before contesting my maiden election and was appalled by the plight of residents in the Khanna segment before contesting the Assembly elections," Sond asserted. Having served as in-charge of the party's industry, trade, transport and BC wing in the Fatehgarh Sahib LS segment, Sond runs a soap and detergent manufacturing industry. Listing his priorities, the new minister vowed: "The new Cabinet will come up to high expectations of the public while working to resolve and address problems and demands of the public on a priority basis." A new face Sond has promised industrial development, investment promotion, and overall development of villages, tourism sector and better facilities for the labour class and infrastructure development to regain the lost glory of Punjab.



## COLLEGE NOTES



Raghuvansh Sharma poses for a photograph.

**BHARTIYA VIDYA MANDIR**  
Ludhiana: Raghuvansh Sharma, student of Class XI at Bhartiya Vidya Mandir (BVM) Senior Secondary School, Udham Singh Nagar branch, brought fame to the school by securing the bronze medal in badminton in the ongoing district-level Khedan Watan Punjab Diyan. He, along with another student of the school, Ayush Kumar, took part in the boys' U-17 category and the former finished on the victory podium. Raghuvansh has also been selected for the state-level games to be held next month. Principal Seema Gupta congratulated Raghuvansh and his coach Rachna on this feat and wished good luck during the state-level games.

**BCM COLLEGE OF EDUCATION**  
The NSS wing of BCM College of Education celebrated NSS (National Service Scheme) Day with the aim to nurture the spirit of selfless service and to inculcate in the volunteers a spirit of social responsibility. On this occasion, students presented PowerPoint Presentations to highlight historical perspective of the NSS and its role in community and national development. Agile BCMites recited thought-provoking poems and delivered speeches to acquaint the future teachers with the powerful NSS motto: 'Not Me, But You'. A skit conveying the message of 'Education for All' was showcased by students of BEd semester one.

**POLICE DAV PUBLIC SCHOOL**  
With the collaboration of Apollo Tyre's Healthcare Foundation, Police DAV Public School, Ludhiana, organised a free medical camp for the faculty members and helping staff. Nearly, 150 faculty members benefited from complimentary medical consultations and diagnostic services. Renowned specialists, Dr Gagandeep and Dr Yashika Gupta, provided expert care, diagnosed various health needs and prescribed necessary medications. Principal Dr Anu Verma appreciated the initiative of the team of doctors and added that it was a significant step towards ensuring the well-being of our faculty members. TNS

## National Nutrition Month observed at DMCH

**TRIBUNE NEWS SERVICE**  
LUDHIANA, SEPTEMBER 24  
In the view of the National Nutrition Month, Department of Dietetics, Dayanand Medical College and Hospital in association with Indian Association for Parenteral and Enteral Nutrition (IAPEN) Ludhiana chapter and Indian Dietetic Association (IDA) Punjab chapter conducted a session for the nursing staff on nutritional screening and assessment tool today at DMCH.  
The speaker for the session was Dr Jaspreet Kaur, Associate Professor and Head, Department of Home Science, Government College for Girls, Ludhiana. Dr GS

## 100 potato growers attend workshop at PAU

**TRIBUNE NEWS SERVICE**  
LUDHIANA, SEPTEMBER 24  
As many as 100 farmers participated in a one-day workshop on 'Natural Resource Management and Technologies for Potato Cultivation', organised by the Skill Development Centre of the Punjab Agricultural University (PAU) in collaboration with Mahindra HZPC Private Limited. The course was held under the guidance of PAU's Director of Extension Education Dr MS Bhullar.  
Dr Rupinder Kaur, Associate Director (Skill Development), said the course laid thrust on enhancing the quality of potatoes and income of the farmers while conserving the natural resources. — TNS

## Residents allege RUB poorly lit, demand sufficient lighting

**TRIBUNE NEWS SERVICE**  
LUDHIANA, SEPTEMBER 24  
The newly-constructed railway underbridge (RUB) on Pakhowal road, connecting Sarabha Nagar intersection to Canal Bridge, lacks adequate lighting, posing a significant risk to commuters. Despite being a part of the Ludhiana Smart City Limited's project, the underbridge remains poorly lit, sparking concerns among residents.  
Upendra Sharma, a Punjab Mata Nagar resident while highlighting the issue said, "The underpass is eerily dark, even during daylight hours. The approach roads are covered with plastic sheets, further reducing visibility. The MC officials have the view that railway authorities are responsible for installing streetlights in the underbridge, as it falls under their jurisdiction."  
Residents and commuters were urging authorities to install a 24x7 lighting system to enhance safety, said Sharma, who is also advisor to the Punjab Mata Nagar Welfare Society adding, "Visibility is a major concern, even during the day. Vehicles approach at high speeds and the sudden darkness within the underbridge poses a significant accident risk. I have been raising this issue since long time but to no avail."  
Another resident of Pakhowal road, Raman Arora, said two-wheeler riders were struggling to navigate the drainage line within the underpass. "During rain, rainwater accumulates in the RUB, commuters especially the two-wheeler riders face a tough time to cross the waterlogged stretch. Another thing that poses challenge for the commuters is the lack of effective lighting. Authorities must prioritise commuters' safety and address these concerns promptly," Arora added.

## PAUV-C releases brochure on millets

**TRIBUNE NEWS SERVICE**  
LUDHIANA, SEPTEMBER 24  
In a significant step towards promoting the cultivation and consumption of millets, Dr Satbir Singh Gosal, vice-chancellor, Punjab Agricultural University (PAU), released an insightful and resourceful brochure on millets titled 'Millets - Nature's Super-grain' with a tagline 'From Field to Feast: Nourishing Future'.  
Dr Ruchika Bhardwaj, a noted millets breeder at PAU, along with Dr Maria Afzal, business mentor, and Alisha Kaur, research scholar, School of Business Studies, have contributed significantly to the creation of this document. Their combined expertise ensured the brochure offered not just technical knowledge but also practical guidance to the millet growers, processors, marketers and the entrepreneurs.  
Dr Gosal highlighted the importance of millets in addressing both health and environmental concerns. The brochure provided a comprehensive overview of the key millets cultivated in the state, and how they were being revitalised in the state's agricultural landscape, he observed. It emphasised how the National Food Security Mission (NFSM) and various initiatives by the Indian Council of Agricultural Research (ICAR) were playing pivotal roles in promoting millet cultivation and consumption, he added.  
Dr Ramandeep Singh, Professor-cum-Director, PAU's School of Business Studies, emphasised that this brochure served as a vital resource for the farmers, Farmer Producer Organizations (FPOs), traders, exporters and the importers by providing a reliable data on the ever-expanding millet market. It offered actionable insights into the cultivation processes, benefits of various millet varieties and their significant role in diversifying state's cropping patterns, he told. With detailed guidance on pricing, packaging, labelling, promotion and distribution, the brochure aimed to empower the farmers and producers to better position themselves in the market, he added.  
Dr Bhardwaj said the brochure also depicted success stories of entrepreneurs, including homemakers turned agripreneurs, who had leveraged the rising demand for millets to create thriving businesses. "It is set to become a cornerstone for the farmers, entrepreneurs and the policymakers in the region, bridging the gap between the field and the feast, for a nourished and sustainable future," she added.

## Sudhar girls win Khedan Watan Punjab Diyan football title

**OUR SPORTS CORRESPONDENT**  
LUDHIANA, SEPTEMBER 24  
Gurusar Sudhar team secured the first position in football in the girls' U-21 section in the ongoing district-level games of the third edition of Khedan Watan Punjab Diyan, being organised by the Punjab Sports Department under the aegis of Sports and Youth Services, Punjab, with assistance of the district administration at different venues across the district on Tuesday.  
In football, at the Punjab Agricultural University ground, Machhiwara 'A' team finished as the first runners-up and Dehlon 'A' team got the third position.  
In handball (girls' U-14), PAU Club emerged the winners while BVM School, Kitchlu Nagar branch, and Government Senior Secondary School, Katani Kalan, secured the second and third place, respectively, and in the girls' U-17 category, PAU Club got the top position while GAD Academy and DAV Public School, Pakhowal road branch, finished as the first and second runners-up, respectively.



A participant throws javelin and a volleyball match is underway during the Khedan Watan Punjab Diyan on Tuesday. PHOTOS: INDERJEET VERMA

In the girls' U-21 section, PAU Club, PAU Campus team and Amrit Indo Canadian Academy secured the top three positions.  
In volleyball (smashing) for girls' U-14 section, Government Senior Secondary School, Gidharwandi village, emerged champions while Spring Dale Public School and Guru Nanak Stadium team secured the second and third position, respectively.  
In the girls' U-21 section, Guru Nanak Stadium team, Government Senior Secondary School, Gidharwandi village and Delhi Public School, Khanna secured the first, second and third position, respectively.  
In athletics, at Guru Nanak Stadium, Akalroop Kaur of Doraha won first position in 200m race for girls U-14 section while Gurleen Kaur of Raikot got second position and Amaanat Sidhu of Municipal Corporation finished at the third place.  
In 800m race (girls' U-14), Simran Kaur of Doraha, Chandni Kumari of Machhiwara and Archana Kumari of Machhiwara secured the top three positions while in triple jump event, Khushpreet Kaur of Raikot clinched the top spot. Komalpreet Kaur and Jaismeen Kaur finished at the second and third place, respectively.  
In 800m race (girls U-21), Veerpal Kaur emerged victorious, followed by Sukhvir Kaur and Kirandeep Kaur, respectively, at the second and third positions.  
At Government Girls College ground, Ludhiana, in



khokho (girls' U-14), Sahibajpura team won the top position. Government Senior Secondary School, Sidhwan Khurd, secured the second place and Government High School, Bhumal village, finished third while in the girls' 21 section, Ghali Kalan village, secured the top position while Government Girls College, Ludhiana, and GMT International School finished at the second and third place, respectively.

## BKU (Eka Ugrahan) condemns Malli's arrest, threatens stir

**AHMEDGARH, SEPTEMBER 24**  
Terming the arrest of human rights activist Malwinder Singh Malli as an attack on freedom of expression, office-bearers and activists of Bhartiya Kisan Union (Eka Ugrahan), Ludhiana, during a meeting, have threatened to launch an agitation in case the government did not withdraw the case registered against him.  
The meeting was held under the supervision of district leader Sudagar Singh Ghudani and Rajinder Singh Khatra at Butahri village near.  
Accusing the AAP of adopting pressure tactics to suppress the voice of public leaders, Ghudani alleged the state government led by CM Bhagwant Mann was also toeing the footprints of other traditional political parties in contravention of promises made during the election campaign.  
Speakers including Ghudani, Khatra, Charanjit Singh Phallewal and Jagjit Singh said unity among farmers during recent Morcha at Chandigarh had resulted in a situation when all stakeholders would be able to study the draft of the new agricultural police, before it is implemented. — OC

## Odisha's dairy officials, farmers visit vet varsity

**LUDHIANA, SEPTEMBER 24**  
An exposure visit of dairy officials from Bolangir-Kalahandi-Nuapada Regional Co-Operative Milk Producer's Union Ltd based at Bolangir, Odisha, was arranged at Guru Angad Dev Veterinary and Animal Sciences University. A total of 27 officials including, the board of directors of the milk union and progressive farmers from three districts of Odisha visited the vet varsity.  
The exposure visit was organised to sensitise the officials and progressive farmers regarding latest advancements adopted in the dairy sector. The visit to university's dairy farm was facilitated by Dr RS Grewal, Director of Livestock Farms, wherein he apprised the visitors regarding climate smart housing of livestock along with importance of feeding balanced ration for optimal milk production. The visitors were also shown the functioning of the automatic milking parlour at the farm.  
During their visit to the university's clinics they witnessed the large animal treatment area and facilities provided to the farmers. The visit at clinics was facilitated by Dr Gurpreet Singh Preet. The visitors were also made familiar with the facilities provided to the farmers through Farmer Information Centre along with Pashu Palak Tele-Advisory Kendra. — TNS

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## Nestlé scientists visit vet varsity to explore sustainable collaboration

**LUDHIANA, SEPTEMBER 24**  
A delegation of Nestlé scientists, including Pascal Chapot, Nestlé Global Head of Agriculture, Henry Florence, Head of Sustainable Nutrition and Manuel Schärer, Agronomist from the Nestlé Institute of Agricultural Sciences in Switzerland, Naveen Puttalingaiah from Nestlé R&D Singapore, Sumeet Dhiman and his team from Nestlé Moga, visited Guru Angad Dev Veterinary and Animal Sciences University to explore potential collaborations to achieve goal of net-zero emissions by 2050.  
During the deliberations, Dr JPS Gill, vice-chancellor, underscored the university's unwavering dedication to environmental stewardship and the transformative potential of a partnership with Nestlé. He expressed optimism about creating a replicable model for sustainable development that reflects both institutions' values. The livestock sector contributes 18 per cent of global anthropogenic greenhouse gas emissions, with methane accounting for 37 per cent of this total. Methane has 28 times the warming potential of CO2 over a century, making its mitigation crucial for achieving rapid cooling effects in the atmosphere. By combining our expertise, we could set a new standard for environmentally responsible dairy farming and contribute to global climate change efforts, the V-C said.  
Pascal expressed enthusiasm for the collaboration, stating that their visit has been incredibly enlightening and that the university's dedication to innovation in sustainable agriculture aligns perfectly with our goal of achieving net-zero emissions by 2050. — TNS

## Cultural connect



Udaya Kerala Club members celebrate Onam at Shiv Shakti temple in Ludhiana.

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Patwar union president urges revenue officials to participate in the fight against stubble burning.

## Patwaris to persuade farmers to shun burning of stubble

OUR CORRESPONDENT

MALERKOTLA, SEPTEMBER 24

A campaign has been launched to sensitise farmers against burning stubble. The campaign got a boost when workers of the Punjab Revenue Patwar Union said they would urge paddy cultivators of their respective regions to shun the malpractice.

The revenue officials said they would facilitate events organised by the administration to spread awareness about causes and consequences of the stubble burning, adding that they would also organise nuded meetings and workshops at common places and fields situated on the outskirts of their beats.

Punjab Revenue Patwar Union President Harvir Singh Dhindsa said revenue officials would organise small yet productive events on management of agricultural wastes, including stubble beyond their duty hours.

"As revenue officials (Patwari) constitute the widest

and most intimate platform for redressal of issues related to agriculture, they can be most effective in persuading farmers to shun stubble burning," said Dhindsa. He appreciated the efforts of the revenue officials who had agreed to volunteer their services to the cause.

Dhindsa said revenue officials had been supporting a coordinated movement launched in the district under the supervision of the Malerkotla Deputy Commissioner; however, the farmers were addressed by senior functionaries in the administration and agriculture departments only.

He said, "Though the Malerkotla DC, Dr Pallavi, has already convened a meeting of senior functionaries in the Department of Agriculture, Department of Farmer's Welfare, Punjab Pollution Control Board, Cooperative Department and Rural Development for undertaking aggressive measures to check stubble burn-

ing in the region, we have decided to explore chances to further encourage farmers on our personal level to help the administration achieve the 100 per cent target of zero tolerance."

He claimed presidents of various districts have been asked to ensure activists of their respective areas organise informal meetings with farmers to address the problem.

Dhindsa said officials have been asked to update their knowledge on the problem before they organise meetings with farmers. "We want to make sure that all Patwari are up-to-date on alternative methods of handling stubble and availability of equipment required for the purpose," said Dhindsa.

Earlier, the Deputy Commissioner, Dr Pallavi, had appealed rank and file in the administration to buttress the movement launched to sensitise farmers on the causes and consequences of violating guidelines of the Green Tribunal on disposal of agricultural waste.

## Ferozepur govt hospital sans regular eye specialist, patients at receiving end

ANIRUDH GUPTA

FEROZEPUR, SEPTEMBER 24

Established for Rs 5.5 crores in 2014 during the SAD-BJP regime, the state-of-the-art eye hospital has turned into a 'white elephant' in the absence of any 'super specialist' doctors, juxtaposed with poor upkeep. When the project was launched, four super speciality doctors, each for glaucoma, retina, squint, and cornea-related problems, were supposed to join this hospital; however, no such specialist has ever been appointed so far.

Adding to the woes of the patients, the only eye specialist who had been working here has also been transferred, which has left the hospital without any doctor.

The triple-storeyed building of this eye hospital, which was constructed on the civil hospital premises, consists of five rooms for OPD, two operation theatres, two dark rooms, one eye ward, and four additional rooms. However, most of these rooms remain locked throughout the day. The condition of the building has been deteriorating by the day. The costly equipment, including ophthalmologic chairs, slit lamps, tonometers, and other gadgets, has been collecting dust.

Owing to the transfer of the regular eye specialist, the patients who come from far-flung areas suffer. Tarlok Singh, who had come here from Rakhri village, for an eye check-up of his daughter, Ramnik Kaur (14) said when he arrived at the hospital, he came to know the specialist doctor would be available for two days per week. He said, "We will have to come back on Monday as the specialist was unavailable."



The building of the state-of-the-art eye health facility at Ferozepur.



The empty hospital premises; and (right) the registration counter at the healthcare centre.



Sukhchain Singh, a resident of Sabuana village, had also come to the hospital with his daughter, Sandeep Kaur. He said, "My daughter had been facing some issues in her eyesight. We are going back after a general eye check-up. It is sad to see the state government boasts about health-care facilities; however, in reality, doctors are not available at these facilities."

The SMO, Dr Nikhil Gupta, said following the transfer of Dr Dixit Singla, who had been working here as an eye specialist, Dr Ranjit Singh Karir from Zira Civil Hospital has been called here on deputation. Dr Gupta said he would come to the district eye hospital twice a week, i.e., Monday and Thursday. He added, "The operations related to cataracts are being done in the hospital; howev-

er, the critical patients are being referred to Government Medical College at Faridkot."

The Chief Medical Officer, Dr Rajwinder Kaur, said she has apprised the higher authorities regarding the shortage of doctors. "We are trying to manage the situation by marshalling the existing manpower resources."

The president of Anti-

Crime Anti-Drug (India), Naveen Sharma, said, "It is a matter of concern that during the recent times no specialist doctor has stayed here for a longer period of time. Even those doctors who had been appointed here, got themselves transferred on the pretext of one reason or another. The government must look into these aspects and appoint permanent doctors here."

## Van to raise awareness on farm fires

OUR CORRESPONDENT

FATEHGARH SAHIB, SEPTEMBER 24

To create awareness among the farming community against stubble burning, the Deputy Commissioner, Dr Sona Thind, today flagged off an awareness van. The DC said the district would be free from stubble burning soon. She said nodal officers have been deputed to monitor their respective villages, adding that cooperative societies have been directed to ensure machinery for proper management of stubble; besides, this subsidy was being provided.

She said it was every one's responsibility to curb the increasing levels of pollution, adding that it was the duty of the current generation to leave a safe and



Fatehgarh Sahib DC Dr Sona Thind flags off the van on Tuesday.

clean environment for future generations.

The DC said nodal officers have been assigned to different villages to monitor stubble burning activities in their

areas. She said they would be held responsible if cases of stubble burning were reported from their areas. She said paddy has been sown in 87,400 hectares in the district

this year, from which 5.5 lakh tonnes of straw were likely to be produced.

DC Thind said farmer training camps were being organised at the block level

and village level to sensitise the farmers about proper management of straw. She said the farmers selected through the process of drawing were being provided subsidies on agricultural machinery. She directed the officials of the cooperative societies department to ensure that all the cooperative societies in the district had subsidised agricultural machines for stubble management so that the farmers could plough the stubble in the field.

The Chief Agriculture Officer, Dr Dharminderjit Singh Sidhu, said an awareness van would sensitise the farmers in the villages of Block Khera from October 1, Block Sirhind from October 2 to 9 and Block Amlah from October 10 to 13.

## Kisan Mela



A farmer carries a sack at the annual Kisan Mela at Rauni village in Patiala on Tuesday; and (below) Farmers sell jaggery laddos at the mela.

PHOTOS: RAJESH SACHAR

## Police arrest two with opium

TRIBUNE NEWS SERVICE

FARIDKOT, SEPTEMBER 24

The police have arrested two persons and seized about 4 kg of opium from their possession this morning. The police said the suspects have been identified as Pargat Singh of Dhimhawali village and Kamalpreet Singh alias Babbu of Puri Colony in Faridkot. The police said the truck and car that the suspects used for smuggling the narcotics have also been seized. The investigating officer in the case, Haqam Singh, said the police seized the opium and arrested the suspects near Panjgrain village on the Moga-Kotkapura state highway.

## Abohar residents on edge amid spurt in attacks on women, robbery cases

ABOHAR, SEPTEMBER 24

With a sharp increase in petty crimes in the past few weeks, people in the subdivisional town and surrounding area have a genuine reason to feel insecure.

Two young girls of Prem Nagar here yesterday complained to the city-1 police station that three bikers, who appeared to be drug addicts, forcibly stopped their bikes in Seed Farm colony when they were going to practice kabaddi at Dhani Kadaka Singh last evening. The girls said they fell and were injured. They said one of the miscreants snatched the key to their bike, and the others

made a video on their mobile phones. The girls were admitted to the Abohar Civil Hospital for treatment. The police said a case under Sections 281, 125(0), 324(4), 79, and 304 of the BNS has been registered against the suspects. They said two of the suspects were identified as Narinder Singh Tiddu and Sonu Bhola of Seed Farm, adding that the third suspect was yet to be identified.

A few months back, some Seed Farm-based bike-borne youths were booked for chasing a school student on her way back to her house and had humiliated her family too.

In a separate report to the

city-1 police station, Rakesh Kumar Juneja of Sunder Nagari said he and his wife Rachna, both teachers at the government school, went to their respective schools yesterday at 7.30 am. They said when they returned home from work at around 2.15 pm, they found locks of their house broken and jewellery worth Rs 5 lakh and passbooks of their bank accounts were missing along with Rs 10,000 cash. The police said CCTV footage indicated a car stopped outside the house, and one person barged into the house and two waited for him in the vehicle outside.

Three shops were burgled on

Gaushala Road, just a few meters away from the city-2 police station on Sunday night. The miscreants took away about Rs 87,000 by breaking the locks of these shops.

Miscreants carrying sharp weapons had looted cash from a vegetable and fruit shop operator, Surinder Kumar, near Lala Lajpat Rai Market last Wednesday. A day later, Kundan Lal Dhingra, who had been running a kiosk in the new grain market for 30 years, was robbed of cash and commodities by four miscreants, who had reportedly been seen loitering in the mandi, said the victim. — OC

## Youth beaten up on suspicion of theft

ABOHAR, SEPTEMBER 24

A 26-year-old resident of Burjmuhar village near the bypass here was allegedly attacked with sticks and other weapons by some people of the same village on suspicion of theft. He was severely injured and his legs were fractured after the attack. The victim has been admitted to the civil hospital for treatment. The victim's family said at around 11.30 pm he went



Shavinder at the civil hospital.

with his maternal uncle to help a farmer set up a water line. They said about six people attacked him, suspecting that he was a thief. The family said when

Shavinder's uncle tried to intervene, he was attacked too. The uncle ran away and informed the family about the attack.

Shavinder's family members, along with a member of the panchayat, reached the field at night; they saw that Shavinder was lying there in a semi-conscious state, soaked in blood, with wounds on his legs. They brought him to the Abohar Civil Hospital for treatment. — OC





## Beauty on the ramp

Alia Bhatt dazzles in a Gaurav Gupta outfit at Paris Fashion Week debut

Bollywood star Alia Bhatt looked drop-dead-gorgeous as she made her Paris Fashion Week debut in a creation by ace couturier Gaurav Gupta. The actress sauntered on the ramp along with American star Andie MacDowell during the show *Walk Your Worth* at Palais Garnier. She wore a metal-cast silver breastplate paired with black velvet flared pants from the designer's 2024 couture collection, Arundaya. Gupta, who has styled renowned global head-turners, took to Instagram and wrote, "@aliaabhatt in custom Gaurav Gupta Couture for her runway debut at the L'Oréal Paris — Le Défilé show."

Gupta's list of celebrities, who have sported his creations, include names such as Beyoncé, Paris Hilton, Mindy Kaling, Angela Bassett, Priyanka Chopra Jonas, Kriti Sanon, Janhvi Kapoor, Kareena Kapoor Khan, Shakira, Jenna Ortega, Jr Ntr. Bebe Rexha, Sharon Stone, Jeena Ortega, Sharon Stone, Ashanti, Luis Fonsi, Lizzo, Kylie Minogue, Megan Thee Stallion and Saweetie. — IANS

## AISHWARYA DELIGHTS

With her captivating appearance at Paris Fashion Week, Bollywood star Aishwarya Rai Bachchan once again proved why she is called Queen of Ramps. Dressed in a balloon hem-red dress, the *Jodhaa Akbar* star let her hair down and added a pop of colour to her look with a bold red lip shade. She walked the runway with utmost confidence and grace, representing L'Oréal Paris. Her walk became more special when she greeted the French audience with a namaste. ANI



# Bebe's boy!

MONA

A lawyer by training and a cook by passion, *MasterChef* finalist Gurkirat Singh is putting both the talents to good use. As he announced his upcoming show *Bebe Da Kitchen* in the tricity on Tuesday, he shared, "I draft all my contracts myself."

He is putting his knowledge of law to good use, but it was his preparation for the *MasterChef* kitchen for years that made him reach the final of the most-watched cooking shows ever.

"I was eight when the first season of *MasterChef India* was launched. I knew then and there that I had to be here," said Gurkirat.

In love with sweets and baking, he did wonderfully well when it came to desserts in the reality show. His experience in *Bebe Da Kitchen* has made Gurkirat see *ghiya* (gourd) in new light. "This is one *sabji* that I ran away from, but once Bebe made such sumptuous *ghiya wali daal* that it is now my favourite." The show that's due to air on Zee Punjabi, has *bebe-pota* (grandmother-grandson) cook together. "You will discover recipes that are not just lip-smacking, but also healthy. Why a particular *masala* goes in a particular *dal* and more, the knowledge our grandmothers have is truly mind-boggling."

Enjoying the limelight that has come his way and love for his YouTube channel, Gurkirat is sure turning into an entrepreneur. He is naming his first restaurant in his hometown Sirsa, Haryana, after his favourite movie *1920*. "We are going to create the 1920s vibe with mud walls. Some dishes from the past, I am really looking forward to the venture."

**MasterChef finalist Gurkirat Singh, who is set to launch his show *Bebe Da Kitchen*, promises authentic recipes and a link to tradition via grandmothers' kitchens**

When not cooking, Gurkirat loves to paint and watch horror films. Due to his busy schedules painting has taken a backseat, but his love for horror films stays.

"I watch every Hindi, English and Spanish film in the horror genre." Gym is another passion or call it necessity! A sweet tooth and baking being his passion, he has to really balance it out to stay fit. "I eat sweet, workout and then I am ready to eat sweet again the next day," he smiles.

Candid and honest,

Gurkirat talks of the days when he practiced as a lawyer and struggled. "I completed law due to my father's wish, who is a lawyer and also practiced but I couldn't adjust to the pressure." He also took therapy to normalise things. "When one is physically sick, nobody minds going to a doctor. But mental health issues go unnoticed." With a generation hooked on to devices, the situation is grim, "We must normalise the fact that seeking support is fine."

Happy that he found his calling rather soon, Gurkirat is looking forward to his show. "You must have your *bebe*, but in our show we have many *bebes*. They have something special — authentic recipes and a link to tradition, which you wouldn't find on social media. Catch us soon."



PHOTO: VICKY

## KNOW HIM BETTER

**FAVOURITE MASTERCHEF:** Nayanjyoti Saikia, the winner of Season 7, which I was a part of. He was also my roommate for the show. He is so reticent, I learnt so much from him.

**COMFORT FOOD:** *Maa aur bebe ke hath ka khana*. I have tried different cuisines at different places, but at regular intervals I have to have *ghar ki daal roti*.

**FAVOURITE FILM:** *1920*, a supernatural horror film. I love horror films in English, Hindi and Spanish.

**Holiday destination:** I have forever been trying to go to London. Last year, I missed it by a whisker. I am set to ring in Christmas and my birthday, which falls a day later, in London.

To mark the birth centenary of Bharatnatyam exponent Mohan Khokar, his son Ashish launches a book

NEHA SAINI

In 1940, the son of an Army man, a young Punjabi Sikh guy boarded a train to Chennai (Madras at the time), to learn Bharatnatyam as he had heard there was a lady, who taught it under a famous tree. That lady was the legendary Bharatnatyam exponent Rukmini Devi Arundale and the young Punjabi guy was Mohan Khokar, eminent dancer, archivist, writer and academician, who created India's largest collection of dance archives containing rare photographs, books, hand-written documents, letters, notes, articles and more. Khokar was the first North Indian student of Bharatnatyam, later married the Bharatnatyam doyenne, Padam Shri artist MK Saroja.

Celebrating his birth centenary, as he was born in Quetta (now in Pakistan), in 1924, Majha House and Indira Gandhi National Centre for Arts presented an event, *The Mohan Khokar Saga*, with Ashish Khokar, Mohan's son and an archivist, and also launched a book, *Mohan Khokar — The Father of Indian Dance History*, dedicated to his father's life and work as an documentarian.

"September 2024 will also mark his 25th death anniversary and it is time to celebrate his life's mission to not just pursue the art form but also archive it for generations," said Ashish.

The Mohan Khokar Dance Collection, currently displayed at Indira Gandhi National Centre for Arts, New Delhi, is massive, quite like the artist who created it. A treasure trove of Indian classical, folk and ritual dance forms and artists, the collection, which a UNESCO audit estimate put somewhere close to Rs 7 crore, is now being maintained and amplified by Ashish.

"I believe Mohan's madness has been passed on to me," he makes an honest confession. "As a father, Mohan Khokar was a mysterious man, who believed that dance was a fragile art form, just like life. When he was 10, he survived the

# Tribute to a legend



ASHISH KHOKAR

PHOTO: SUNIL KUMAR

Quetta earthquake that killed over 2,000 people and it was a turning point in his life. As he grew up, he saw the great Ram Gopal perform Bharatnatyam in Lahore, which was the cultural capital before Partition. It was then he decided to learn the art form and despite his father's opposition, travelled to Madras," shared Ashish.

The Mohan Khokar Dance Collection gives you a peek into the 150-year-old journey of Indian classical dance, with archives of Sitara Devi, American dance legend Ted Shawn, who performed Bharatnatyam in India during the 1940s, another Bharatnatyam legend Bal-

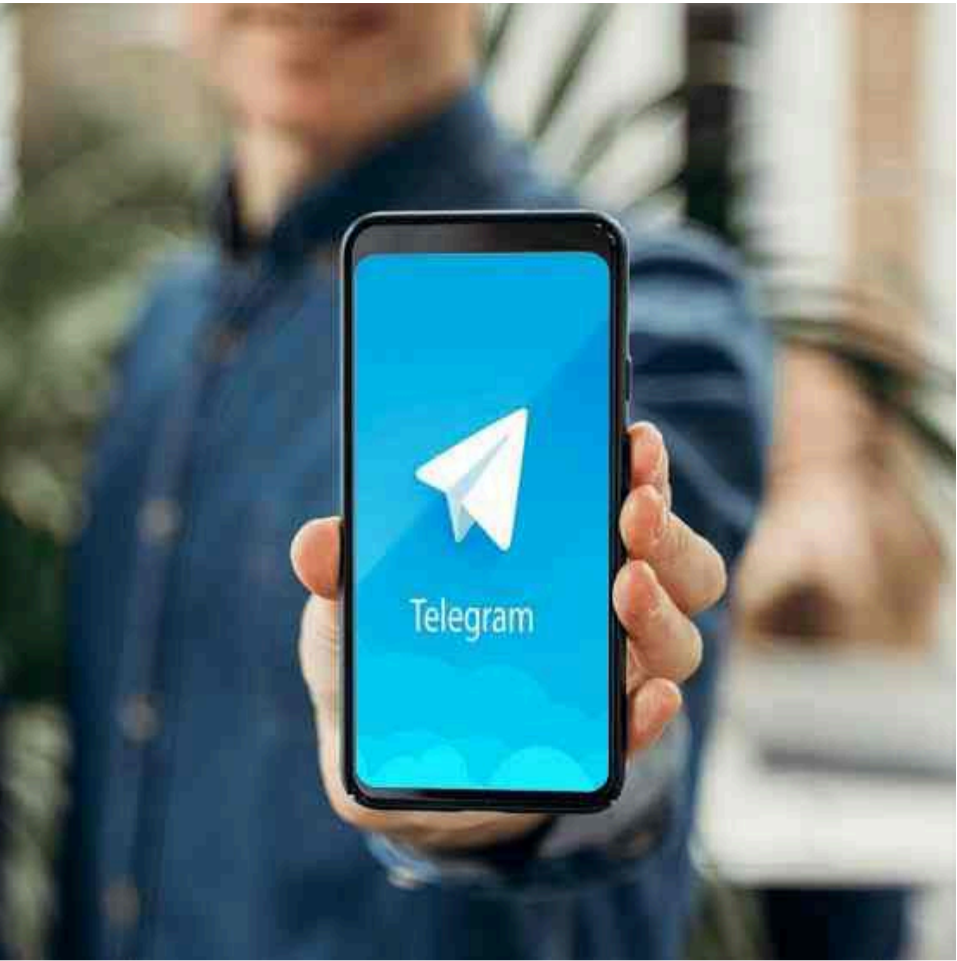
asaraswati, Kathak greats Uday Shankar and Ram Gopal, documented notes on the Devdasi traditions and much more.

For Mohan, the academics of the art form was as important as the art itself, so he founded the Department of Dance at the Baroda University, designing a course which is still taught in dance schools. Ashish, who also finds delight in reconstructing Indian classical dance forms, an attribute he generously inherited from his father, said the Khokar collection was a medium to revive the lost dance forms.

"My father, through concerted efforts,

ensured that Odissi, Mohiniattam and Koodiyattam, which were not recognised as classical dance forms, were recognised. He also archived extensively some folk art and ritual dance forms. Many would not know that there was a Punjab Gharana of Kathak, which had patronage of Pandit Pyare Lal, Tara Chaudhary, Aashiq Hussain...Such greats. A lot of our contemporary classical dance forms have been reconstructed and so, it's my desire that Punjab should revive its lost art form. Universities must initiate research and revive the *gharana*," said Ashish.





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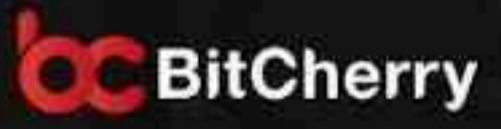
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