

Congress did tukde tukde of Vande Mataram

PM Modi says Nehru agreed with Jinnah

PM Modi attacked Congress and Jawaharlal Nehru during discussion on Vande Mataram in Lok Sabha, claiming that they capitulated to Muslim League and did 'tukde tukde' of the national song.

New Delhi.(Agency)

Prime Minister Narendra Modi attacked the Congress and Jawaharlal Nehru while addressing a discussion on Vande Mataram in the Lok Sabha. The PM said that the Congress did tukde tukde of the national song and Jawaharlal Nehru claimed that Vande Mataram could incite Muslims. The PM's remark echoed his earlier statement that Congress removed the key lines from the song in 1937, a move he said sowed the seeds of Partition. As chants of "shame, shame" erupted in Lok Sabha, PM Modi said "some forces carried out vishwas ghaat" (betrayal) of the national song in the last century. "It is our duty to tell our next generations who did it. Muslim League (pre-Independence) led by Mohammed Ali Jinnah, in 1937, carried out a drive against Vande Mataram. But the Congress and Jawaharlal Nehru, rather than opposing them, started probing Vande Mataram instead."

"Pandit Jawaharlal Nehru wrote a letter to Subhash Chandra Bose after Jinnah's opposition to Vande Mataram, stating that he had read the background of Vande Mataram and thought it might provoke and irritate Muslims. He added that they would examine the use of Vande Mataram, and that too in Bankim Chandra's Bengal," he said.



said that the Constitution choked when the national song completed 100 years. When

WAS VANDA MATARAM BROKEN UP

The song, written by Bankim Chandra Chatterjee in 1875 and later featured in his novel Anandamath (1882), became a powerful rallying cry against colonial rule, with many freedom fighters invoking Vande Mataram in their final moments. The original two stanzas praised the motherland, but the version in Anandamath expanded the song by six additional stanzas. These added stanzas depicted Hindu monks fighting Muslim rulers in Bengal during the Sanyasi Rebellion of 1776-1777, reflecting the novel's plot. Because of this portrayal and the chant's use by Hindu revolutionaries, many Muslims viewed it as idolatrous or hostile, and historians note instances where the chant was used during communally tense periods.

Vande Mataram completed 50 years, India was under British rule. When Vande Mataram completed 100 years, India was in the clutches of Emergency... At that time, the patriots were imprisoned. When the song that inspired our freedom movement, unfortunately, India was witnessing a black period.... 150 years of Vande Mataram is an opportunity to reinstate that pride and that great part of our past... This song inspired us to attain freedom in 1947..."

"Now, at 150 years, it is a good opportunity to restore the glory of 'Vande Mataram' which won us freedom in 1947," the Prime Minister said, praising the song written by Bankim Chandra Chatterjee in November 1875 and which quickly became a rallying cry for freedom fighters.

Congress high command defers Karnataka power-sharing call till Dec 19: Sources

Tamil Nadu.(Agency)

Senior Congress leaders held a late-night meeting in Delhi on Saturday to address the simmering power-sharing tensions between Karnataka Deputy Chief Minister DK Shivakumar and Chief Minister Siddaramaiah, said sources. The meeting was attended by Congress President Mallikarjun Kharge, Sonia Gandhi, Rahul Gandhi and organisation general secretary K C Venugopal. Sources said Kharge and Sonia Gandhi pressed for immediate intervention to prevent further escalation between the two Karnataka leaders. However, Rahul Gandhi reportedly stressed that



any decisive action should be taken only after December 19, and not during the ongoing Parliament and Karnataka Assembly sessions. Venugopal briefed the leadership on the recent "breakfast diplomacy" involving the two leaders and conveyed that both were currently toeing the party line.

Sources said Venugopal was instructed to tell both leaders not to escalate the matter and to refrain from giving interviews to television or print, as the high command is seized of the issue. Strict instructions were also issued to all 140 Congress legislators to follow the party line and avoid speaking out of turn.

Rahul Gandhi Gives Four-Word Reply To 'Vande Mataram' Debate In Parliament

New Delhi.(Agency)

Congress leader Rahul Gandhi on Monday gave a four-word reply to the debate on the national song 'Vande Mataram' in the Parliament - "Priyanka ka bhashan suno" (Listen to Priyanka Gandhi's speech).

Prime Minister Narendra Modi kicked off a debate on 'Vande Mataram' in the Lok Sabha as the song completed 150 years. This came a month after a political row broke out when the PM accused the Congress of dropping important stanzas of 'Vande Mataram' during the 1937 session of the party in



claimed the decision was based on the advice of Rabindranath Tagore and amounted to the accommodation of feelings of members from other

Faizabad. According to him, the grand old party's decisions "sowed the seeds of Partition" and "dissected the national song into pieces".

The Congress, however, communities and faiths. Congress also demanded an apology from the BJP, and accused the ruling party of "insulting" the Congress Working Committee (CWC) of 1937 - which had issued a statement on the national song, as well as Rabindranath Tagore. Earlier, a political confrontation had erupted just before the start of the Winter Session as the Rajya Sabha Secretariat reiterated that MPs must refrain from using expressions such as 'Vande Mataram' and 'Jai Hind' inside Parliament to maintain decorum.

PM politicises Vande Mataram, we follow its true spirit: Congress's Gaurav Gogoi

During a special Lok Sabha discussion marking 150 years of Vande Mataram, Congress's Deputy Leader of the Opposition Gaurav Gogoi accused Prime Minister Narendra Modi of politicising the national song and said Congress had always upheld its true spirit.

New Delhi.(Agency)

Deputy Leader of the Opposition in the Lok Sabha, Gaurav Gogoi, responded sharply to Prime Minister Narendra Modi's address during the special discussion marking 150 years of Vande Mataram on Monday. Gogoi said the Congress had always supported the national song. "Congress supported Vande Mataram. Congress gave importance to Vande Mataram to make it the national song of India," he said, adding that the Prime Minister routinely brought up Nehru and the Congress "in every debate." He also accused the BJP of misrepresenting Bengal. "The BJP sees all Bengalis as

infiltrators. They never understood the nation that India is. We are protecting the Constitution," he said. The Congress leader attacked the government for not mentioning the recent Delhi blast in the PM's speech. "People of India are suffering, and there is no mention of it. PM Modi did not mention the Delhi blast once. We are not able to protect our citizens, neither in Delhi or Palaham," he said. "People are unable to breathe," he added, referring to rising public distress.

GOGOI RAISES INDIGO MONOPOLY ISSUE IN HOUSE

Gogoi also sought an explanation from the



Centre over the nationwide flight disruptions. "We request the Government, especially the Ministry of Civil Aviation, to explain why passengers across airports have been suffering for days," he said.

"Many of them are dialysis patients, some have weddings at home, others have to see their elderly relatives. There is complete chaos at airports. People are losing money," he said, accusing IndiGo of exercising monopoly. "We are seeing IndiGo's monopoly. The common citizen is crying because of it," he told the House. The Chair eventually asked Gogoi to confine his remarks to the Vande Mataram discussion.

PM RECALLS VANDA MATARAM'S ROLE, ATTACKS NEHRU

In his speech earlier, Prime Minister Modi had described Vande Mataram as more than

a patriotic slogan. "Vande Mataram became the voice of our freedom movement. It integrated everyone in the country and became the resolve of every Indian," he said.

PM Modi said Bankim Chandra Chattopadhyay composed the song "when it had become a fashion to show India as weak, useless and demeaned in every possible way." The song, he said, was meant "to shake the conscience of the country and bring an awakening." He then targeted the Congress and former prime minister Jawaharlal Nehru over their handling of the song during the pre-Independence years.

Were they sleeping? As IndiGo chaos continues, board of directors come under fire

New Delhi.(Agency)

The mayhem caused by IndiGo's flight cancellations continued on Monday, the seventh straight day of travel disruptions. Even as India's largest airline cancelled around 350 flights on Monday, its powerful board of directors came in the line of fire, with people asking if they were sleeping. The board of directors, however, jumped in to take a stock of the situation right from Day 1 of the crisis, according to an IndiGo statement on December 7. Former Air Chief Marshal BS Dhanoa, ex-NITI Aayog CEO and G20 Sherpa Amitabh Kant, former Sebi Chairman M Damodaran and former FAA Administrator Michael Whitaker are among the nine members on IndiGo's board of directors.



All of the board members at IndiGo are eminent individuals with distinguished careers and unblemished track record. That was why it was more shocking why the chaos precipitated in the way it did. Though the board doesn't get into day-to-day operations, but it has a crucial role in overall oversight.

"Was the high-profile Board of Directors of Indigo Airlines sleeping. Are they not responsible

aviation veterans Anil Parashar and Gregg Saretsky.

Experts suggested that IndiGo CEO Pieter Elbers, who took over the leadership role in September 2022, acted on the advice of the board of directors, and that was why it can't be beyond question.

"The G20 Sherpa on IndiGo board has not posted a single tweet on the aviation crisis," said political commentator and analyst Amitabh Tiwari.

Man waiting for flight to Delhi falls sick at Lucknow airport, dies

Anoop Pandey, a finance executive originally from Kanpur and working in Bengaluru, had arrived to take a Lucknow-Delhi-Bengaluru connection after attending a relative's 13th-day ceremony. While waiting for his Lucknow-Delhi flight on Friday, he suddenly fell ill and died.

Lucknow.(Agency)

Amid the ongoing nationwide air travel chaos, a passenger waiting for his flight at Lucknow airport suffered a health emergency and died on Friday. Anoop Pandey, a finance executive with a private beverages company from Kanpur, had travelled to attend a relative's final rites and was returning to Bengaluru. While waiting for his connecting flight from Lucknow to Delhi, he suddenly fell ill and was rushed to Lok Bandhu Hospital, where doctors declared him dead.

His brother, Anil Pandey, said Anoop had been extremely anxious due to the continued wave of flight cancellations, worried about getting back to Bengaluru where his wife and children were alone, and his leave had already ended. The family claims that had he received immediate medical care at the airport, he might have survived. Police have conducted a post-mortem and handed over the body to the family.

The incident comes against the backdrop of widespread disruptions by IndiGo, India's largest airline, which has faced massive criticism from both passengers and government authorities for cancelling hundreds of flights since December 2. These cancellations, triggered by changes in pilot rest regulations under the new Flight Duty Time Limitations (FDTL) norms, have left lakhs of passengers stranded across the country.



Verify Identity Before Hiring: Yogi Adityanath Urges UP Residents

Lucknow.(Agency)

Chief Minister Yogi Adityanath on Monday urged citizens to remain alert and get identity verification done before employing someone, asserting that Uttar Pradesh has launched strict and decisive action against illegal immigrants to safeguard security and social balance.

His appeal comes amid an ongoing crackdown against infiltrators across the state following his instructions to the authorities last week.

In a post on X, Adityanath said, "The honourable Supreme Court has made an extremely important remark during a hearing that a red carpet cannot be laid out for infiltrators. This makes it clear that infiltrators are not acceptable at any cost." He said resources belong to

IndiGo had initially failed to publicly acknowledge the scale of the cancellations. It was only on Friday, when a record 1,600 flights were cancelled — the largest in Indian aviation history — that CEO Pieter Elbers released a video apology. In his message, he admitted the airline was cancelling numerous flights but did not specify the record-breaking scale of Friday's cancellations.

citizens and not to illegal immigrants, underlining that maintaining security, social equilibrium and a strong law and order system in the state remains his government's top priority.

The Supreme Court on December 2 sharply questioned the legal status of Rohingyas living in India and asked whether "intruders" should be given a "red carpet welcome" while the country's own citizens grapple with poverty.

A bench comprising Chief Justice of India Surya Kant and Justice Joymalya Bagchi made the observations while hearing a habeas corpus (bring the person) petition filed by a rights activist alleging disappearance of a few Rohingyas from the custody of authorities in Delhi.

Child marriage causes unimaginable suffering, says minister

The Sikh Times

New Delhi: The minister said India had strengthened its legal framework, from the Sarda Act of 1929 to the Prohibition of Child Marriage Act of 2006, but social customs enabling child marriage still persist. "Even one child marriage is unacceptable," she said, urging states, community leaders and civil society to adopt a zero-tolerance approach. Annapurna Devi said schemes such as Beti Bachao, Beti Padhao had contributed to improvement in sex ratio and helped increase enrolment of girls in secondary and higher education. "Today, our daughters are growing faster than ever before. Whether in sports, defence, mining or space, they are creating new history," the minister said. Representatives of

grassroots organisations at the event shared how village-level counselling, school interventions and local vigilance were helping

neighbours. Women and Child Development Secretary Anil Malik termed child marriage a "crime against humanity".

ber has fallen sharply, according to recent Sample Registration System data. He, however, asserted that laws alone

could not eliminate the social evil. Malik said more than 38,000 CMPOs are now registered on the national portal. Over 22 lakh people accessed it last year and more than 50,000 pledged to help prevent child marriage, he added.

The event laid emphasis on young community leaders who helped stop underage marriages, including Roshi Parveen from

Bihar, Shilu from Odisha and Jyotsana Akhtar from Tripura. The minister cited the example of Surajpur district in Chhattisgarh, where 75 panchayats have reported no child marriages for two consecutive years. Child rights activist and founder of Just Rights for Children (JRC), Bhawan Ribhu, called on all stakeholders to join the movement. "The role of community groups, faith leaders, panchayats and citizens is central to building a child-marriage-free India... Last year, more than one lakh child marriages were prevented," he said. "Next year, we pledge to make one lakh villages child marriage free so that every child has opportunities and a secure future," Ribhu added. JRC is a network of more than 250 non-governmental organisations (NGO) across 451 districts.

DU mandates advance permission for faculty attending external seminars
New Delhi: The Delhi University (DU) has introduced a new approval mechanism for faculty planning to participate in academic seminars and conferences outside the campus, making advance permission mandatory. Under the new norms, teachers have to apply at least two months before the event and attach the full research paper, invitation letter and event details. Conferences organised by private or non-university bodies will undergo an extra layer of scrutiny to verify credibility. The change comes in the backdrop of a recent disagreement involving a faculty member who was denied travel clearance for an international conference after reportedly declining to submit the draft of his presentation. Until now, DU faculty had greater freedom to attend or present at academic forums without prior content vetting. The policy has triggered debate across departments. While some faculty members say the move may bring transparency, many view it as "excessive control". "It feels like academic judgement is being replaced by bureaucratic review," said a DU professor, calling the process time consuming and restrictive.

Kin of man who drowned in Yamuna get Rs 10L ex gratia

New Delhi: The Delhi Government on Thursday handed over an ex gratia assistance of Rs 10 lakh to the family of Kuldeep Nailwal, who died after slipping and falling into the Yamuna River. The cheque was presented to the deceased's wife, Deepa Nailwal, by Law & Justice Minister and Karawal Nagar MLA Kapil Mishra at the Delhi Secretariat. Extending condolences to the grieving family, Mishra said the government stands firmly with them in this difficult time and assured that the family will continue to receive all necessary support. He added that arrangements will be made for employment of Deepa Nailwal and that he will take responsibility for the education of the couple's daughter. After receiving the cheque, Deepa Nailwal extended her gratitude to the government and MLA Kapil Mishra.

PUBLIC NOTICE
I, BINOD KUMAR TIWARI, F/O SERVICE NO. JC-394173M, RANK NB SUB SHYAM SAROJ TIWARY, UNIT 31DSR C/O 5640 LEPH (KARU) HOME ADDRESS-VILLAGE-SARSWI- WAN, POST-KRISHNAGARH, DIST- BHOJPUR (ARA). STATE-BIHAR -802313, wrongly mentioned my name as VINOD TIWARI and date of birth is 01 July 1957 in my son service record. I have changed my name from VINOD TIWARI and date of birth 01 July 1957 to BINOD KUMAR TIWARI and date of birth 12.08.1961. Vide Affidavit No. 04, Dated 24.11.2025. Before Notary Public Jharkhand.

PUBLIC NOTICE
I, MOHD ASLAM S/O MUNNAN KHAN Residing at C-162 F/F GALI NO-14 SUBHASH MOHALIA NORTH GONDA, DELHI-110053 have changed my name to MOHD ASLAM KHAN for all future purpose.

PUBLIC NOTICE
I, SHAHINA W/O MOHD ASLAM KHAN Residing at C-162 F/F GALI NO-14 SUBHASH MOHALIA NORTH GONDA, DELHI-110053 have changed my name to SHAHINA PARVEEN for all future purpose.

PUBLIC NOTICE
I, MOHAMMAD ALI S/O MOHD ANIS Residing at H No-666 GALI NO-26 JAFRABAD DELHI 110053 have changed my name to MOHD ALI for all future purpose.

PUBLIC NOTICE
I, SHAISTA W/O MOHD ALI Residing at H No-666 GALI NO-26 JAFRABAD DELHI 110053 have changed my name to SHAISTA PRAVEEN for all future purpose.

PUBLIC NOTICE
I, MOHAMMAD ANIS S/O MOHD ANIS Residing at H No-D-206 STREET NO-2 KABIR NAGAR DELHI 110094 have changed my name to MOHD ANIS for all future purpose.

PUBLIC NOTICE
I, KISHAN MOHAN JHA S/o Radhakant Jha R/o H.no.858, N.T. Nangla Enclave, Part-2, Faridabad, Haryana 121005, have changed my name to KRISHAN MOHAN JHA permanently.

PUBLIC NOTICE
I, MANAWAR NAAZ / MANWAR NAAZ W/o Zakir Khan R/o J-3/106 B, J.EXTN, Jawahar Park, near Amar Wali Masjid, Laxmi Nagar, Delhi-110092, have changed my name to SUNNY LEDHWANI permanently.

PUBLIC NOTICE
I, KM ERAM ANIS W/O SHAFIQ AHMAD ROH HOUSE NO-116 GALI NO-2 OLD MUSTAFABAD MUSTAFABAD, NORTH EAST DELHI 110094 HAVE CHANGED MY NAME TO ERAM SHAFIQ

PUBLIC NOTICE
I, SUNNY LODHWANI S/o Duni Chand Ledhwani R/o D-527, Tegore Garden Extension, New Delhi-110027, have changed my name to SUNNY LEDHWANI permanently.

PUBLIC NOTICE
I, KM ERAM ANIS W/O SHAFIQ AHMAD ROH HOUSE NO-116 GALI NO-2 OLD MUSTAFABAD MUSTAFABAD, NORTH EAST DELHI 110094 HAVE CHANGED MY NAME TO ERAM SHAFIQ

PUBLIC NOTICE
I, LAKSHMI ISHWAR NAIK for all future purposes vide Affidavit dated 08/12/2025 before Notary Public, Delhi.

PUBLIC NOTICE
I, NARAYANA NAIDU ZAKIR HUSSAIN R/O 28A 1ST FLOOR BHARAT NAGAR NEW FRIENDS COLONY SOUTH EAST DELHI 110025 HAVE CHANGED MY NAME TO ANAM ZAKIR

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NEWS BOX

2 Police Officers Killed In Colombia Explosion, Authorities Blame Guerrilla

world. (Agency) Two police officers were killed Sunday in northeast Colombia in an attack that authorities blamed on the National Liberation Army, a Marxist guerrilla force active since the 1960s. President Gustavo Petro condemned the killings of a police superintendent and a sub-superintendent in Cúcuta on X, warning that he will increase the number of troops present along the Colombian-Venezuelan border.

The director of the Colombian National Police, Gen. William Ospina, said on social media that there were two "terrorist attacks" in the department of Norte de Santander. One attack claimed the lives of the officers, and in another neighbourhood, two soldiers were wounded, he said. Colombian media outlets published images of the area where the explosion occurred, showing a damaged road. According to initial investigations, Ospina said the attacks were "retaliation" by the ELN guerrilla force "in response to the police's offensive actions" against the group. According to the International Committee of the Red Cross, Colombia is experiencing an intensification of hostilities and a "sharp deterioration of the humanitarian situation," the organisation's president, Mirjana Spoljaric, said during a recent visit to the country.

The ELN, which has been armed since 1964, was negotiating peace with Petro's government, but talks broke down after an attack earlier this year that left nearly 100 dead in Catatumbo, also in Norte de Santander. The ELN is vying for control of the border with Venezuela with the "33rd Front," one of the dissident groups of the now-defunct Revolutionary Armed Forces of Colombia that did not accept the peace agreement signed between the guerrillas and the government in 2016.

Amid Benin's Coup, A Look At Other Military Takeovers In Africa

TOKYO. (Agency) Benin has joined a growing list of African countries where military officers have seized power since 2020. The military takeover lasted several hours on Sunday before officials announced it was foiled.

In a familiar scene across West Africa, a group of soldiers appeared on Benin's state TV on Sunday announcing the removal of President Patrice Talon and the dissolution of the government following the swift takeover of power. Hours later, Benin's Interior Minister Alassane Seidou said in a video shared online that the coup was foiled. The soldiers in question "launched a mutiny with the aim of destabilising the state and its institutions," Seidou said, adding that the military remained "committed to the republic." Here is a timeline of coups in Africa, following a pattern of disputed elections, constitutional upheaval, security crises and youth discontent: Since August 2020, Mali has witnessed two back-to-back coups. A group of soldiers mutinied and arrested senior military officers just outside the capital, Bamako, after weeks of protests by civilians demanding the then-president, Ibrahim Keita, resign over accusations of corruption and failing to clamp down on armed groups.

Col. Assimi Goita, the military leader, entered into a power-sharing deal with Bah Ndaw, a civilian president, with Goita serving as the vice president of a so-called transitional government. In 2021, Goita overthrew Ndaw following a series of disagreements and installed himself as president. He postponed an election slated for 2022 to 2077.

Mali is one of a tripartite group of landlocked West African countries, along with Burkina Faso and Niger, run by military juntas that have now formed their own bloc after breaking from the Economic Community of West African states, and have firmly stated their objections to a return to democracy.

Louvre water leak: Hundreds of 19th–20th century items damaged — what went wrong

world. (Agency) A water leak at the world-famous Louvre Museum in Paris has damaged between 300 and 400 works, mainly books and research journals, the museum has confirmed.

The incident comes just months after thieves stole priceless French crown jewels from the museum in broad daylight, raising fresh concerns over its infrastructure and security, according to the BBC.

The leak was discovered on 26 November in the museum's Egyptian department. Deputy administrator Francis Steinbock said the damaged items were mainly Egyptology journals and scientific documents dating back to the late 19th and early 20th centuries. These materials are widely used by researchers but are not unique or rare, he clarified. "No heritage artefacts have been affected by this damage. At this stage, we have no irreparable and definitive losses in these collections," Steinbock told news agency AFP. He added that the affected books would be dried, sent to a bookbinder for restoration and then returned to the shelves.

According to the museum, the leak was caused by the accidental opening of a valve in an old heating and ventilation system, which led to water seeping through the ceiling of the Mollien wing where the books were stored. Steinbock said the fault in the system had been known for years and full repairs are scheduled for next year.

This is the third major issue faced by the Louvre in recent months. In November, part of a gallery displaying Greek vases was closed due to structural weaknesses.

As Russia's Africa Corps fights in Mali, witnesses describe atrocities from beheadings to rapes

When the Africa Corps replaced Wagner six months ago, weary civilians hoped for less brutality.

DOUANKARA. (Agency)

A new Russian military unit that replaced the Wagner mercenary group is carrying out abuses including rapes and beheadings as it teams up with Mali's military to hunt down extremists, dozens of civilians who fled the fighting have told The Associated Press. The Africa Corps is using the same tactics as Wagner, the refugees said, in accounts not reported by international media until now. Two refugees showed videos of villages burned by the "white men." Two others said they found bodies of loved ones with liver and kidneys missing, an abuse the AP previously reported around Wagner. "It's a scorched-earth policy," said a Malian village chief who fled. "The soldiers speak to no one. Anyone they see, they shoot. No questions, no warning. People don't even know why they are being killed."

West Africa's vast Sahel region has become the deadliest place in the world for extremism, with thousands of people killed. The military governments of Mali, Burkina Faso and Niger have turned from Western allies to Russia for help combating the fighters affiliated with al-Qaida or the Islamic State group. When the Africa Corps replaced Wagner six months ago, weary civilians hoped for less brutality. The United Nations says they have been abused by all sides in the conflict. But refugees described a new reign of terror by Africa Corps in the vast and largely lawless territory, and legal analysts said Moscow is directly responsible. The AP gained rare access to the Mauritanian border, where thousands of Malians have fled in recent months as fighting intensified. It spoke with 34 refugees who described indiscriminate killings, abductions and sexual abuse. Most spoke on condition of anonymity for fear of retaliation.

"They are the same men, paid by the government, and continue the massacres. There is no difference between Wagner and

Africa Corps," said the village chief. Malian authorities have never publicly acknowledged the presence of Wagner or



Africa Corps. But Russian state media in recent weeks have published reports from Mali, praising Africa Corps for defending the country from "terrorists," and Russia's Foreign Ministry has confirmed that the unit is active "at the request of the Malian authorities," providing ground escorts, search-and-rescue operations and other work. Russia's Defense Ministry did not respond to AP questions.

Calling locals 'dogs' in Russian

It was early morning and Mougaloa was preparing sweet black tea when she heard gunshots. Seconds later, two cars pulled up in front of her tent, filled with masked white men shouting in a foreign language. A herder from northern Mali, she has witnessed her share of horrors over the last decade of violence — but she said no one had been as ferocious as these men. Armed men had come before, Mougaloa said. Usually the family would flee when they heard them coming. But three months ago, they were caught. She said the men arrived with Malian soldiers and grabbed her 20-year-old son, Koubadi. The Malians asked him whether he had seen militants. When he said no, they beat him until he fainted.

Then the men slit his throat as Mougaloa watched, powerless. She said the family fled but the armed men found them again in late October. This time, they didn't ask questions. They wore masks and military uniforms. They took everything the family had, from animals to jewelry.

Japan summons China envoy after Chinese military aircraft locked radar onto Japanese jets

TOKYO. (Agency)

Tokyo has summoned Beijing's ambassador after Chinese military aircraft locked radar onto Japanese jets, the latest incident in the row ignited after Prime Minister Sanae Takaichi's comments backing Taiwan.

Takaichi suggested last month that Japan would intervene militarily in any Chinese attack on the self-ruled island that Beijing claims as its own and which it has not ruled out seizing by force. J-15 jets from China's Liaoning aircraft carrier on Saturday twice locked radar on Japanese aircraft in international waters near Okinawa, according to Japan. No damage or injury was caused, but it was the first time that Japan had disclosed such an incident. Fighter jets use their radar for fire control to identify targets as well as for search and rescue operations.

Japan had scrambled its F-15 jets because it was worried about possible "airspace violations," chief



government spokesman Minoru Kihara said Monday. China's navy said Sunday that the Japanese planes "repeatedly approached the Chinese Navy's training area and caused trouble, seriously affecting the normal training of the Chinese side and seriously endangering flight safety." A statement said that Tokyo's claim was "completely inconsistent with the facts" and told Japan to "immediately stop slandering and smearing."

Kihara responded on Monday that China's "claim that the Self-Defense Forces aircraft seriously obstructed the

safe flight of Chinese aircraft is unfounded." Vice Foreign Minister Takehiro Funakoshi summoned ambassador Wu Jianguo on Sunday and "made a strong protest that such dangerous acts are extremely regrettable." Funakoshi "strongly urged the Government of China to ensure that similar actions do not recur," the Japanese foreign ministry said late Sunday. Takaichi said the same day that Japan would "respond calmly and resolutely." Beijing's foreign ministry said it rejected that protest, and had lodged its own counter-protest, according to state news agency Xinhua. Rare earths - The comments on November 7 about Taiwan by Takaichi, seen before she became premier in October as a China hawk, have enraged Beijing.

China has urged its citizens to avoid Japan -- they are the biggest source of tourists -- and cultural events involving Japanese performers and movies have been hit.

Trump says Zelenskyy 'isn't ready' yet to accept US-authored proposal to end Russia-Ukraine war

KYIV, Ukraine. (Agency)

President Donald Trump on Sunday claimed Ukrainian President Volodymyr Zelenskyy "isn't ready" to sign off on a U.S.-authored peace proposal aimed at ending the Russia-Ukraine war. Trump was critical of Zelenskyy after U.S. and Ukrainian negotiators completed three days of talks on Saturday aimed at trying to narrow differences on the U.S. administration's proposal. But in an exchange with reporters on Sunday night, Trump suggested that the Ukrainian leader is holding up the talks from moving forward. "I'm a little bit disappointed that President Zelenskyy hasn't yet read the proposal, that was as of a few hours ago. His people love it, but he hasn't," Trump claimed in an exchange with reporters before taking part in the Kennedy Center Honors. The president added, "Russia is, I believe, fine with it, but

I'm not sure that Zelenskyy's fine with it. His people love it. But he isn't ready."

To be certain, Russian President Vladimir Putin hasn't publicly expressed approval for the White House plan. In fact, Putin last week had said that aspects of Trump's proposal were unworkable, even though the original draft heavily favored Moscow. Trump has had a hot-and-cold relationship with Zelenskyy since riding into a second White House term insisting that the war was a waste of U.S. taxpayer money. Trump has also repeatedly urged the Ukrainians to cede land to Russia to bring an end to a now nearly four-year conflict he says has cost far too many lives. Zelenskyy said Saturday he had a "substantive phone call" with the American officials engaged in the talks with a Ukrainian delegation in Florida. He said he had been given an

update over the phone by U.S. and Ukrainian officials at the talks. "Ukraine is determined to keep working in good faith with the American side to genuinely achieve peace," Zelenskyy wrote on social media. Trump's criticism of Zelenskyy came as Russia on Sunday welcomed the Trump administration's new national security strategy in comments by the Kremlin spokesman published by Russia's Tass news agency. Dmitry Peskov said the updated strategic document, which spells out the administration's core foreign policy interests, was largely in line with Moscow's vision. "There are statements there against confrontation and in favor of dialogue and building good relations," he said, adding that Russia hopes this would lead to "further constructive cooperation with Washington on the Ukrainian settlement."

The International Court of Justice in 1962 awarded sovereignty to Cambodia over an area that included the 1,000-year-old Preah Vihear temple, which still rankles many Thais. The ceasefire does not spell out a path to resolve the underlying basis of the dispute, the longstanding differences over where the border should run.

'Not black or white': Teens worldwide react to Australia social media ban

HONG KONG. (Agency)

Australia's landmark move to ban under-16s from social media will be closely watched by other countries, which could follow suit with similar laws.

AFP spoke to teenagers and adults around the world about the Australian ban, which comes in on Wednesday. Here are some of their reactions:

- Mumbai: 'Nothing is black or white' - At the seafront in India's Mumbai, 19-year-old Pratigya Jena scrolls with her friends through Instagram videos of a posing influencer and a camel at a beach. Social media "should be partially banned because according to me nothing is either black or white", the student said. "Gen Z are very active, they are doing really well on social media. And doing great things, especially young entrepreneurs," Jena said. At the same time, children watching adult content online "has a very bad effect". At a Mumbai park, cricket coach Pratik Bhorke, 38, said Australia's move would encourage

children to spend time outdoors and could have "great benefits" in India too. - Berlin: 'Help to detox' - In the chilly German capital, Luna Drewe, 13, is watching selfie-style TikTok clips posted by other young people. "Actually a good thing in some ways because social media often portrays a certain image of how people should look, like girls have to be thin," she said of the ban. Another teenager, Enno Caro Brandes, said: "I'm 15 so for me the ban would definitely come into effect. I can't really imagine giving it up completely. A ban is a bit extreme, but it could definitely help to do a detox." - Doha: 'Really stupid' - An AI baby singing and answering interview questions are among the videos served up to Firdha Razak, 16, as she scrolls in her room. Razak is not in favour of a ban. "It's really stupid, honestly," although "there's not really much we can do as 16-year-olds" if governments decide to act, she said. The families of many people in Qatar live

abroad, so "it's going to be so much harder to talk to them". Also in Doha, Youssef Walid, 16, said bans like Australia's were "a



bit harsh" and hard to enforce. "We can use VPN. We can easily bypass the security and easily make new accounts," he said. Lagos: "We were born with it" - At a Nigerian high school, Michelle Okinedo is revising for exams, checking over her hand-written notes. In the classroom -- where phones are banned -- students in uniform sit at separate desks.

"I see where the (Australian) government is coming from. Students nowadays, they are really distracted," Okinedo said.

Even so, "we were born with it", the 15-year-old added. "And I don't think it's something I want to stop." Her mother, 50-year-old event planner Hannah Okinedo, agrees with a social media ban for under-16s, saying most parents "don't have time to monitor their children all day". Mexico City: 'Express yourself' -

Young Mexico City resident Aranza Gomez, 11, has had a smartphone with access to social media for one year. Without it, "I would honestly feel sad. I wouldn't really have a good way to spend my time," she said. Santiago Ramirez Rojas, 16, is sitting on a bench in the Tabacalera district, scrolling through posts containing news about Argentina and tour dates for a musician. "Social media today is very important for expressing yourself, no matter how old you are," said Rojas.

NEWS BOX

Maha winter session begins, adjourned within hours over flight disruptions

Nagpur. (Agency)

The winter session of the Maharashtra Legislature commenced in Nagpur on Monday, but concluded within a few hours on the opening day, as large-scale travel disruptions hindered the arrival of several lawmakers.

A major operational crisis involving IndiGo Airlines led to multiple flight cancellations and last-minute rescheduling, delaying the travel plans of political leaders.

While many legislators were stranded at airports, senior leaders were able to reach Nagpur using chartered aircraft. Several others are expected to arrive in the city by train or road over the next two days.

With a truncated attendance, only limited legislative business was taken up before both Houses were adjourned for the day.

Meanwhile, the influx of political delegations during the peak wedding season has pushed hotel tariffs sharply upward. Hotel associations confirmed a steep surge in room rates across premium properties owing to an unusual spike in demand. The winter session is expected to see heated debates in the coming days, with key political and administrative issues slated for discussion.

Maha Cabinet approves scheme to build 'all-weather' motorable farms roads

Nagpur. (Agency)

The Maharashtra Cabinet approved a new scheme to build all-weather, motorable approach roads aimed at improving connectivity between agricultural fields and villages across the state.

The decision was taken at a cabinet meeting chaired by Chief Minister Devendra Fadnavis on Sunday, an official release said. The scheme, titled 'Mukhyamantri Baliraja Shet-Pandan Rasta Yojana', seeks to provide farmers with better access to transportation facilities for moving agricultural produce, thereby reducing delays and easing market linkage.

According to officials, the initiative allows 100 per cent mechanised construction to ensure faster execution, improved quality and to avoid dependence on manual labour, which had slowed work under the MGNREGA framework. The scheme also provides for immediate removal of encroachments on roads demarcated in village maps. The project mandates tree plantation on both sides of the roads, either following the Bihar model or through MGNREGA support. Funding will be allocated through 25-km cluster-based tenders, enabling quicker implementation.

A high-level committee headed by Revenue Minister Chandrashekhar Bawankule will monitor the scheme, which will be implemented across all districts of Maharashtra, the release further said.

Shastra VC launches India's first VC-led deep-tech fellowship to push research boundaries

Chennai. (Agency)

Shastra VC, an early-stage venture capital fund, has launched India's first Venture Capital-led deep-tech fellowship to take frontier research from labs to venture-ready startups. 'SDEX' (Shastra Deep-tech Excellence Fellowship) will be a 16-24 week research-to-venture fellowship aimed at accelerating deep-tech innovation at the grassroots level across India's top engineering and research institutions, ranging from IITs, IISc and IISERs to NITs, IIITs and other national labs, a release from IIT-Madras said today.

'SDEX' will provide to each fellow up to USD 100,000 in equity free funding to deep-tech researchers across IITs, IISc, IISERs, NITs, IIITs and other National Labs to take frontier research from labs to venture-ready startups.

Shastra VC has invested in more than 30 Startups including Alt Carbon, Simplismart, SISIR Radar, Sanlayan, and Inspectify, among others. SDEX Cohort 1 will select up to 15 teams for the inaugural cycle and provide equity-free funding and resources of up to USD 100,000 to each fellow.

Applications are open to researchers and builders across India working on frontier deep-tech innovation.

Bodies of three youth who died in Goa Nightclub fire arrive in Ranchi

Ranchi. The bodies of three youths from Jharkhand, who died in a devastating fire caused by a cylinder explosion at a Goa nightclub, arrived at Birsa Munda Airport in Ranchi on Monday. As soon as the mortal remains were received, wailing relatives broke down in grief, plunging the entire airport premises into an atmosphere of sorrow. Jharkhand Congress Working President Bandhu Tirkey also reached the airport to meet the bereaved families. Expressing deep condolences, he assured them of all possible support. The families have demanded a high-level probe into the tragedy and adequate compensation for the victims. Local administration officials have begun coordinating the necessary procedures with the families. After post-mortem examinations, the bodies will be taken to their respective native villages.

Karnataka's 2.5 lakh vacancies expose fiscal strain, legal hurdles and rising youth anger

Government shies from filling 2.5 lakh vacancies amid resource crunch; as joblessness grows, is it time for AI to step in and steady Karnataka's 'God's Work'?

BENGALURU.(Agency)

The famous inscription on Vidhana Soudha reads 'Government Work is God's Work'. But not many are recruited to take up this divine duty in Karnataka. In 2023, just before the Assembly polls, the Congress released its manifesto and one of the poll promises was that the party would fill all the approved vacancies in all government departments within one year. It's been over 2.5 years, and the promise remains on paper. In the past too, other governments could not fill the vacancies with the result that over 2.5 lakh posts are lying vacant in various departments. There are 5.2 lakh employees in 72 departments, boards and corporations of the government. Of the 2.5 lakh vacant posts, some are managed by employees appointed on contract basis.

At present, the state government has implemented the recommendations of the 7th Pay Commission since August 2024. Under this structure, minimum salary is Rs 27,000 and

maximum is Rs 2.41 lakh. While recruitment has taken a back seat for various reasons, students and graduates in Dharwad are staging protests, demanding the state government to fill the vacancies. The protest turned ugly recently

One of the reasons for not recruiting is lack of funds. Sources in the government told TNIE that on an average, 200 to 250 proposals are received every year from various departments. Each proposal has a request to fill several vacant posts.

"Most of the proposals are from the health, education, police and medical departments. We have to keep in mind the financial implications. In most cases, we give approval only for a few posts in departments where staff shortage is severe," the sources said. But do we really need these many employees for better functionality? A senior retired officer on condition of anonymity, said, "No. Generally revenue expenditure is much larger than capital expenditure (all expenditure that results in asset creation) and the primary

reasons are huge wage bills which come to around Rs 1.5 lakh crore, including salaries, pensions, admin expenses like office rentals, vehicles, maintenance, power and water bills.



where over 40 people were detained by the police. They had staged protests many times earlier. In October this year, they held a state-wide convention of job aspirants.

Financial Implications

Rape accused shot in leg during scuffle with police in Ahmedabad

Head constable Bharat Rathod of the Ahmedabad DCB also sustained injuries, according to a statement by the DCP (Crime)

Ahmedabad .(Agency)

A man accused of raping a mentally challenged woman was injured on Monday after suffering a gunshot wound to the leg during a scuffle with officers of the Detection of Crime Branch (DCB) of the Ahmedabad City Police.

According to DCP (Crime) Ajit Rajian, the incident took place when the accused allegedly tried to escape the custody of crime branch officials during a reconstruction of the crime scene. The accused is in six days' police remand.

A statement by Rajian on Monday afternoon said, "The accused was injured after assaulting police and attempting to escape custody during a reconstruction of the rape offense. The

incident occurred between 12:15 pm and 12:30 pm today, while the Crime Branch team was



conducting the reconstruction." Regarding the

scuffle, the statement added, "The accused allegedly attempted to assault the police team and seize a weapon from Police Inspector Imran Ghasura at the reconstruction site. During the scuffle, a round was fired, which struck the accused in the leg. Additionally, Head Constable Bharat Rathod sustained injuries during the confrontation."

The man was arrested last week for the alleged rape of a mentally challenged woman earlier this year. The police said he has an extensive criminal record, with over 16 offences registered against him. He has previously been detained under the Prevention of Anti-Social Activities Act (PASA) twice and has also faced extemity proceedings.

No buses, roads, students walk 14km to school and back

MYSURU. (Agency)

For more than 50 school and college students from Pachedoddi, a small village near Hanur taluk of Chamrajnagar district, education is a test of endurance. With no bus connectivity and no proper road linking their village to nearby towns, students take a punishing 14 km walk every day. They trek 7 km to schools in Ajjipura, Ramanapura and Hanur, and another 7 km to return home.

The route winds through thick forest patches and stretches of uneven, unpaved mud roads that turn treacherous during monsoon.

The fear of encountering wild animals is ever present, as the area falls under the Male Mahadev Wildlife Division, which recently reported the death of a tiger and frequent movement of wild life.

Children of Pachedoddi cry for CM's attention.

Lack of reliable transport has forced students into this routine that very few children of their age endure. The long walk leaves them exhausted by the time they reach school, and many find it difficult to concentrate in class.

"Our parents brought this issue to the notice of authorities, but in vain. We have now written to the

chief minister," said a student of the village who along with a few of her friends wrote the letter.

Over the years, different ministers, elected representatives and education officials have visited Pachedoddi and promised a solution, but demands like improving the road and regular bus service have been pending for far too long. Recently, the students recorded a video of their struggle and circulated it



on social media, hoping to catch the attention of Chief Minister Siddaramaiah, but it didn't make any impact. Despite the hardships, children of Pachedoddi continue to pursue their education.

Cancer care chain to expand centres across Western India

Mumbai. (Agency)

Specialty Surgical Oncology Hospital (SSO), a chain of surgical cancer hospitals in Western India, has raised 2.8 million dollars in funding from the Everhope Oncology platform, which is backed by Narayana Health, W Health Ventures and 2070 Health.

The investment marks an important step in SSO's plan to expand its network and strengthen access to affordable, specialised cancer surgery. India records nearly 2 million new cancer cases each year, a figure expected to double by 2045. With an increasing burden on public and private cancer centres, SSO aims to scale a model that delivers high-quality surgical oncology care through organ-specific specialist teams. Founded in 2021 by seven cancer surgeons led by Dr. Sanket Mehta, an alumnus of Tata Memorial Hospital, SSO was created to address gaps such as overcrowded hospitals, long waiting periods and limited access to advanced surgical expertise. Its centres operate exclusively as cancer surgery units staffed by organ-specific teams that manage complex cases. Since its

inception, SSO has expanded to five centres, employing a team of twenty surgeons who have collectively performed more than 20,000 oncology procedures.

Commenting on the new investment, Dr. Mehta, Co-founder and Lead Peritoneal Oncology Surgeon, said the hospital chain was founded on the belief that patients' geography or income should not dictate their medical outcomes. He said the partnership will support the launch of three new centres in Mumbai and enable further investment in clinical talent, infrastructure and systems.

Dr. Pankaj Jethwani, Managing Partner at W Health Ventures, said physicians who design care models create systems capable of addressing service gaps and producing meaningful outcomes. He praised SSO's founding team as institution builders with a mission-driven approach.

Viren Shetty, Executive Vice-Chairman at Narayana Health, noted the need for high-quality cancer surgery designed for middle-income patients, especially as demand rises in the coming decades.

Maharashtra govt allots Sion plot to VHP for 30 years for medical, educational activities

The official occupancy commenced on June 25 with an annual ground rent of Rs 10,186 for the entire period and a one-time premium of Rs 9.72 crore.

Mumbai .(Agency)

The Maharashtra government Thursday approved the allotment of a 7,658.33-square-metre plot in Sion to the Vishva Hindu Parishad (VHP) for 30 years, converting the land from a leasehold plot into mukta (occupancy) tenure.

The decision follows a proposal from the Brihanmumbai Municipal Corporation's (BMC) Improvements Department and has been cleared under provisions of the Mumbai Municipal Corporation Act.

In October, the BMC submitted a proposal to the Urban Development Department (UDD), led by Deputy Chief Minister

Eknath Shinde, seeking approval to allot the plot to the VHP for medical or educational purposes. Speaking to The Indian Express, Shirish Nair, a VHP spokesperson, said, "This plot has been part of our operations since 1984, during the time of a Congress government. Previously, it was on lease, but with the current renewal, the government will now receive revenue that it did not before. It is important to note that this is an existing facility; it is not a new allotment. We have been using this location to provide medical and educational assistance to those in need." On December 4, the UDD approved the proposal and

clarified that occupancy will officially begin on June 25, 2025, the date the civic body granted its approval for a 30-year period. The government has fixed an annual ground rent of Rs 10,186, payable by the VHP for the entire 30-year period beginning June 25, 2025. In addition, the organisation must pay a one-time premium of Rs 9.72 crore, calculated at 25 per cent of the usual rate applicable to such long-term occupancy. The civic body will set the payment schedule for both the annual rent and the premium. As per the Development Control and Promotion Regulations (DCPR),

2034, the plot is subject to various reservations. Only medical or



educational activities are allowed on this land. The responsibility of ensuring that the land is used strictly as permitted and that all reservations are followed lies with the BMC commissioner.

Yellow alert issued in 11 districts, Gumla coldest at 3.5°C

Ranchi. (Agency)

The cold wave has tightened its grip across Jharkhand, with temperatures dipping steadily and icy winds in the mornings and evenings adding to the winter chill. Dense morning fog and cold conditions after sunset have begun to disrupt daily life in several parts of the state.

According to the Ranchi Meteorological Centre, no major weather system is currently active over Jharkhand, resulting in dry and stable conditions. Although a western disturbance persists over northern India as a trough, it is not expected to have any direct impact on the state's weather.

While mild sunshine appears during the day, the intensified chill during early mornings and nights has become more pronounced.

Cold winds from the northwest are causing temperatures to drop rapidly, creating cold-wave-like conditions in several districts.

Gumla recorded the lowest minimum temperature at 3.5°C, making it the coldest district in the state. Considering the cold conditions, the Met Department has issued a yellow alert for 11 districts, including Ranchi, advising residents to take necessary precautions.

In the capital Ranchi, the minimum temperature fell to 7.5°C, resulting in a harsh cold spell during morning and late-night hours.

In Kanke, the mercury dropped even further to 4.4°C. Minimum temperatures recorded in other districts included Jamshedpur at 9.6°C, Khunti at 5°C, Bokaro at 8.2°C and Daltonganj at 6.5°C.

In many areas, the cold has become so intense that people are relying on bonfires to cope.

The IMD Department has forecast no major weather change for the next five days, with dry conditions likely to prevail across the state. A slight rise of 2-3°C in minimum temperatures is possible over the next three days, but this is not expected to bring significant relief from the cold. Light cloud cover may appear in some districts. Morning fog and haze are expected to persist until December 13, potentially affecting visibility. Weather experts have advised children, the elderly, and those with health conditions to take extra precautions.

Touchstones: The rise of social anxiety

As we head into the last month of 2025, perhaps it is time to take a long view of what happened this year. Wars, natural disasters and huge social changes shook every part of the world. Above all, Trump happened to the world and no country has been allowed to forget what a single maverick politician can do to bring an era to an end. Since there is time yet to assess all that and by analysts far more erudite, let me look at an aspect that has worried people like me: the rise of social anxiety and its consequences. Virtually every day, one reads about suicides by young people, families that have stopped being connected with each other, broken relationships — whether marital or social — and the alarming rate at which the young keel over and suddenly die of a stroke or heart attack in the prime of their life. Is there a pattern here that we must now confront and deal with before it's too late? The answer I think is a resounding yes. Traditional roles (parents and children, husbands and wives, brothers and sisters, the rise of social groups hitherto invisible to us, such as women) have radically changed. Perhaps the more correct way of describing all the above is that a rewiring of society has crept upon us while we were sleeping. Homes, schools, social interaction are no longer what they were at the turn of the century and neither are the rising levels of insecurity despite better incomes, poverty alleviation and better healthcare. Mental health issues, earlier dismissed as imaginary or pooh-poohed as the indulgence of a few, are now considered an even more important disease than cancer. New initiatives and remarkable medical research have now made it possible for certain types of cancer to be completely cured. Sadly, we are still in a state of denial about the pernicious spread of mental health issues across countries and age groups. The time has come to wake up to what this portends for all humanity.

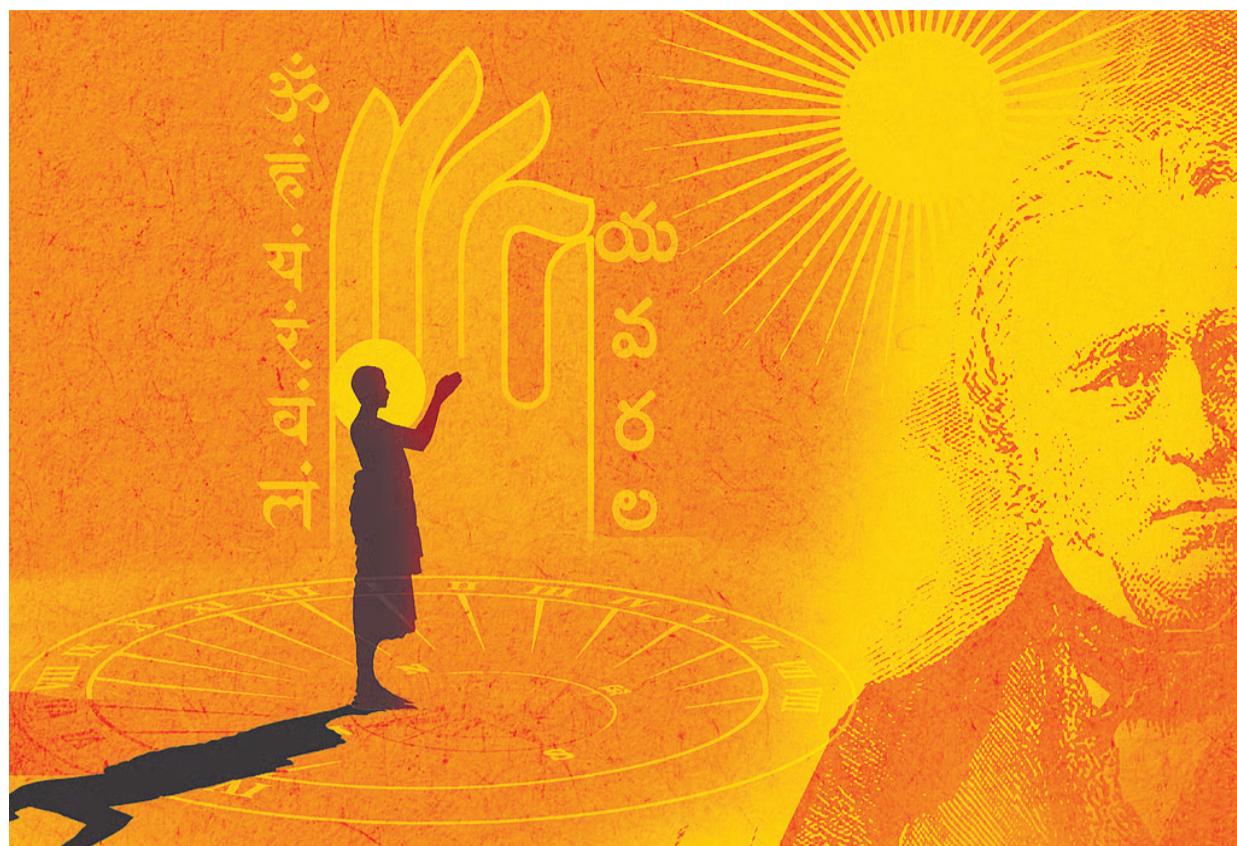
A few months ago, a friend who knows my voracious appetite where books are concerned, sent me Jonathan Haidt's 2024 bestseller, 'The Anxious Generation'. The New York Times had called it "endlessly wise and engrossing" and his research and data are truly impressive. What he calls the Great Rewiring of Childhood (its addiction to social media) has resulted in an epidemic of mental illness that has killed so many. This is now accepted by several psychologists as this massive shift in human behaviour is widely held across the world by sociologists, educationists and social scientists of every hue. All of us have friends who have lost a young one to suicide, committed over an issue that seems so absurd. Others have had friends suddenly keel over and die even as they were at the gym, on a treadmill. Still others have had young friends struck by brain-stroke in the prime of their life. Anxiety, sleeplessness, withdrawal from a social group or family, loneliness, the burden of unsustainable peer pressure, fear of being ignored or 'missing out' — all these are reasons offered. Certainly, these are common reasons, commonly accepted by those who are engaged in the study of such issues. However, the question that then arises is, how can we deal with them and what changes are necessary to set the clock at normal? Naturally, there is no one magic wand that can heal everyone and all of us have to rewire ourselves. Everything, as with most problems, begins at home. From parenting to childcare and schools — the first step is to be there for your children instead of handing them over to a nanny or childcare facilities. It is not easy to do this in current times, given the rising ambitions of young parents and the pressures of a demanding worklife. Bringing up a child is the duty of both parents and if needed, one of the two will have to take a break. I see a change in some cases: work from home is a growing option. In the children's park in our colony, I often see a father bringing in a child to play while he sits around responding to the child's excited chatter. Sadly, there are many more nannies there, one hand holding a mobile phone to catch up with her calls and chats away from the cameras installed by parents to ensure she does not neglect her duties.

By insisting on English as the administrative language and pushing for recruitment based on written exams, Macaulay attacked the privilege of hereditary scribes

For over 2,000 years, the Brahmin was assured of his profession as a bureaucrat in the king's court. The entire system was based on his framework, his rules, his language. His son and nephews inherited his role, no matter who was king. The jati-varna system ensured it. When the Muslim kings came 800 years ago, only the court language changed to Persian. On the ground, everything remained the same. The Brahmin was in charge of administrative affairs. But then came Macaulay, and everything collapsed.

Education changed. Language changed. Systems changed. And most importantly the hegemony was gone. Meritocracy was introduced — provided you studied English and were rich enough to travel to London for the civil services exam. It's a wound that still has not healed. It was made worse when reservations returned post Independence favouring those the Brahmin once considered 'untouchable'. Modern India is repeatedly told that Macaulay destroyed a glorious Indian education system. But the older system that existed before the 19th century was not a universal structure meant for all Indians or even Hindus. It was a patchwork of local institutions aligned to elite groups. They were controlled by hereditary scribes, priests, and court scholars who monopolised state paperwork, temple accounts, land records, and legal interpretation. It was a caste-linked and lineage-linked system that gave predictable employment to specific communities.

Into this world entered Macaulay. He despised all things Hindu or Indian. His ideas were shaped by the needs of the British Empire. But his reforms disrupted a very old monopoly. By insisting on English as the administrative language and pushing for recruitment based on written exams, he attacked the privilege of hereditary scribes. It favoured a new mindset shaped by English literature and classical studies. Not Kalidasa, but Keats. Naturally this favoured a new kind of elite. But it broke the older caste guarantee that knowledge, power, and employment would pass from father to son. The resentment of Brahmin groups toward Macaulay is rooted in this loss. The modern call for decolonisation often hides this tension. According to Christian missionaries, in the 19th century, there were 1,00,000 schools in Bengal, one school for about 500 boys. The Presidency of Madras had indigenous schools where there were more students from lower castes or 'shudra' groups. These are facts. And this information is being widely shared across social media today to show the pre-modern education system was not as horrific as Macaulay portrayed. In fact, it was far superior to the clerical education imposed by the British. It had a deeper sense of Indian civilisation. But this cleverly hides a major fact — that 'shudra' has different



meanings in North and South India. The traditional four-fold chatur-varna system is a theoretical construct more applicable to North than to South. In the North, the Rajputs occupied the Kshatriya position. The Vaishyas were clearly identified as Baniyas. Then came Shudras. In the South, there was no equivalent of Kshatriyas. Nayaka kings of Tamil lands were traders but often referred to as Shudras. Kakatiya kings of Telugu lands proudly claimed to be Shudras. In most parts of peninsular India there were only two castes: Brahmins and Shudras. Shudras were split into the 'elite' right-hand group and the 'peasant' left-hand group. Elite Shudras included land-owning and mercantile families. They went to school. Not the rest. The idea that pre-Macaulay India had a uniformly open education system to all castes is a lie. What remains even more unspoken is the fate of the 'impure, polluted, untouchable' castes and tribal communities, each constituting 10 per cent of India. This bottom fifth is rarely spoken even when academicians speak of India's 'fluid' caste system that was made rigid by British documentation. After Macaulay, English education gradually opened to many castes and

communities. It did not erase inequality. But it offered new routes of mobility. A child from a non-elite family could now enter administration by mastering a new language rather than inheriting social capital. This shift is what angers sections of the old elite. Scrapping civil service exams today would not create equality. It risks bringing back recommendation, family ties, and caste influence, much like the collegium system in the judiciary, where networks and kinship dominate selection, where a non-Brahmin judge is something to be proclaimed and showcased as a case study. Decolonisation must therefore be understood with care. If it means revaluing regional languages and restoring neglected knowledge, it is meaningful. But if it means reinstating old hierarchies in the name of heritage, then it becomes a political tool to regain lost privilege. Today, anyone who questions traditional medicine or ritual practice is accused of being anti-national. A society that silences doubt collapses into dogma. The debate around Macaulay, English, and education is not just about colonialism. It is about whether India wants a future shaped by open inquiry or a past shaped by inherited authority.

RBI unlocks 'goldilocks' phase on growth; rupee new balancing concern

As a rate change is transmitted with a lag, the reduction is perhaps a sign of an anticipated subdued macroeconomic environment, at least in the first few months of 2026.

After a brief pause, the RBI on Friday resumed monetary easing, reducing the repo rate by 25 basis points to 5.25 percent, the lowest in over three years. Analysts expected the central bank to hold fire amid robust growth in the July-September quarter, but the RBI reminded that monetary policy is rarely a rear-guard action and more a forward march. As a rate change is transmitted with a lag, the reduction is perhaps a sign of an anticipated subdued macroeconomic environment, at least in the first few months of 2026. Former Governor Raghuram Rajan noted that we can either have low rates or low inflation, not both. But that's exactly what's happening now. With the central bank keeping the door open for further cuts, the question is how much room does it have? The markets are factoring in 5-5.25 percent as the likely floor this fiscal, though it's likely to see sub-4 percent in 2026-27. The RBI also announced Rs 1 lakh crore of open market operations and \$5 billion in forex swaps to smoothen liquidity and strengthen credit transmission. The dovish pivot is much-needed to support bond yields, which have been under pressure. Meanwhile, the central bank revised the 2025-26



real GDP growth estimate up to 7.3 percent from 6.8 percent projected earlier, besides trimming the inflation outlook to 2 percent from 2.6 percent. As Governor Sanjay Malhotra noted, the first half of this fiscal ended with an

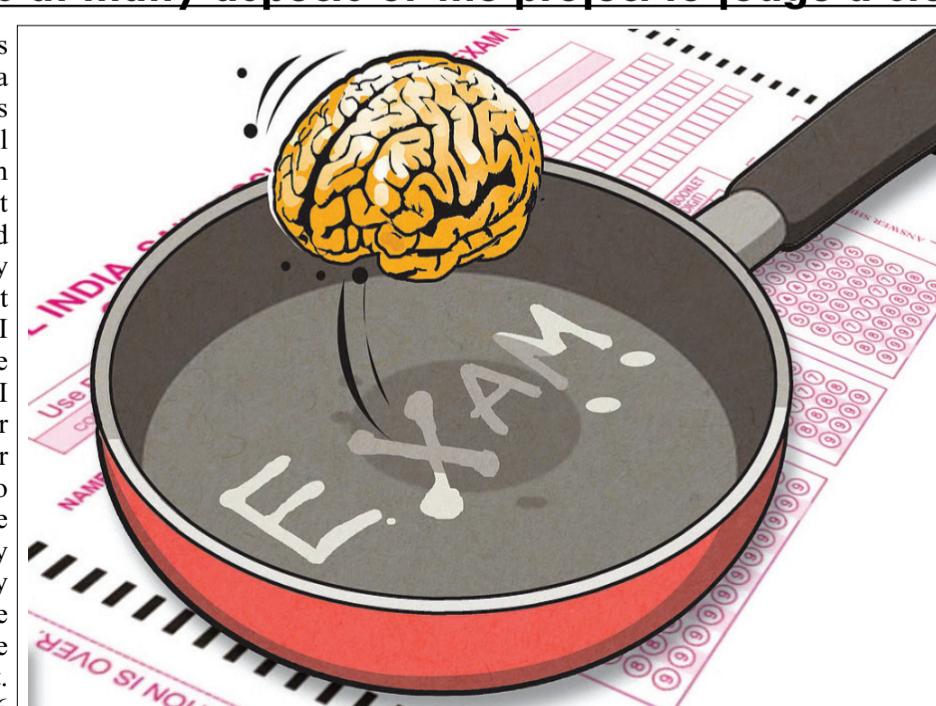
impressive 8 percent growth and 2.2 percent inflation. With sustained rural spending, urban demand rebound, and rising private investments, Malhotra decided to unlock a rare 'Goldilocks' phase to goose the economy.

One argument in favour of cuts was that the real rates are at a decadal high of over 5 percent. As an analyst pointed out, strong nominal GDP growth is essential because only when the nominal momentum improves, demand expands, pricing power stabilises, and companies deliver profits. Therefore, a nominal growth boost is needed to strengthen balance sheets, improve earnings, and reinforce India's broader growth cycle. Friday's rate cut nudges the economy in that direction, even though it failed to charm the currency markets. The rupee, which opened at 89.69 against the US dollar anticipating a status quo, appreciated to 90.07 soon after the announcement. So far this year, the rupee has fallen over 5 percent to emerge as Asia's worst-performing currency. After inflation, it's now one of RBI's major balancing concerns.

Test to enable young minds, not to disable them

The National Education Policy, 2020, talks of assessing a student through a pedagogy that relies on project-based problem solving, and which looks at many aspects of the project to judge a student

I have often pondered at a statement emanating from the 19th century French mathematical genius Evariste Galois. I recall with distaste that the best French mathematicians of his time failed to recognise his abilities. Having been failed more than once in an entrance examination, Galois had remarked somewhat to the effect that a person of higher intelligence is always lost with a person of lesser abilities. Something similar had happened to the Indian mathematical genius Srinivasa Ramanujan when Madras University failed to recognise his extraordinary gifts as a mathematician and struck his name off its rolls. This action was prompted by the fact that Ramanujan had failed to obtain the required minimum marks in the English literature course. Einstein too went through a similar ordeal. To begin with, none of Einstein's university professors recognised his potential as a genius. After having secured a doctorate, he repeatedly failed to obtain a teaching position. In desperation, he took up a job as Patent Clerk Third Class at the patent office in Berne. During this phase he solved three of the greatest mysteries of nature including one that later fetched him the Nobel Prize. Yet, when he applied for promotion to Patent Clerk Second Class, he was rejected. All of these illustrate the veracity of Galois' assertion as above. This brings me to the business of student examinations. My inferences and beliefs are based on experiences ranging from my own days as a student to a myriad learnings across geographical and institutional boundaries. I have come to the firm and clear conclusion that most student examinations are designed in a standard and mostly unimaginative fashion that do not reveal the real abilities of a student. I recall with some clarity the time when as a grade 1 student at school, I carried a letter from my teacher informing my parents about my poor abilities in mathematics and due to which I was to be detained in the same grade for another year. My mother managed to browbeat my teacher with the simple logic of the foolishness of judging so harshly the raw intellect of a grade 1 student. Such a situation recurred in grade 6 again. My teacher repeatedly compared me with my best friend in unfavourable terms. Later, I wrote my first research paper while still a teenager; for the record, my best friend was struggling to clear his school leaving examination at that time. Lest the reader reads unintended meanings into my story, all I am trying to say is that



examinations generally do not tell us useful things about a student. However, my real worries arise from the futility and harm that mark the current practices of examining students for academic abilities. I have never fully understood why we indulge in the habit of using an examination to disable a student. If at all, an

examination must be so designed that it leads to a student being enabled. For instance, instead of asking students if they know the answer to this and that question what prevents an examiner from asking a student to write what he knows? Yet, most examinations that I have encountered are designed to establish how little a student knows. This matter of establishing how little a student knows is what caused harm to Ramanujan. They established his lack of interest in the English literature course but failed to establish his mathematical genius. The other worry that causes much concern stems from the fact that we are examining our students out of their minds. This practice of heaping one examination after another begins at the stage of near infancy and continues unabated year after year.

My fear is that the day is not far off when India shall appear like one giant examination centre from outer space. In contrast, the National Education Policy, 2020, talks of assessing a student through a pedagogy that relies on project-based problem solving, and which looks at many aspects of the project to judge a student.

NEWS BOX

Maharashtra Cabinet approves scheme to provide motorable roads for farmers' connectivity between fields and villages

Ranchi. (Agency)

The Maharashtra Cabinet Sunday approved the ambitious 'Mukhyamantri Baliraja Shet-Pandan Rasta Yojana', a scheme that will ensure all-weather, motorable farm-to-field roads across rural Maharashtra by permitting 100 per cent mechanised construction.

The main objective of the scheme is to enhance connectivity between farmers' fields and villages, and remove bottlenecks in the transportation of agricultural produce. It aims to provide affordable and accessible transportation to farmers, making it easier for them to reach the markets.

The scheme is expected to remove long-standing hurdles faced under the earlier Mahatma Gandhi National Rural Employment Guarantee Act (MGNREGA) framework.

Revenue Minister Chandrashekhar Bawankule, who also heads the monitoring committee for the scheme, said, "For decades, farmers have struggled with muddy, broken approach roads that become unusable during the monsoon. This revolutionary scheme will ensure durable roads right up to every farm, enabling timely sowing, smooth harvesting and quick transport of produce to markets."

According to officials, under the scheme, 100 per cent use of machinery is allowed to ensure speedy, quality construction and eliminate dependence on manual labour availability. It also seeks to ensure the immediate removal of encroachments on roads marked in village maps.

"Mandatory tree plantation on both sides of every road (Bihar pattern or through MGNREGA) will be done under the scheme. Dedicated funding will be provided through cluster-based tendering (25-km clusters) to ensure rapid execution. The scheme will be implemented across all districts of Maharashtra and will be monitored by a high-level committee headed by Revenue Minister Chandrashekhar Bawankule," an official said.

Bodies of three youth who died in Goa Nightclub fire arrive in Ranchi

Ranchi. (Agency)

The bodies of three youths from Jharkhand, who died in a devastating fire caused by a cylinder explosion at a Goa nightclub, arrived at Birsa Munda Airport in Ranchi on Monday. As soon as the mortal remains were received, wailing relatives broke down in grief, plunging the entire airport premises into an atmosphere of sorrow.

Jharkhand Congress Working President Bandhu Tirkey also reached the airport to meet the bereaved families. Expressing deep condolences, he assured them of all possible support. The families have demanded a high-level probe into the tragedy and adequate compensation for the victims.

Local administration officials have begun coordinating the necessary procedures with the families. After post-mortem examinations, the bodies will be taken to their respective native villages. A wave of mourning has swept through the villages as large numbers of residents gather to offer condolences.

It may be recalled that around 25 people lost their lives in the incident. Among them were three youths from Jharkhand Pradeep Mahto (24) and his brother Vinod Mahto (22), sons of Dhaneshwar Mahto from Fatehpur, Lapung block of Ranchi district, and Mohit Mahto (22), son of Etwa Mahto from Govindpur, Karra block of Khunti district. All three had travelled to Goa for work as cooks.

Security agencies seize brown sugar worth Rs 10 crore at Indo-Bangla border

Kolkata. (Agency)

Alert security agencies, including the BSF, guarding the Indo-Bangla border, have seized contraband brown sugar, worth over Rs 10 crore, seized more than Rs 10,000 Indian fake currencies, and arrested two suspects in separate raids from West Bengal's Malda district border, official sources said on Monday.

Sources said the Border Security Force (BSF) jawans, whilst on patrol, held a Bangladeshi national, identified as Md Razzowan from the Mahadipur International Land Port, with nearly Rs 20,000 counterfeit Indian currency. Razzowan, who hailed from Khariyal village in Monaksha of Chapainawabganj district, had entered India on a valid passport and visa. The BSF has handed him over to the English Bazar Police station, and on interrogation, the foreigner claimed he had unknowingly gotten the fake currencies while exchanging Bangladeshi Taka for Indian rupees at Sonamasjid Panama Port.

In a separate drive, Kaliachak Police, during raids and frisking on the border area at Mozampur, recovered 4,400 kgs of contraband brown sugar, valued at over Rs 10 crore. The contraband, packed in four polypackets, was found near the house of one Sukchand Sheikh, while the accused fled from the spot.

Admin spends Rs 1.5 crore on dismantling road railings and fixing again after increasing height

Experts claim railings, which people jump over and cross anyway, are not a viable option and bat for green hedges

Chandigarh. (Agency)

At the public expense of Rs 1.5 crore, the Chandigarh Administration is doing an interesting task — dismantling the existing road railings (guard rails) and reinstalling them after adjusting their heights. This tedious job is being done for over Rs 50 lakh at Madhya Marg and for over Rs 1 crore on the Kalka-Chandigarh stretch.

Chief Engineer CB Ojha told The Indian Express, "Heights of the railings are very low, and it was pointed out at several road safety meetings. So, we are increasing the height and then reinstalling to prevent accidents. At certain places where railings have come off, we are installing new ones."

Speaking with The Indian Express, former nominated councillor Surinder Bahga asked why green hedges couldn't serve the purpose? "Why couldn't they just have green hedges like other cities. Why are they fixing railings, even after knowing that railings don't help prevent fatal accidents? It is just a vague explanation to go ahead with installing railings," he said. "They are fixing railings without any authentic study about their viability in preventing accidents. We architects

had opposed it, but nobody listened to us. Grand avenues are partitioned to give them a narrow look. It isn't just ruining the city's beauty, but also not practical. The bureaucracy-engineers' nexus will oppose us by saying they are doing it to control accidents," Bahga said.

it spoiled the look and scale of the road. The hedges were working well. But the traffic police would insist that people randomly crossing the road was a major hazard. If thorny hedges are installed, no one would do that. It seems this time, they have now replaced it to strengthen railings."

"At the Madhya Marg stretch, the dismantling of the existing 9-10½ foot-long MS flat iron railing and fixing the same again after repairing, like cutting, strengthening of existing bent members, and increasing the height of the existing railings by welding 6-inch piece of channel of size 125mm x 65mm and rotate the grill after cutting the edges of horizontal angles/vertical flats welded to MS vertical channel & 9 long flat of size 50mm x 6mm welded on sharp edges is being done for lakhs," as mentioned in the scope of work.

The scope of work further says that they are also inserting a "12mm dia long bar placed in each vertical flat after making a suitable hole and welding with flats. The channel of railing is to be joined back-to-back with new 12mm nuts, bolts & 3-inch-long GI sleeves. The whole structure is also being painted with two coats of synthetic enamel paint".



Bahga said, "Railings of this height are not even needed. Bushes or green hedges are a great option."

A heritage expert, on the condition of anonymity, said, "Why were railings not fixed properly when they were installed for it first. When they were first installing railings, people objected as

GM NFR Conducts Comprehensive Inspection Focus on Safety, Efficiency and World Class NJP Station

The Sikh Times

Maligaon, 07th December:

Shri Chetan Kumar Shrivastava, General Manager, Northeast Frontier Railway (NFR) carried out comprehensive inspection of the Malda - New Jalpaiguri section, including tracks, signals, stations, loco shed and others infrastructure. He was accompanied by senior officials from NFR Headquarters as well as divisional officials. The General Manager arrived at Malda Town (MLDT) where he conducted a detailed inspection of the Malda Town Loco Shed, reviewing maintenance practices, safety standards and overall operational readiness. He appreciated the dedicated efforts of the staff in ensuring reliable and safe locomotive operations, highlighting the strong safety culture maintained across the zone. He also carried out a

through Window Inspection from Malda New Jalpaiguri (NJP) during which he assessed track conditions, signalling assets, passenger amenities and infrastructure readiness along the route. He emphasised the importance of adhering to safety protocols and modern operational practices to ensure smooth and secure train operations. During the visit, Shri Shrivastava reviewed the progress of works under the Amrit Bharat Station Scheme (ABSS) at Samsi (SM) and Dalkhola (DLK) stations. At Samsi, the GM of NFR examined the level crossing gates to ensure their safe and efficient operation. At Dalkhola, he reviewed the redevelopment works aimed at modernising station facilities, modern facilities, state-of-the-art platforms, enhanced passenger amenities and improved circulation areas. He also reviewed other redevelopment initiatives under the Amrit Bharat Station Scheme, designed to create a highly efficient and future ready travel hub that delivers an exceptional experience for all passengers. Shri Shrivastava commended the commitment and professionalism of railway personnel in maintaining the highest safety and operational standards. He reaffirmed NFR's dedication to continuous infrastructure development, technological upgradation & delivering safe, reliable and passenger friendly railway services across the zone.



CCTV expansion to interceptor vehicles, traffic enforcement get logistical boost in Uttar Pradesh

Sanctions include 4.96 crore for CCTV cameras at major intersections in Lucknow, 3.10 crore for integrated CCTV cameras in Moradabad and Ballia

Lucknow. (Agency)

The state government has approved proposals to upgrade its traffic and transport infrastructure, including electronic enforcement devices, CCTV network expansion, and interceptor vehicles, to enhance road safety and reduce accidents, said the officials on Sunday.

According to the officials, the Uttar Pradesh Transport Department and Traffic Directorate have received sanctions for multiple proposals to purchase state-of-the-art electronic enforcement devices, expand the CCTV network, install motion sensors, and acquire interceptor vehicles.

Sanctions include 4.96 crore for CCTV cameras at major intersections in Lucknow, ₹3.10 crore for integrated CCTV cameras in Moradabad and Ballia, and 1.28 crore for truck simulators and technical equipment for BTTE units, according to the officials. The government has also decided to install electronic enforcement devices in 25 high-risk districts through the DRSC (District Road Safety Committee), said the officials. The Transport Department and the Traffic Directorate have received Rs 25 crore i.e. Rs 1 crore per district and

an additional 25 crore 50 lakh per district) for the remaining 50 districts.

The Transport Department officials informed that Rs 19.95 crore had been approved for interceptor vehicles and other equipment in 2024-25, of which approximately Rs 17.15 crore was spent on 70

interceptor vehicles.

Further, Rs 14.05 crore has been approved for 18 motion sensors. The department has also submitted new proposals for the construction of platforms and additional infrastructure to make the sensors more effective, said the officials.

Further, for road safety awareness in the state, revenue schemes worth over Rs 2.10 crore have been approved for the promotion of traffic rules, e-challan system, signage boards, internet services, equipment repair, mobile recharge, and campaigns. Officials informed that the Traffic Directorate is in the process of purchasing 4,500 iron barriers, 4,525 folding barriers, 7,200 safety helmets, 8,000 fluorescent jackets, 270 breathalysers, 85 speed laser guns, 15 four-wheeled and 62 two-wheeled interceptor vehicles at a cost of Rs 25 crore.



UP: Woman cop claimed SHO shot himself – now arrested for his murder

Lucknow. (Agency)

A 27-year-old woman police constable was arrested on Sunday for allegedly killing a Station House Officer (SHO) in Jalaun district of Uttar Pradesh.

The body of 46-year-old Arun Kumar Rai, the SHO of Kuthaund police station, was found at his official residence on Friday night with a gunshot wound to his head. According to Jalaun Superintendent of Police Durgesh Kumar Singh, constable Meenakshi Sharma had first informed the police about Rai's death, claiming the SHO had allegedly shot himself with his service weapon.

However, police said, suspicion about her involvement grew when CCTV footage showed her coming out of the SHO's residence just after the incident on Friday night. The SHO's wife had also accused Meenakshi Sharma of killing him. Sharma is currently posted with Dial 112 in Jalaun.

"The postmortem report revealed that the bullet had entered from the right side of the SHO's head and exited from the left... Based on the evidence gathered so far, we have arrested the woman constable. She was the one

who first informed the police about the incident," Jalaun Superintendent of Police Durgesh Kumar Singh said, adding that scientific evidence is being collected, and the next steps would be taken accordingly.

Sources in the police said that the woman constable was arrested "primarily because she was present at the spot at the time of the incident".

"Around 9 pm on Friday, the woman constable was seen running out of the SHO's residence, shouting that he had shot himself. Moments earlier, police personnel at the Kuthaund station had heard the sound of a gunshot. When they rushed to the SHO's quarters located inside the police station premises, they found the SHO lying on the floor with blood oozing from his head. He was taken to the hospital, where doctors declared him dead," said a police officer, citing the CCTV footage. Rai, who had been promoted to the post of inspector from constable in August this year, is survived by his wife and a son. His last rites were performed with a guard of honour in his home district of Sant Kabir Nagar on Sunday.

Kashmiri women artisans debut at Amritsar's annual Punjab International Trade Expo

The Rouble Nagi Art Foundation has set up a PITEX stall showcasing Kashmiri women artisans' work as part of its Studio Saksham initiative to make rural women capable, confident, and financially independent.

Amritsar. (Agency)

The annual Punjab International

Trade Expo (PITEX) in Amritsar

has for the first time featured

Kashmiri women artisans' work.

The display is part of the Studio

Saksham initiative by the Rouble

Nagi Art Foundation (RNAF),

which has set up a stall at the

exhibition at Ranjit Avenue.

The exhibition, running from December 4 to December 8, features handcrafted goods from over 6,000 women across India. While the stall features products from states such as Telangana, Jharkhand, and Maharashtra, the debut of Kashmiri craftsmanship remains the primary focus. The Kashmiri collection includes



Punjab.

economic objective behind the showcase. "Our vision is simple: to make women in villages Saksham—capable, confident, and financially independent," Nagi stated. "When visitors support Studio Saksham, they are not just buying a product; they are uplifting a woman, preserving a tradition, and strengthening the cultural heartbeat of India."

In addition to the Kashmiri collection, the stall displays a wide range of other regional items.

These include embroidered kurta from Uttar Pradesh, silk sarees from Gujarat, rugs from Rajasthan, and cotton satin co-ord sets from Mumbai. The initiative aims to function as a marketplace that connects rural artisans with urban buyers, eliminating middlemen.

Following the response at PITEX, the foundation has announced plans to establish a permanent centre in Punjab.

The centre will focus on training local women in reviving traditional Punjabi crafts such as Phulkari and modernising them for national and global markets.

"We aim to turn local craft clusters into thriving economic ecosystems powered by women," Nagi added.

Tripura BJP threatens to launch a movement against Congress MLA's threat to BLOs

Agartala. (Agency)

The ruling Bharatiya Janata Party (BJP) in Tripura strongly criticised the opposition Congress party following a warning issued by Congress Working Committee member Sudip Roy Barman to Booth Level Officers (BLO) regarding the upcoming Special Intensive Revision (SIR) of the electoral roll. BJP President and Rajya Sabha MP Rajib Bhattacharjee condemned Roy Barman's language towards the BLOs, stating that it reflected the culture of the Congress party. Bhattacharjee emphasised that the BLOs, as government employees working under the supervision of the Election Commission of India, were being directly targeted by Roy Barman's remarks, which he deemed unacceptable and potentially criminal. He clarified that while all political parties have the right to raise concerns about the electoral roll during the ongoing correction activities, openly threatening electoral officials is not permissible. BJP would move to the appropriate forum on such a statement, besides mobilising people against the attempt to indulge unrest, he pointed out.

In a public meeting in Indranagar last evening, Roy Barman accused BJP of attempting to manipulate the electoral roll during the SIR and advised BLOs to resist any pressure that could compromise the integrity of voter list verification.

Citing examples from Maharashtra, Haryana, and Bihar, Roy Barman highlighted discrepancies in electoral rolls and stressed the importance of preventing such issues in Tripura, and said, "You (BLOs) will be beaten up in public; BJP cannot save you from physical assault." He warned the BLOs against falling into the BJP's alleged design to gain an advantage, and stated that any manipulation or attempt during the SIR would not go unnoticed by the public. Roy Barman further clarified that legitimate corrections, like the deletion of names of deceased voters or ineligible non-citizens, were acceptable, but fabricated or artificially multiplied entries of voters would be met with strong opposition.

Lured via Grindr, Gurgaon youth kidnapped for Rs 37,000 ransom; four arrested

Gurgaon Police said they rescued the youth as well as another man, whom the accused had kidnapped earlier so they could use his bank account to transfer the ransom amount.

Gurgaon.(Agency)

On Saturday, a 20-year-old youth was abducted and Rs 37,000 demanded as ransom from his family. Five hours after a missing complaint was lodged, the Crime Branch of the Gurgaon Police Sunday arrested four men in the case.

During investigation, police said it emerged that the victim had met the accused through the Grindr social networking app.

The arrested accused have been identified as Ajay (21, studying in an ITI), and two 18-year-olds. The three are residents of Charkhi Dadri district. The fourth accused, Anil (33, a Class 12 passout), is a resident of Gadrai village in the same district.

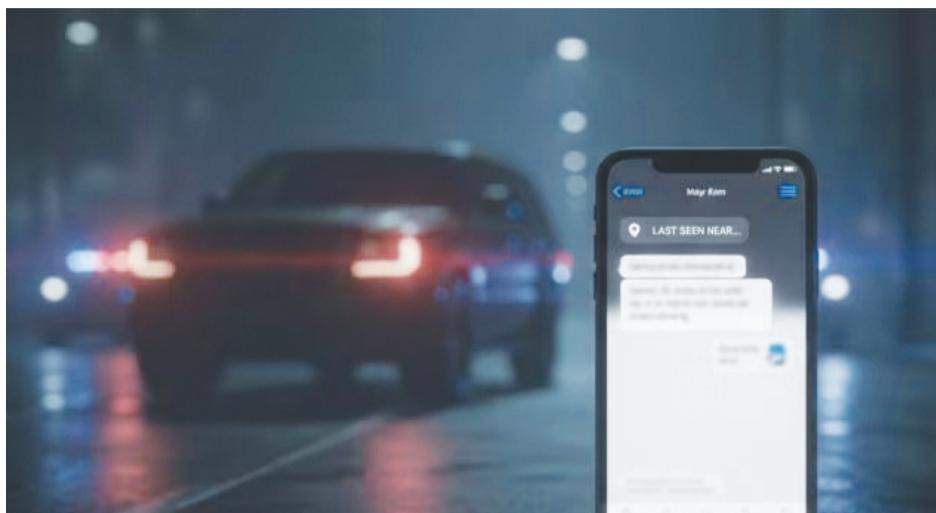
Police said during questioning, the accused admitted to kidnapping another man the same day from Asandh, Karnal district, to obtain a bank account for routing the

ransom money. The second victim was also rescued safely, police said. The Gurgaon youth was kidnapped on December 6 when he had gone to a gurdwara for prayers.

"The 20-year-old victim had developed acquaintance with the accused through the Grindr social networking app about 10 days ago. On December 6, around 4.30 am, after the youth reached the Sector 9 roundabout on the Dwarka Expressway following morning prayers, the accused picked him up in a rented black Scorpio, injected him with a sedative, and took him towards Haridwar," a police spokesperson said.

While the victim was unconscious, the accused made WhatsApp calls from his phone to demand ransom from the family, police added.

"They forced the family to transfer Rs 21,000 to a bank account belonging to one



Manpreet, Rs 6,000 to another account, and Rs 10,000 through the victim's phone — totalling Rs 37,000. Manpreet had been abducted earlier on December 6 from

Asandh, specifically to use his account for the transaction," the spokesperson said.

A complaint was lodged at Rajendra Park police station around 4.30 am on December 6 after the youth did not return home. Initially registered under Section 127(6) of the BNS for a missing person, the case was converted to kidnapping for ransom under Section 140(2) BNS on Sunday.

A joint team of the Palam Vihar Crime Branch and Rajendra Park police traced the accused to Umri Chowk in Kurukshetra and arrested them on Sunday afternoon. Both victims were rescued safely.

"From the possession of the accused, police seized the black Scorpio used in the crime and 11 mobile phones. The accused said they are drug addicts and committed the abductions to fund their habit," officers said.

Lure of Bollywood, easy forex deal: How a Kolkata man conned people with a promise of making film deals

New Delhi.(Agency)

The Delhi Police Sunday arrested an alleged interstate fraudster accused of running a pan-India foreign currency exchange cheating racket, who was wanted in multiple cases in the national capital, Mumbai, and Kolkata.

According to Crime Branch officers, Krishna Kumar Sharma, 31, was tracked down and arrested in Kiran Garden, Uttam Nagar. They said Sharma is the mastermind of a gang that duped victims by offering favourable foreign currency exchange deals, and posing as film industry professionals.

His associate, Saurabh, has already been arrested by the Kolkata police. "SI Anuj Chhikara received a tip-off on December 6 that Sharma would visit Kiran Garden to meet an associate. A



team was formed... After placing Sharma under technical surveillance, and pinpointing his location, officers laid a trap and apprehended him the same day," said Harsh Indora, Deputy Commissioner of Police, Crime Branch.

Cases in multiple cities

Sharma, who belongs to Rishra in West Bengal's Hooghly district, had been on the run after a case was registered against him at the Shakespeare Sarani Police Station in Kolkata. A warrant of arrest was issued against him by the chief judicial magistrate in Kolkata on December 6.

Sharma is wanted in an FIR registered on November 14 under sections 318(4), 319(2) and 61(2) of the Bharatiya Nyaya Sanhita (BNS). The complainant alleged that Sharma induced him to part with \$15,000 and 1,000 euros, valued at approximately Rs 14.5 lakh, on the pretext of a forex deal.

Crime Branch officers said Sharma has been previously involved in at least four other cases, in Amboli and Vakola in Mumbai, and one at Connaught Place in Delhi. In 2023, he allegedly cheated a woman of Rs 45 lakh by promising to arrange the signing of a Bollywood actor.

In wake of Christmas, New Year celebrations, Delhi Police to intensify patrolling in party hubs

Police officers said that all establishments must ensure that fire extinguishers are functional, exit routes remain free of obstructions, and electrical loads are regularly monitored.

New Delhi.(Agency)

With a crowd swelling expected in the popular parts of the Capital in the wake of Christmas and the New Year celebrations, the Delhi Police on Sunday said patrolling will be intensified in major party hubs and that clubs, bars, restaurants and other venues have been directed to review their fire safety compliance.

The advisory comes a day after a massive fire at a nightclub in Goa killed 25 people, prompting renewed scrutiny of fire preparedness at venues across the country.

Police officers said that all establishments must ensure that fire

extinguishers are functional, exit routes remain free of obstructions, and electrical loads are regularly

and increased patrolling in the city. Additional force has been stationed outside nightclubs, and we will maintain strict vigilance to ensure that all regulations are followed," a senior officer said.

Pub and restaurant owners in South Delhi said various major outlets in the city already comply with the rules laid down by authorities. They noted that fire safety norms are regularly updated, and that new entrants to the nightlife industry must treat them as essential. They also pointed out that overcrowding can make evacuation extremely difficult and that even minor obstructions near doors can worsen a crisis.



monitored. They added that nights drawing large crowds require strict adherence to emergency procedures. "We have deployed additional PCRs

'Nobody knows when will bodies arrive...': Grief hangs heavy at Delhi home as 4 of family killed in Goa club fire

New Delhi.(Agency)

Four out of the five tourists killed in a fire at a club in Goa on Saturday night were from Karawal Nagar in North-East Delhi. In all, 25 were killed in the incident.

On Sunday, the neighbours of the deceased — four of the same family — gathered outside their double-storey house. The bodies had not reached till evening, yet the neighbourhood stood in quiet vigil. A white tent has been erected outside the house to accommodate the steady flow of visitors. Inside, sat Vinod Kumar's elderly mother surrounded by relatives. People said she was not told yet that her younger son, her daughter-in-law and two other members of the family had died. "Woh ro toh rahi hain... par unko abhi tak poori baat nahi batayi gayi (She has been crying... but has not

been told about the entire incident yet)," a neighbour said.

The four members of the family who died in the blaze are Vinod Kumar,



his sister-in-laws Anita Joshi and Saroj Joshi, and his elder brother's wife Kamla. Vinod's wife Bhavana survived. The group had left for Goa on December 3 and were scheduled to return on Monday. According to Goa Police, the inquest proceedings

were completed for Vinod and Saroj, while post-mortem of Kamla's and Anita's bodies were pending, as of Sunday night. "Nobody knows when the bodies will arrive... people have been gathering here since morning," said Anju, a neighbour.

The locality — a cluster of narrow lanes, uneven roads and a long nallah running parallel to the houses — is home to families who migrated from Uttarakhand in the 1980s and 1990s. Over the years, many have built larger homes and in many live joint families. "I have been staying here since 1985... their family had arrived just 2-3 years after us. Our families have known each other ever since. They have been good neighbours... would never get into any fight," said Rajesh Shah.

Fake dating profiles, a 'rare oil' pitch: How Ugandan man duped AIIMS researcher of Rs 1.90 lakh

Delhi Police arrested the accused and claimed he is linked to 14 cyber fraud cases, with the duped amount running into crores, on the National Cybercrime Reporting Portal

New Delhi.(Agency)

Creating fake profiles of women on dating apps using his girlfriend's photo, luring victims to invest in a fraudulent rare oil business scheme: That's how a Ugandan national allegedly honeytrapped an AIIMS researcher and duped him of Rs 1.90 lakh in a 'romance-cum-investment' scam.

The Delhi Police have arrested the Ugandan national, Micheal Iga (38), for running a cyber fraud syndicate in the national capital. He was also residing illegally in North Delhi.

Police claimed he is linked to 14 cyber-fraud cases on the

National Cybercrime Reporting Portal, with cumulative researcher came across the fraudulent transactions running profile of a woman on a dating into several crores across multiple states.

"Investigation revealed that the accused created multiple fake identities of women to befriend victims online, emotionally manipulate them, and cheat them through fabricated high-return investment stories. He used photographs of his girlfriend to create fake profiles on dating and social media platforms," DCP (Southwest) Amit Goel said.

The present case started a year



site, Happn. Sparks flew, numbers were exchanged, and within a month, the researcher and the woman were talking regularly. The woman was none other than Iga, posing as an

employee of a beauty-products company, police said.

"Iga lured him with a fraudulent business opportunity to buy a rare oil from Assam for Rs 2 lakh per litre and sell it for Rs 3.5 lakh, promising instant high returns," a police officer said.

Iga was arrested on December 8 from Burari. During questioning, he told police that he was the one who created the fake profile and trapped the victim in the fraudulent scheme.

A special team led by Inspector Pravesh Kaushik, police said, also recovered cash Rs 22,500,

four mobile phones, a laptop, and six debit cards used for receiving and rotating defrauded funds from Iga's possession.

"The accused frequently changed locations to evade arrest. Multiple raids were carried out in Gurgaon, Mehrauli, Burari, and adjoining areas before he was finally apprehended through sustained technical surveillance," DCP Goel said.

"Intimation regarding the foreign national was sent to the Uganda Embassy and Foreigners Regional Registration Office. The accused was found to be residing illegally in Delhi.

NEWS BOX

Virat Kohli begins new chapter, announces partnership with Agilitas after Puma exit

New Delhi. (Agency)

Indian cricket superstar Virat Kohli announced his partnership with Indian sportswear startup Agilitas Sports on Monday, December 8. Days after winning the Player of the Series award in India's 2-1 ODI series win over South Africa, the batting great confirmed the partnership with a video on social media. Earlier this year, Virat Kohli ended his long-term association with sportswear giant PUMA, instead signing on as an investor and brand ambassador with Indian sportswear startup Agilitas Sports, founded by Abhishek Ganguly, former Managing Director of Puma India and Southeast Asia. Kohli's original deal with Puma, signed in 2017, was reportedly worth Rs 110 crore. The eight-year partnership saw the launch of his lifestyle-athleisure label One8 under Puma's umbrella. Media reports



suggested that Kohli rejected a substantial renewal offer from Puma — reportedly around Rs 300 crore, in order to back Agilitas. "Look, when the offer came through and he (Ganguly) made me understand the force behind it, the manufacturing capabilities, the expertise that he has, and the kind of people that were going to come on board, I thought this could become something big and of course, I wanted to be a part of it," Kohli said. "This has been designed by people of our own, made here. But, I think the foundation of this whole process is fulfilling your potential," he added. With the shift, Kohli isn't just becoming a face of Agilitas, he is reportedly making a significant equity investment. Regulatory filings suggest his initial input may be Rs 40 crore, which translates to roughly 1.94% stake in the company, through Compulsorily Convertible Preference Shares (CCPS). This move elevates Kohli's role from brand ambassador to co-creator and stakeholder, helping shape the direction of Agilitas and its associated brands. The company has positioned itself as a full lifecycle sportswear firm — from manufacturing to retail.

Ashes: Nathan Lyon is pissed. But Steve Smith says Gabba axe right call

New Delhi. (Agency)

Australia's stand-in captain for the first two Tests of the ongoing Ashes 2025-26, Steve Smith, hopes that Michael Neser's five-wicket haul in the second Test will silence the chatter surrounding the decision to bench Nathan Lyon. Neser claimed his maiden five-wicket haul in Tests, registering figures of 5/42 in 16.2 overs in the second innings. He was instrumental in triggering England's collapse on Day 4 after the first-session resistance from Ben Stokes and Will Jacks. Following his match-winning performance, Smith hoped that the five-for would put an end to the criticism he faced for benching Nathan Lyon. He praised Neser's skill in keeping things tight with his stump-to-stump line and in forcing batters to take risks. He did a wonderful job, I hope so. It was tight, we could've gone a few different ways and it's certainly nothing against Nathan. He's been our spinner for a long



time. I think Michael offers something different. We can bring the keeper up, we can bowl stump to stump, keep things tight and make you take risks when the ball's probably not quite as quick or a little bit skiddy," said Smith in the post-match press conference. "It was a kind of similar role as to what Nathan would play, obviously not a spinner, but a similar role and obviously (he) extended our batting, which we thought was going to be crucial as well," he added. Meanwhile, Lyon had openly expressed his disappointment at being dropped for the second Ashes Test, marking the first time he has missed a home Test since 2012. As Australia went in with an all-seam attack, the decision surprised many fans and pundits, particularly as captain Steve Smith indicated a preference for additional seamers to take advantage of the pink ball in the day-night conditions.

Potential vs process: India were outthought by Germany in Junior World Cup semis

Hockey Junior World Cup 2025: Germany showed India the difference between talent and preparation. Now comes the real test—whether these lessons survive beyond heartbreak and become the steel that shapes tomorrow's champions.

New Delhi. (Agency)

There are two ways to judge India's 1-5 defeat against reigning World Champions Germany in the semi-finals of the 2025 Junior World Cup — get exasperated or in the larger scheme of things, take this as a bold step forward, a learning curve that would make the team understand the gap between itself and a team that moves like water. After easy group matches, and a belligerent quarterfinal against Belgium which went all the way to the shoot-out, the Indian juniors had a feel of what it is to look into the void of high-pressure elite hockey. As has happened in previous Junior World Cups, the ones who

can manage the pressure, imagine bigger stages to ply their trade, will make it to the senior team; the rest would fall by the wayside. Yet, in all this, India has everything to play for — a third/fourth bronze medal match against Argentina. India will not only play for pride, the bronze but also to forget the nightmare against Germany. The boys, including the coaching staff, headed by former Indian goalkeeper PR Sreejesh, should be proud of the fact that they are in the world's elite four teams. The big question is whether we learn from a team that, in the juniors, has been the most consistent with 13 semifinals in 14 editions and seven trophies, perfectly positioned now to pick up their 8th World Cup. If the semi-final gave us insights, it was simply that, as a team, we are not ready to be flexible in order to make a match or even take on a team that knew what and when to do. By the 2nd quarter and the end of the 3rd quarter, we were not only outplayed. But out thought. It's the latter which highlights the critical gulf in strategic depth and on-field decision-making, distinguishing world-class consistency from potential. With aggressive pressing, they forced India into playing

predominantly in their own half right from the start. Crucial goals came at critical times, including right at the stroke of the first and second quarters, effectively crushing India's



morale early on; goals came in the 14th, 15th, 30th, 40th, and 49th minute. Have a close look at the game plan, and you will see better tactical execution from Germany, who repeatedly found ways to slice open the Indian defence using simple half-turns in the midfield and quick passing, showing an elevated level of on-field intelligence and coordination. In a high-quality semi-final, skill counts but what differentiates two teams is always about execution. In order to keep India's constantly free-wheeling forwards at

bay, a high press followed by a defensive posture worked for Germany. India, knowing Germany's strength, should have controlled the game, packing the midfield, stalling Germany's counter-attacking strength. The more we kept them away, figured out the area in and around the striking circle, there could have been an act of desperation from Germany too; no team is immune from that. At this level, holding and controlling are the best methods to employ.

DEJA-VU?

There was a similar situation in 1997 when India played Germany in the junior World Cup semi-finals. With goals in the 5th and 31st minute, Germany was 2-0 up at the break. It looked bleak. Rajesh Chauhan, who had already gained some experience playing with the senior side, went up to coach Bhaskaran and said that he would like to play in the centre half position, more in an attacking role. Baljit Saini, the skipper, was already making forays from his halfback position. Bhaskaran agreed and India controlled the midfield, pushing Germany back, and getting goals in the 38th and 43rd minutes off moves that sprung from the middle of the striking circle.

Shakib Al Hasan eyes swansong in Bangladesh as political, selection hurdles linger

CHRISTCHURCH. (Agency)

Former Bangladesh captain Shakib Al Hasan has made a U-turn on his international retirement, saying he wants to play all three formats once before calling it quits. Shakib's latest statement comes despite an official stance from authorities that he will not be selected for the national team.

Shakib announced his T20I and Test retirements last year and has continued to play franchise cricket across the globe. The 38-year-old all-rounder, however, said he wants to return to Bangladesh and bow out of international cricket in front of fans, who have cheered him on over the years. Shakib has been one of Bangladesh's most successful cricketers, amassing more than 14,000 international runs and taking over 700 wickets since making his debut in 2006. He captained Bangladesh across formats and was widely regarded as the country's leading match-winner over the past



decade. However, Shakib has not featured for Bangladesh since political turmoil in 2024 that led to a change in government. During that period, he was an elected Member of Parliament representing the ruling Awami League. Following the government's collapse and the formation of an interim administration, several figures associated with the former regime came under scrutiny. In August 2025, Bangladesh's interim Sports Adviser, Asif Mahmud, announced that Shakib would no longer be considered for national selection due to his association with the Awami League leadership. "I am hopeful (of returning to Bangladesh) and that's why I am playing and I think it will happen and that's the reason, the only reason I am playing (to stay fit and retire at home)" Shakib told Moeen Ali on the Beard Before Wicket podcast.

SMAT 2025: Baroda's Amit Passi equals world record with hundred on T20 debut

New Delhi. (Agency)

Wicketkeeper-batter Amit Passi struck a century on his T20 debut, playing for Baroda in the Syed Mushtaq Ali Trophy against Services at Gymkhana Ground in Hyderabad on Monday, 8 December. The 26-year-old blasted 114 off just 55 balls, hitting 10 fours and nine sixes in a highly entertaining innings. Passi also equalled the world record for the highest individual score on T20 debut in men's cricket. He matched the mark set by Pakistan's Bilal Asif, who scored 114 from 48 deliveries for Sialkot Stallions in a domestic T20 match in Faisalabad in May 2015. Passi is now the third Indian batter, after Punjab's Shivam Bhambri and Hyderabad's Akshath Reddy, to score a hundred on T20 debut. Incidentally, all three centuries have come in the Syed Mushtaq Ali Trophy — India's premier domestic T20 competition.

HUNDREDS ON T20 DEBUT BY INDIANS

Amit Passi — 114 for Baroda v Services in

2025Shivam Bhambri — 106 for Chandigarh v Himachal Pradesh in 2019

Akshath Reddy — 105 for Hyderabad v Mumbai in 2010Passi single-handedly



helped Baroda post 220 for 5 in their 20 overs. Despite losing partners at regular intervals, he refused to ease off, reaching his hundred with a six in just 44 balls. He brought up his half-century in 24 deliveries and then added 64 runs from his next 31. He stitched two crucial partnerships — 60 for the third wicket with middle-order batter

MS Dhoni is very unique, we should be proud that he was born in India: Murali Vijay

Former India and Chennai Super Kings (CSK) opener Murali Vijay, who spent a significant part of his international and IPL career under MS Dhoni's leadership, believes Indians should feel "proud" that a player of Dhoni's calibre was born in this country.

New Delhi. (Agency)

Former India opener Murali Vijay has heaped rich praise on MS Dhoni, describing him as a natural and "very unique" leader whose instinctive decisions and calm authority have shaped some of Indian cricket's most defining moments. Vijay said Indians should feel "proud" that a player of Dhoni's character and talent was born in this country. Dhoni, who has been retained by Chennai



Super Kings (CSK) for the IPL 2026 season, remains one of cricket's most successful captains. From the 2007 T20 World Cup and the 2011 ODI World Cup to the 2013 Champions Trophy, his achievements continue to stand apart, while his leadership also took India to the top of the Test rankings for the first time in 2009. Vijay, who played much of his India and IPL career under Dhoni, spoke with admiration about his former captain's clarity and strength of mind. "Dhoni is natural and very unique. Those personalities you cannot replicate.

Anybody cannot come and do what he is doing," Vijay said. "The way he has dominated and taken the game, he was a very strong person. The way he launched those sixes, I don't think anyone else got that range as a right-hander." He pointed to Dhoni's decision in the 2007 T20 World Cup final as a classic example of his instinctive thinking. With Pakistan needing 13 runs off the last over, Dhoni handed the ball to Joginder Sharma, despite senior spinner Harbhajan Singh having an over left. "He gave that last over to Joginder and we won it. There may not have been logic as Harbhajan had an over as a senior. But it won us the cup as he did something out of the box. We all should be proud that he was born in our country," Vijay said. Dhoni retired from international cricket after the 2019 ODI World Cup but remains the central figure at CSK, where he has won five IPL titles as captain. The 44-year-old continues to draw massive support each season he turns out in yellow.

Not England, but India are trendsetters in T20I cricket now: Phil Salt

Philip Salt hails India as the new trendsetters in T20I cricket after their 2024 World Cup win. Their unbeaten streak and top ICC ranking signal a shift in global T20 dominance.

New Delhi. (Agency)

England batter Philip Salt has been left in awe of India's approach in T20Is, calling them the global trendsetters. The Men in Blue have been on a rapid rise since their T20 World Cup 2024 triumph in the West Indies, as they are yet to drop a series under the leadership of captain Suryakumar Yadav.

Recently, Salt recalled how India have transitioned into a global T20 powerhouse following their loss in the 2022 World Cup semi-final against England. India were hammered by ten wickets in the all-



important semi-final as England chased down 169 in just 16 overs without losing any wickets. "In the World Cup semi-final we won in Australia against India, we were absolutely the trendsetters in the global

game, and had been for a few years. The way we played that night was incredible. I was batting at three and didn't even get in because Alex Hales and Jos Buttler were brutal at the top. They played with such a

carefree approach — there was no stopping us that night. That performance was the product of many years of working in the right direction," said Salt on the RCB Podcast. "But since then, I feel India have made the switch and are now the trendsetters in the global game, leading the pack. That World Cup semi-final in Guyana showed it again. On that day, especially at that venue, they would have taken some serious beating. The landscape is always changing, and hopefully in the not-too-distant future we'll be back on top," he added.

India are ranked at the top of the ICC T20I rankings with 272 rating points to their name. The Men in Blue have won their last nine series or tournaments on the trot in the format and last lost a series in 2023 against the West Indies. They will next take on South Africa in a five-match series beginning on December 9 as they build up towards the T20 World Cup 2026 on home soil.

Is a Rs 10,000 SIP really enough to make you wealthy

New Delhi.(Agency)

Many young earners today feel that once they start a Rs 10,000 monthly SIP, their financial life is more or less sorted. The amount gets auto-debited every month, the market does its work, and the investor feels confident. But according to CA Abhishek Walia, co-founder, Zactor Money, this belief can be misleading. A SIP BUILDS HABIT, NOT WEALTH ON ITS OWN. Walia explains that most people treat SIPs as a complete financial plan, when in reality, they are only the starting point. This means that while SIPs help you stay disciplined, they cannot magically meet your long-term life goals unless you actively manage and improve them.

WHY A FIXED SIP MAY NOT BE ENOUGH

Many investors start with Rs 10,000 a month and continue the same amount for years without thinking twice. But life goals such as retirement, children's education, or financial independence need more planning and regular upgrades.

Walia points out this common gap: "If your income doesn't grow meaningfully, if you never increase your SIP, if you don't course-correct when markets run hot or cold, that SIP becomes comfort, not strategy." Simply put, a SIP is good discipline, but not a complete roadmap.

MORE THAN INVESTING, YOU NEED DIRECTION

A meaningful financial plan needs more than a fixed monthly investment. It requires, as Walia suggests, "income step-ups, allocation shifts, occasional lump-sum courage, and most importantly, an exit plan." He says that most people never pause to ask themselves a simple question: why they are investing. He notes, "People invest religiously but never ask why or for what. Without clarity and direction, even the most disciplined SIP may fall short of expectations.

One Nation—One Employee-Employer portal: Digital integration for a unified labour governance and social protection ecosystem

New Delhi.(Agency)

India's new Labour Codes signal a fundamental redesign of labour governance, social protection, and workplace regulation. While legislation establishes a new structural framework, its success will ultimately depend on how effectively digital infrastructure is strengthened to unify compliance, employment records, and access to benefits across the country. The vision of a One Nation - One 'Employee - Employer' Portal has the potential to become the digital backbone of India's labour ecosystem, enabling transparency, efficiency, accountability, and inclusion at an unprecedented scale.

This article uses the phrase 'One Nation - One 'Employee - Employer' Portal' as a future-oriented conceptual lens, a way to imagine how India's diverse labour systems could, over time, become more connected, interoperable, and worker-centric through digital architecture. It is a thought framework rather than a programme announcement.

India has already built significant digital foundations in labour and employment, such as EPFO for provident fund, ESIC for medical insurance and benefits, e-Shram for unorganised workers, Shram Suvidha Portal for establishment registration and unified return filing, State labour systems, workers' welfare boards, safety and inspection databases, industrial dispute mechanisms, and sectoral licensing systems etc. Each platform plays a critical role within its statutory mandate. However, at present, the labour landscape is fragmented across numerous entities and portals. The opportunity now lies in strengthening interoperability between these systems so that workers and employers experience them as a unified, coherent pathway rather than separate touchpoints. While these systems have grown organically to meet specific needs, they often function independently, leading to duplicate records, drop-offs in worker information, and multiple compliance touchpoints for employers. Workers especially those in the unorganised sector, may find it difficult to track rights and benefits, employers face multi-portal submissions and inconsistent requirements across states, and the policy makers lack a real-time national view of employment, mobility, social security coverage, and safety patterns.

ED attaches Rs 4,190 cr in crypto cases, declares one accused as fugitive economic offender

New Delhi.(Agency)

The Enforcement Directorate has attached proceeds of crime worth Rs 4,189.89 crore in crypto-related cases under the anti-money laundering law and declared one accused as a Fugitive Economic Offender. Parliament was informed on Monday. Besides, the Central Board of Direct Taxes (CBDT) has also detected undisclosed income of Rs 888.82 crore from virtual digital assets (VDA) transactions during search and seizure operations. The CBDT has sent 44,057 communications to taxpayers who invested or traded in VDAs but did not report these in Schedule VDA of their Income Tax Returns (ITRs). Minister of State for Finance Pankaj Chaudhary said in a written reply to a question in the Lok Sabha. The government has also brought VDAs under the Prevention of Money Laundering (PMLA). "The Enforcement Directorate has investigated several crypto-related cases under PMLA, attaching/seizing/freezing proceeds of crime worth Rs 4,189.89 crore, arresting 29 persons, and filing 22 prosecution complaints.

One accused has been declared a Fugitive Economic Offender," Chaudhary said. He said crypto-assets/Virtual Digital Assets are unregulated in India, and the government is undertaking capacity-building initiatives to strengthen monitoring and investigation of VDA-related transactions.

Why gold is beating equities this year

Whenever central banks grow cautious or stock markets begin reflecting fear, investors instinctively look for safe havens. That's exactly what has happened globally. The uncertainty has pushed investors out of risk assets and back into gold.

New Delhi.(Agency)

India's stock market story is very different from the rest of the world. Despite global war-like tensions and geopolitical uncertainty, India has neither been pulled into the conflict nor become a participant. Yes, tariff-related challenges are present, but domestic sentiment has remained remarkably strong. A major reason is the deep trust Indian consumers have placed in the government's reforms. The impact

of GST reform alone has triggered strong, broad-based buying across sectors. Even before the complete GST data is in, India reported an impressive 8.2% growth rate in Q2, and Q3 is expected to reflect further gains as the benefits of lower GST rates materialise. This surge in consumption has created a clear divergence between Indian equities and global markets, with India moving on a separate, resilient path.

WHY INVESTORS ARE FLEEING TO GOLD

Whenever central banks grow cautious or stock markets begin reflecting fear, investors instinctively look for safe havens. That's exactly what has happened globally. The uncertainty has pushed investors out of risk assets and back into gold. Another overlooked trigger was the United States experiencing its longest-ever government shutdown, with federal departments partially frozen for nearly two months. The root cause was America's rising debt ceiling, now beyond \$38 trillion. Every year, the gap between tax revenues and expenditure widens, adding roughly \$2 trillion to the debt. Interest payments alone stand at a

staggering \$1.5 trillion. Surprisingly, global markets have not panicked yet. But the moment this debt spiral touches \$40 trillion or \$42 trillion, a trigger is inevitable. When it happens, global investors will begin dumping the dollar, and they will have only one credible



alternative: gold. That shift alone could send gold prices to new historic highs.

GLOBAL MARKETS ARE SIGNALLING SLOWDOWN
Signs of recession are already emerging: The US economy is showing early indicators of a slowdown.

Japan, which kept interest rates negative until recently, has now been forced to raise rates. For years, Japanese savers deposited 100 yen and got back 99.75 yen. That's how deep negative rates were. Today, banks have finally begun offering small positive returns.

This reversal is pulling investments out of multiple markets and pushing them back toward gold. As a result, gold has consistently outperformed equities over the last few years, and the trend is strengthening.

WHY GOLD IS WINNING AND WILL CONTINUE TO

Gold is not rising because of a single factor; it is rising because everything is moving in its favour: Geopolitical tensions: Ongoing global conflicts are driving investors toward safe-haven assets, and gold remains the most preferred refuge.

De-dollarisation: After Russia attacked Ukraine, the US Treasury froze Russia's investments. After witnessing this freeze, other countries realised their dependence on the dollar could also be risky, and they decided to reduce their reliance on the dollar and participate in de-dollarisation.

Will new income tax rules impose an 84% penalty on cash kept at home

MUMBAI. (Agency)

India's income tax rules around cash dealings are getting tighter, and many people are confused about what is allowed and what can lead to a heavy penalty. To help people understand these changes better, CA Sarthak Ahuja, an investment banker, recently explained how the new rules work and why everyone needs to be careful with cash.

UNEXPLAINED CASH CAN ATTRACT UP TO 84% TAX

The government has strengthened its laws to curb unaccounted money found during searches. If the Income Tax Department finds cash at your home that you cannot explain, the penalty can go very high. Ahuja wrote on LinkedIn, "The New Income Tax regulations will impose 84% tax on all the cash that they find lying at your place." This 84% includes the basic tax, surcharge, cess, and penalty. In simple words, unexplained cash can almost completely be taken away by the department.

HOW WILL THE DEPARTMENT FIND OUT?

Banks are now required to report large cash withdrawals. This makes it easy for the tax department to track unusual movements of cash. Ahuja said, "If you withdraw more than Rs 10 lakh as cash from your savings account in a year, the bank will report it." For even higher withdrawals, the rules are stricter.

"If you withdraw more than Rs 10 Lakh as cash from your savings account in a year... the bank will report it to the tax department... If you withdraw more than Rs 20 lakhs, the bank will deduct TDS..." If officials sense anything suspicious, they can initiate a search or inquiry.

CASH IN PROPERTY DEALS CAN LEAD TO 100% PENALTY

Cash payments in property transactions are strictly monitored. If you sell a property and receive more than Rs 20,000 in cash, the entire amount becomes liable for 100% penalty. Ahuja said.

This means if you take Rs 50,000 in cash, you may have to pay the entire Rs 50,000 again as penalty.

CASH RECEIPTS ABOVE RS 2 LAKH CAN ALSO BE PENALISED

Businesses and individuals must also avoid accepting large cash amounts. "If you receive more than Rs 2 lakh in cash from one customer in a day, then 100% penalty will be imposed on the entire amount," he said.

Why insurers reject claims and the smart ways to avoid it

Many policyholders mistakenly believe claim rejections are arbitrary, but they primarily result from identifiable causes related to process gaps, compliance failures, and policy design.

New Delhi.(Agency)

The post-pandemic surge in retail health insurance across India has led to a rise in claim volumes and first-time policyholders. With this growth, insurers have increased scrutiny due to mounting fraud risks, coding inconsistencies, and higher loss ratios.

Many policyholders mistakenly believe claim rejections are arbitrary, but they primarily result from identifiable causes related to process gaps, compliance failures, and policy design. Understanding these causes and their remedies enables consumers to safeguard their coverage.

WHY CLAIMS GET REJECTED?
1. Non-Disclosure of Pre-Existing Conditions

Cause: The leading reason for claim denial is incomplete or inaccurate disclosure during the underwriting stage. Undeclared

conditions such as diabetes, hypertension, thyroid abnormalities, or prior hospitalizations revealed during claim investigations betray insurer trust and trigger repudiation.

Remedy: Always provide complete health information and disclose existing diseases when applying. Utilize tele-verification services offered by insurers to confirm disclosures and reduce repudiation chances.

2. Documentation Deficiencies at TPAs

Cause: Claims are often delayed or rejected because Third Party Administrators receive paperwork with missing, inconsistent, or illegible medical documentation, complicating proof of treatment necessity.

Remedy: Keep well-organised, digital medical records inclusive of prescriptions, test results, and discharge summaries.

Ensure submission of comprehensive,

clear documents and monitor claim progress via insurer platforms.

3. Hospital Coding and Billing Mismatch

Cause: Discrepancies between diagnoses and billed procedures, common at hospitals with non-standard coding or errors like upcoding, result in automated claim flags and disputes.

Remedy: Opt for network hospitals that observe standard billing and coding norms aligned with insurer expectations.

Industry efforts focus on strengthening audits and harmonising hospital-TPA coordination.

4. Misunderstanding of Policy Terms

Cause: Insufficient explanation during sales leads to misunderstanding of exclusions, maternity sub-limits, waiting periods, or room rent caps, causing unmet buyer expectations and claim rejections.

Wakefit IPO opens: GMP falls sharply, should you still apply

The Wakefit Innovations IPO opened on December 8 and will remain available for bidding until December 10. Shares are scheduled to list on both the BSE and the NSE, with a tentative listing date of December 15.

New Delhi.(Agency)

Wakefit Innovations Limited on Monday opened its Rs 1,288.89 crore initial public offering (IPO) for public subscription, offering investors exposure to one of India's best-known direct-to-consumer (D2C) home and sleep solutions brands.

The company, which sells mattresses, furniture, and home decor products, is looking to tap growing demand for organised, branded home consumption.

The IPO opened on December 8 and will remain available for bidding until December 10. Shares are scheduled to list

on both the BSE and the NSE, with a tentative listing date of December 15. The basis of allotment is expected to be finalised on December 11.

ISSUE STRUCTURE AND PRICE BAND

The Wakefit IPO comprises a fresh issue of 1.93 crore shares worth Rs 377.18 crore and an offer for sale (OFS) of 4.68 crore shares worth Rs 911.71 crore. The price band has been fixed at Rs 185-195 per share. Retail investors will need a minimum investment of Rs 14,820 to apply for one lot of 76 shares at the upper end of the band. For non-institutional investors, the small NII (sNII) lot size is 14 lots (1,064 shares) requiring an investment of Rs 2.07 lakh, while the big NII (bNII) category requires 68 lots (5,168 shares) amounting to Rs 10.07 lakh. The issue is being managed by Axis Capital Ltd as the book running lead manager, with MUFG Intime India Pvt. Ltd. acting as the registrar.

GMP SIGNALS BULLISH LISTING EXPECTATIONS

Market sentiment around the Wakefit IPO has cooled in the grey market, with the

latest grey market premium (GMP) slipping to Rs 16 as of December 8. Based on the upper issue price of Rs 195, the implied listing price now stands at around Rs 211, pointing to a muted potential listing gain of about 8%.



The sharp drop in GMP from earlier levels indicates softening speculative interest ahead of the issue's close. Market participants caution that while GMP offers a snapshot of trader sentiment, it remains an unofficial indicator and does not guarantee actual listing performance.

FINANCIAL PERFORMANCE

Wakefit has delivered steady revenue expansion, with revenue growing 28%

between FY24 and FY25, reflecting sustained consumer demand across mattresses and furniture. However, profitability remains volatile.

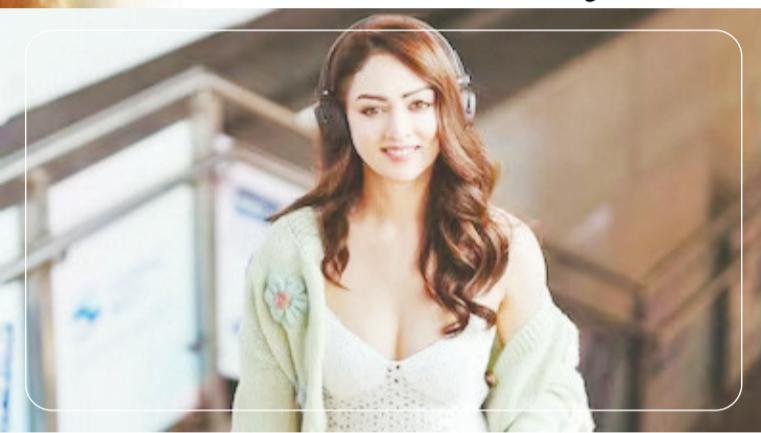
The company reported a 133% decline in profit after tax during the same period,

underscoring margin pressures in a competitive and marketing-intensive D2C environment. More recently, the company returned to profitability in Q2FY26, posting a profit after tax of Rs 35.6 crore, aided by operating leverage and cost optimisation. EBITDA margin improved to 14.25%, a sharp recovery from earlier years. The balance sheet also remains largely debt-free, which provides some comfort to long-term investors.

Wakefit's IPO also comes at a time when India's home and furnishings sector is in the middle of a structural growth phase. The market, estimated at Rs 2.8-3.0 trillion in CY2024, is projected to nearly double to Rs 5.2-5.9 trillion by CY2030. This growth is being driven by urbanisation, rising disposable incomes, premiumisation and the shift from unorganised to organised players.

Sandeepa Dhar

Begins Shooting For New Series, Shares Fun BTS Photos From Day 1



Actor Sandeepa Dhar has sparked a wave of excitement online after sharing a playful behind-the-scenes glimpse from the sets of her upcoming project. While keeping all essential details tightly under wraps, the actress has officially confirmed that she has begun shooting for a brand-new series. On Thursday, Sandeepa took to Instagram to post a carousel of photos from her vanity van, marking the first day of her shoot. In the images, she is seen seated with her script in hand, radiating the kind of quiet focus that comes before a new creative journey. But her caption struck a more mischievous note: "Day 1 energy: Started focused, ended... like this. Pehla kadam... wish me luck!" A note visible in one of the frames — "Here are your sides for the day! See you on set!" — confirmed that work is officially underway, but the actress strategically avoided revealing the title, platform, or genre of the project.

Fans Speculate About a New OTT Series

Despite the secrecy, the post has already kicked off spirited speculation among fans. Many believe the actress is gearing up for her next long-format OTT drama, especially given her successful digital track record with projects such as *Abhay* and *Netflix's Mai*. The possibility of another gripping series has set social media buzzing, with fans filling the comments section with theories, questions, and good wishes.

A Busy Year Ahead for Sandeepa Dhar

With 2025 approaching, it appears Sandeepa's schedule is already shaping up to be an exciting one. Apart from this hush-hush project, she is also expected to feature in *Do Deewane Seher Mein*, adding yet another title to her growing and diverse lineup.

Her caption, paired with hashtags like *#NewBeginnings*, *#BehindTheScenes*, and *#VanityVibes*, hints at a fresh creative chapter — and perhaps a major announcement on the horizon. Until then, Sandeepa's fans will have to remain patient as she continues to tease the project without revealing its name.

Devon Ke Dev Mahadev Fame

Sonarika Bhaduria

And Husband Vikas Parashar Welcome Baby Girl: 'Greatest Blessing'

Actress Sonarika Bhaduria, who is best known for playing the role of 'Parvati' opposite Mohit Raina, who was seen as 'Shiv' in the popular television show "Devon Ke Dev Mahadev", has entered a new and beautiful chapter of her life — motherhood. Sonarika and her husband, Vikas Parashar, welcomed their firstborn, a baby girl, on December 5th, 2025.

Making the exciting announcement on social media, Sonarika posted a monochrome photo of her and her husband holding the feet of their newborn. "5.12.2025 (Spakles emoji) Our sweetest most greatest blessing... SHE'S here and she's already our whole world (sic)," the caption on the joint post read.

Sonarika has been sharing every step of her journey towards motherhood on social media. Recently, she treated her InstaFam with a few images from her maternity shoot. The Instagram post had Sonarika flaunting her fully developed baby bump in black pants and a T-shirt. Along with some solo pics of the mom-to-be, the photoshoot also included Vikas, who joined Sonarika for some lovely couple photos.

For those who do not know, Sonarika tied the knot with businessman Vikas Parashar in February 2024, and the couple announced their first pregnancy in September this year.

Sonarika took to her IG and uploaded some pictures from her maternity photoshoot, along with the caption, "Our greatest adventure yet." Wearing a white lace attire, Sonarika was seen posing against the scenic backdrop of the humongous sea with her husband. Sonarika made her television debut with the show "Tum Dena Saath Mera" back in 2011. However, she became a household name with her hit TV mythological drama "Devon Ke Dev



Mahadev". Sonarika has also been a part of Telugu films such as "Jadoogadu" and "Eedo Rakam Aado Rakam". Following her stint in the movies, she returned to television with "Prithvi Vallabh", "Dastaan-E-Mohabbat Salim Anarkali", and "Ishq Mein Marjawan".

Sonakshi Sinha Says Therapy Saved Her Relationship With Zaheer Iqbal: 'We Had To Make It Work Somehow'



For a couple who now look completely in sync — from Sonakshi Sinha's relaxed YouTube vlogs to Zaheer Iqbal's constant cheerleading — it's easy to assume their bond was always effortless. But Sonakshi has now admitted that the version of them people see today was shaped by a tough moment they almost didn't survive. Her latest conversation with Soha Ali Khan on a podcast pulled the curtain back on the one phase that changed everything. Sonakshi spoke honestly about the period when things between her and Zaheer were at their worst, long before their intimate wedding last year. She said the friction built up slowly until both of them felt stuck. "We were three years into the relationship when we reached a phase where we wanted to pull each other's hair out," she said. "No matter what we did, we just couldn't understand each other's perspective. But in our hearts, we knew we had to make this work somehow. That's when we decided to do couple's therapy — and it was Zaheer who suggested it."

What surprised her most was Zaheer's attitude. He didn't hesitate or push the issue away. Instead, he took the first step. "He told me, 'I want this relationship to work, no matter what. I've heard about therapy, let's just give it a shot.' I agreed, and I'm so glad I did. Just two sessions later, we were back on track. It helped us understand how the other person thinks and that what they say isn't always what they mean.

Even tiny things — like recognising where your partner is coming from — changed everything. "Soha reacted by pointing out how counselling only works when both partners want the relationship to succeed. 'If you can remember them in moments when you're triggered — when to calm down, what words not to use — it fixes communication.'

And communication works only when both people truly want to make it work. "Despite dating for almost seven years, Sonakshi and Zaheer kept their relationship low-key until they married at home last year. Their interfaith ceremony sparked criticism amid trolls, but the two refused to engage with negativity and continued moving forward as a team."

Devoleena Bhattacharjee Drops Pics From Griha Pravesh Of Her 'Dream House': 'I Feel Every Emotion Possible'



Popular television actress Devoleena Bhattacharjee experienced a cocktail of emotions as she stepped into her dream home with her husband, Shanawaz Shaikh, and son Joy. The 'Saath Nibhaana Saathi' actress took to her official Insta handle and posted a set of photos from the Greh Pravesh ceremony in her new home. Posing in an elegant saree, Devoleena was seen performing the puja.

The album comprised a few perfect family pics, the Greh Pravesh ceremony, and also the ritual where the milk is spilled on the stove. Expressing her delight at realizing her long-held dream, she wrote on social media, "Some dreams take time, courage and a lot of belief. Standing



in our dream home today, I feel every emotion possible — thankful for the journey, the lessons, and the blessings that brought us here. (Sparkles, folded hands, red heart, and evil eye emojis) (sic)."

Devoleena has been treating her Insta Fam with sneak peeks into her life with her son, reflecting both the joys and challenges of being a mother.

In November, as her little bundle of joy turned one year old, Devoleena penned a heartfelt birthday wish for her son. In an attempt to put the deep bond she feels with her little one into words, she wrote, "My world fits perfectly in my arms. Can't believe he's almost one... my baby, my whole heart #emotional #devoleena #momson #joy."

In another post, Devoleena revealed how motherhood has transformed her life. Calling the experience both exhausting and beautiful, she penned, "They say motherhood changes you... and it truly does. There's no schedule, no pause button, no 'me time'... just endless love, tiny giggles, and days that start and end with this little soul. It's messy, it's tiring, it's imperfect — but it's also the most beautiful chapter of my life."



If you are struggling with dry skin and hair, a jar of coconut oil could be your best friend. Its light texture, moisturizing properties and easy availability make it one of the best remedies to dry skin.



How to hide dark circles with makeup

Dark circles make your eyes and the skin around look dull. Here are a few tips to hide those marks. Makeup not only highlights your best features, but hides blemishes and marks. However, makeup can also hide dark circles and eye bags. Here's how you can conceal those dark patches around your eyes...

Use a concealer:

Dot a few drops of liquid concealer under your eyes and blend it well. Choose one that corresponds well with your skin tone.

Apply a mousse or foundation:

Set your concealer using a lightweight mousse or a compact powder. Take a brush to dust little powder under your eyes. Use your fingers to blend it well. If the area is looking too stark, use a tissue to wipe the area.

Play with your eye makeup:

Sweep a thick eye liner on your upper and lower lids. Blend a heavy coloured eye shadow. Apply a mascara on your upper as

well as your lower lash lines. How to keep eye makeup intact. Choose a liquid eyeliner while doing your eye make-up. These are safe to use and also stay on for a longer duration of time.

Apply a bit of translucent powder before you do your eye makeup so that it stays on. Go in for waterproof makeup that does not wash out easily. These products are available in most cosmetic stores.

Before going to bed every night, massage the eye area with a lightweight moisturiser to keep it hydrated.



Home remedies for bright

White teeth

Banana peels:

Bananas are considered to be a wholesome fruit that houses loads of nutrients. But do you know that banana peels are a great source of teeth whitening as well. So the next time preserve that banana peel to get a pearly white teeth. Rub the peel on your teeth for about a minute or two twice daily. The minerals in bananas such as potassium, manganese and magnesium, are absorbed into your teeth, which keeps your pearly whites in their best health. Orange peels are also considered to be a great source of teeth whiteners.

Berry berry strawberry:

Did you know that those bright red strawberries are a great source of teeth whiteners? Well, now that you know it, start stocking up fresh strawberries. All you

have to do is take one or two strawberries, mash them up and apply them on your teeth for 2 to 3 minutes. Rinse properly after this procedure or you can even brush your teeth. Strawberries being a rich source of natural enzyme known as malic acid, helps in whitening teeth, while the fiber found in strawberries act as a natural cleanser that helps in removing the bacteria especially, from the mouth and teeth.

Munch in the crunchy carrots:

The next time you see those crunchy carrots, simply wash them well and eat them raw. Raw carrots are very beneficial in scrapping off plaque from your teeth and are also known as natural cleaner. Also rubbing raw carrot sticks on your teeth will brighten them up. They also kill the bacteria while giving you healthy gums and whiter teeth. Apart from carrots, apples and celery are also considered equally important sources of teeth whiteners, which prevents gum disease and gingivitis and kills odor-causing bacteria.

Quit smoking:

Surely it is easy to say than actually doing it and sticking to it. But, all said and done, quitting smoking has more benefits. Smoking, yellows your teeth along with imparting you with other deadly diseases. So if you want to bring back the pearly white shines, quit smoking.

Use a straw:

Sipping anything extremely hot or cold is not good for your teeth. So as far as possible try sipping your tea or cold coffee through a straw as it cuts down the direct contact of your teeth and hot beverages.

The many Benefits of raw Coconut oil

Coconut oil is also an effective makeup remover. Regularly using coconut oil on your body not only helps lighten the skin, but also helps rid scars and dark patches. Massage it onto your skin after a bath every day and you can do without a body cream.

It's also an excellent hair tonic. A massage with warm coconut oil brings back lost shine and makes hair soft and manageable. It also helps reduce protein loss, which makes your hair healthy and attractive.

Trying to grow your hair? Then use coconut oil regularly.



This oil is also good for losing weight, maintaining cholesterol level, boosting the immune system, aiding in proper digestion and regulating metabolism. There is a misconception that coconut oil is not good for the heart because it contains large quantities of saturated fats. But this is far from the truth. Coconut oil contains about 50% lauric acid, which actively prevents various problems that affect the heart, such as high cholesterol levels and high blood pressure.



Caring for your skin during Weather change



Do you feel your skin becoming excessively dry and itchy? Or too oily and acne-prone? This is because your skin is trying to acclimate to the seasonal change. To ensure that your skin does not break out more often, here's what you need to consider.

Change your cleanser

When climates change, the first and the foremost thing that you need to pay attention to is your cleanser. For example if you have oily skin, during the winters it can become dry, thus if you have using a cleanser for oily skin during winters, it may make your skin even drier.

Up the hydration level

During the winters, your skin requires a certain amount of moisture, as compared to summers. No matter what your skin type is, remember to moisturise your skin well and also keep it hydrated at all times. Drink at least seven to eight glasses of water on a daily basis.

Reduce exfoliating

As seasons change you should remember that too much exfoliating can damage your skin and make it rough. Stick to doing it just once every week so that the natural oils from your skin don't evaporate. Also alternatively you can use a mix of gram flour and milk and apply it as a thick paste on your skin to remove the blackheads.

Skip hot showers

One of the best ways to ensure that your skin is not damaged is by reducing the number of hot baths you take in a day. Instead take a bath with lukewarm water so that you don't feel cold. Taking a bath with cold water is also not advised. Not only can you catch a cold but your skin might also become dry and flaky.

Pearly whites gone pale!
One of the most common
problems that every dentist
comes across. Though we all
wish to have pearly white
smile, going for crazy
expensive treatments
definitely burns a hole in our
pockets, thank goodness there
are some home remedies
which are not only easy but
very reasonable.

