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PUBLISHED FROM
Delhi, Haryana, Uttar
Pradesh, Punjab,
Chandigarh, Himachal
and Jammu

The Sikh Times

National Daily

VISIT:
www.thesikhtimes.in
Email: sikhtimesindia@gmail.com

Vol. 17 No. 210

RNI NO. DELENG/2008/25465

New Delhi, Sunday, 14 December 2025

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9654077232

12 pages ₹ 3

Rahul Gandhi and Gautam Adani in the same frame of a picture not taken

Rahul Gandhi and industrialist Gautam Adani, who has been at the Congress MP's crosshairs, came face-to-face during Sharad Pawar's birthday bash. However, it was ensured that no photos of the encounter became public.

New Delhi .(Agency)
In politics, optics matter as much as words. That reality played out at NCP supremo Sharad Pawar's birthday bash, where Rahul Gandhi and industrialist Gautam Adani, who has been at the Congress MP's crosshairs, came face-to-face and even shook hands, but it was ensured that no photos of the encounter became public. Thus, while images of Rahul with Pawar and Telangana Chief Minister Revanth Reddy came out, photos of the Congress MP and Adani were conspicuously missing. The high-profile dinner was held on December 11 as Pawar turned 85. The birthday bash of Pawar, whose relationships span the political spectrum, invited politicians cutting across party

lines, brought together an eclectic mix of senior politicians, from his politically estranged nephew Ajit Pawar to the Gandhis, and business leaders. Among those who attended the dinner was Adani Group chairperson Gautam Adani, who has relentlessly been targeted by Rahul over alleged corruption and creating monopolies in various sectors in collusion with the BJP. However, the highlight of the evening was Rahul and Adani sharing the same frame. Speaking in The Lallantop's Netanagri, senior journalists Rajdeep Sardesai and Aadesh Rawal said Rahul, dressed in a traditional kurta pyjama and not his usual white t-shirt, and Adani met and shook



hands as well. "It was the first time I saw Rahul and Adani come face to face. But surprisingly, no photo of them ever came out," Sardesai said.

Rawal said at that time Pawar's daughter and Baramati MP Supriya Sule intervened, and ensured no pictures of the Rahul-Adani handshake were taken. "Supriya Sule ensured nobody took pictures of their meeting. She understood what its repercussions could have been," Rawal said. In fact, such an explosive image, of Rahul and Adani sharing a frame, would have sharply undercut the Congress's narrative against the conglomerate and become a political flashpoint. It would have invited uncomfortable questions for the Congress from both political rivals and allies. The exchange came on a day Rahul and Union Home Minister Amit Shah faced off in Parliament over electoral reforms.

Mamata Banerjee's Seat Saw 4X Voter Deletions Than Suvendu Adhikari's Nandigram

The Election Commission of India (ECI) has classified the deletions under standard categories such as deaths, relocation, untraceable addresses and duplicate entries.

New Delhi.(Agency)
Chief Minister Mamata Banerjee's Bhabanipur constituency has recorded one of the highest voter deletions in West Bengal, logging nearly four times more removals than Opposition Leader Suvendu Adhikari's Nandigram, according to constituency-wise data released by the Election Commission (EC) on Friday. The EC released the figures a day after the deadline for submitting enumeration forms under the Special Intensive Revision (SIR) process ended, revealing significant variations across the state and adding a fresh political edge ahead of next week's draft rolls. Data showed that Bhabanipur in south Kolkata, widely regarded as Banerjee's pocket borough, recorded 44,787 deletions from the 2,06,295 voters listed in January 2025, while Nandigram, the crucible of the anti-land acquisition

movement that propelled the TMC to power in 2011 and stronghold of Adhikari, saw 10,599 deletions from 2,78,212 voters. The commission has classified the deletions under standard categories such as deaths,



relocation, untraceable addresses and duplicate entries. Officials maintained the process followed uniform criteria statewide. Despite the political attention on Bhabanipur, it was not the constituency

with the highest number of deletions. Among the state's 294 Assembly constituencies, the highest number of deletions occurred in north Kolkata's Chowringhee represented by TMC MLA Nayana Bandyopadhyay, which saw 74,553 voters struck off the rolls. A three-time MLA, she had won the seat by a margin of more than 44,000 votes in 2021. Kolkata Port, represented by senior minister and Mayor Firhad Hakim, logged 63,730 deletions. Hakim, a three-time MLA, had won the seat by a margin of around 70,000 votes, a factor that cemented his grip over the constituency. In Tollygunge, held by minister Aroop Biswas, 35,309 names were removed. Biswas, a four-time MLA, had retained the seat in 2021 with a margin of about 50,000 votes, underscoring his organisational control over one of Kolkata's most politically crucial belts.

30 MLAs attend dinner meeting, refuse to call it head count for DCM

BELAGAVI .(Agency)
The tussle for the chief minister's chair continues in Congress with Dr Ramesh Daddannavar, son of former Belagavi District Congress president Komalanna Daddannavar, hosting a dinner on Thursday on behalf of Deputy Chief Minister DK Shivakumar with over 30 MLAs taking part. MLAs Balakrishna, Bandi Siddanagouda, Iqbal Hussain and others were at the dinner. This was said to be in counter to MLC Yathindra's recent statement that his father, Siddaramaiah, would remain CM for five years. Though the dinner at Daddannavar's place is touted as a show of strength, those who attended it dismissed any such claims. "It was only a dinner party. About 50-60 MLAs attended the dinner. Such a meeting cannot be termed a show of strength. We did not discuss politics. If Shivakumar hosts a dinner, he will invite all the 224 MLAs. They will all come. That is because Shivakumar has cultivated several friends and he has strived hard for the party. If the party wants him as CM, he need not wait till Sankranti. He will become CM immediately after this session," said Ramanagara MLA Iqbal Hussain. Bandi Siddanagouda, Srirangapatna MLA, said that the high command will decide when

Shivakumar will become CM. "For the dinner, I was invited by my Belagavi friends. Do not draw any inference from it. There was no discussion on leadership," he said. Magadi MLA Balakrishna said there was no head count or a meeting. "Some MLAs came and a few could not due to various reasons. It



was just a dinner, nothing else," he said. On the chief minister's New Delhi visit, he said, "Everybody knows the purpose of his visit. My request to Yathindra is not to embarrass the party." ST Somashekar said if it is destined, nobody can stop Shivakumar from becoming CM. "Why shouldn't he become CM. He has worked hard for the party." But MLA AS Ponanna said, "Somashekar is expelled from BJP, but he cannot join our party. He does not have the moral right to speak about our party."

LG Saxena approves honorary ranks for Delhi Police personnel without financial benefits

In May, the MHA granted similar Honorary Ranks to personnel of CAPFs and Assam Rifles, on the day of retirement, without financial benefits.

New Delhi. (Agency)
LG VK Saxena approved the grant of Honorary Ranks—one level above existing posts—on Friday, benefiting over 88,000 personnel, Raj Niwas officials said. They added that this will not carry any financial or pensionary benefits. The issue was first raised in 2014 by former IPS officers Deepak Misra, Sanjay Beniwal and Mukesh Kumar Meena, who had observed low



morale among lower-rank officials due to poor promotion policies and heavy workload. Beniwal and Meena had even prepared a detailed report. Misra retired as Special DG, CRPF; Beniwal as Director General (Prisons); and Meena as Special CP, Delhi Police. According to a statement from the LG office, Delhi Police personnel in non-gazetted ranks who have completed two years in their current post, have good APARs for the last five years, and have not faced major punishment, will be eligible for honorary ranks.

At superannuation, Sub-Inspectors will receive the Honorary Rank of Inspector; Assistant Sub-Inspectors will receive Sub-Inspector; Head Constables will receive ASI; and Constables will receive Head Constable, officials said.

In May, the MHA granted similar Honorary Ranks to personnel of CAPFs and Assam Rifles, on the day of retirement, without financial benefits.

‘Officials should have refused illegal registrations’: Ajit Pawar amid son's land deal row

NAGPUR.(Agency)
Maharashtra Deputy Chief Minister Ajit Pawar on Saturday said officials responsible for registering documents should have refused to process agreements that were not permissible under the law and clearly informed the parties concerned about such limitations.

His comments come against the backdrop of a notice issued by the deputy registrar to the firm of his son, Parth Pawar, seeking Rs 21 crore in stamp duty and penalties in connection with a controversial land deal in Pune. Recently, the Bombay High Court raised sharp questions regarding the police probe into the land deal, suggesting authorities might be shielding Parth Pawar by failing to name him in the FIR.

Ajit Pawar sought to dispel perceptions stemming from a bill cleared by the legislative assembly on Friday, which empowers the revenue minister to hold hearings in contentious cases related to the

IGR. Pawar said those who registered such documents were at fault, and officials should have exercised due diligence at the time of registration. "The officials who received the documents for registration of a deal should have refused to register it. They should have



clearly informed the parties that such an agreement cannot be processed," said the deputy chief minister. When asked about allegations that the bill was moved to protect Parth, who holds a 99 per cent equity stake in

Maharashtra deputy CM shifts responsibility to registering authorities as HC questions probe and Rs 21 crore stamp duty notice looms over firm linked to his son

Amadea Enterprises LLP, Pawar reiterated that responsibility lay with the registering authorities. "We are elected representatives in the House, and people have voted for us. We are free to take decisions or make amendments we find suitable," he said when asked about the intent behind the amendment.

Revenue Minister Chandrashekhar Bawankule has said that under the earlier provision, complainants dissatisfied with decisions at the level of the IGR had to approach the High Court. After the amendment, such complainants can now approach the revenue minister, who will be authorised to hold hearings in these matters. He also stated that certain transactions have

caused financial losses to the state exchequer, necessitating a more effective redressal mechanism. The sale of 40 acres of land in Pune's upscale Mundhwa area for Rs 300 crore to Amadea Enterprises LLP, in which Parth Pawar is a majority partner, came under scrutiny after it emerged that the plot belongs to the government and it could not be sold.

The firm was also allegedly exempted from paying Rs 21 crore in stamp duty. A committee headed by the Joint Inspector General of Registration (IGR) had indicted Digvijay Patil (Parth Pawar's business partner and cousin), Sheetal Tejwani (who held the power of attorney on behalf of the land sellers), and sub-registrar Ravindra Taru. They were named in an FIR registered at a police station in Pune.

SIR is 'NRC in disguise', says Akhilesh Yadav

HYDERABAD.(Agency)
Samajwadi Party president Akhilesh Yadav has launched a scathing attack on the SIR of electoral rolls in Uttar Pradesh, alleging that it was "NRC in disguise" and part of a larger conspiracy to remove voters opposed to the BJP. Yadav, who is in Hyderabad to attend the Vision India - AI Summit on Saturday, also held meetings with Telangana Chief Minister A Revanth Reddy and BRS leaders, including its working president K T Rama Rao.

Addressing reporters, Yadav said the Election Commission should focus on increasing voter participation instead of

allowing large-scale deletions. "More than three crore votes are at risk of being cut in Uttar Pradesh," he claimed. "If such large-scale vote removal happens, and if the BJP and the Election Commission are conspiring to delete votes where the BJP has lost, it amounts to a conspiracy in democracy. This is not the intended purpose of the SIR."

"This is not SIR. This is NRC (National Register of Citizens) in the guise of SIR. They could not directly implement the NRC. Now they have brought NRC. If the NRC is ever implemented, what documents have to be given? The same papers have to

be presented," he said. On his Hyderabad visit, the Samajwadi party leader said, "... Every day, through newspapers and media, we see that the influence of AI is growing at every level, across all sectors, be it agriculture, healthcare, or any other. That is why I am organising Vision India in Hyderabad. The aim of Vision India is that the country should run as per a vision. How should Neo-India move forward, and in which direction?" The former Uttar Pradesh CM added that politics should be about vision and not division. On the Parliament Winter Session, Yadav said the most important

aspect of the session was that "some people, who have never sung Vande Mataram suddenly wanted to do so." According to him, people are being inconvenienced with the Special Intensive Revision (SIR), just as they were with demonetisation, during Covid-19 and the rollout of GST. Yadav called on CM Revanth Reddy and discussed the political situation with him. Reddy briefed Yadav on the development and welfare programmes of his government, an official release said. Yadav lauded the chief minister's decision to recognise 'Sadar', a festival celebrated by Yadav community in Hyderabad.

News box

Gurgaon cops step up heat on violators, 800 fined for flouting lane rules in 11 days

Gurgaon.(Agency)
In a crackdown against lane-driving violations, 842 challans were issued and fines amounting to around Rs 7 lakh were collected between Dec 1 and 11.The crackdown was part of a special drive to streamline vehicular movement and reduce road accidents. All violators were challaned "strictly as per traffic regulations" during the 11-day period, police said. The aim of the campaign is not only enforcement but also "long-term behavioural change", they said.

According to officials, the special campaign was launched to curb the growing menace of "lane-cutting and sudden lane-changing" — two major contributors to road crashes in the city.Traffic teams were deployed across key stretches to monitor motorists, identify offenders and enforce lane discipline. "Despite clear markings, some motorists continue to violate lane norms," police said, adding, roads are marked to separate lanes: heavy vehicles are expected to keep left; lighter vehicles in the middle; and the right lane should remain primarily for overtaking.An official said, "Accidents are frequently caused when drivers abruptly switch lanes or drive in the wrong lane, endangering their own lives and those of others. Improper lane usage continues to be one of the biggest traffic issues in Gurgaon, often resulting in collisions, bottlenecks and unsafe driving conditions." The traffic unit regularly conducts awareness programmes for truck drivers, company staff drivers, school bus operators, auto-rickshaw drivers and other commercial vehicle operators. These sessions focus on safe-driving practices, proper lane usage and adherence to traffic signs.

2 die as dumper crashes into culvert, catches fire on Delhi-Mumbai Expressway in Gurgaon

Noida.(Agency)
Two men were charred to death after a dumper truck crashed into a culvert and caught fire on Delhi-Mumbai Expressway on Friday evening. The incident took place around 5pm near Gurjar Nangla village when the vehicle was heading from Delhi towards Firozpur Jhirka. Preliminary suspicion points to high speed leading to loss of control, but mechanical failure has not been ruled out, police said.The deceased have been identified as Ranjit (36), a resident of Neemli in Rajasthan, and Rizwan (24), a resident of Dholet. Police said Ranjit was the maternal uncle of Rizwan."The impact was so severe that the heavy vehicle broke through the culvert and plunged off the expressway. Moments after it fell, the vehicle burst into flames, trapping the driver — Ranjit — and the conductor — Rizwan — inside." an officer said.Farmers working in nearby fields rushed to the spot and attempted to rescue the two despite the raging blaze.



They were able to drag Ranjit out of the blaze and were rushed him to a hospital. However, he succumbed to his injuries on the way, an officer said.

Eyewitnesses said the fire spread rapidly.

While locals made repeated attempts to pull out Rizwan, the flames were too intense. Villagers said his body was burnt badly and he died on the spot. The bodies have been sent to Al Afia Hospital in Mandikhera for autopsy. Police are examining CCTV footage. "The mangled remains of the dumper have been removed from the spot to clear the carriageway," another officer said

Nikki Bhati murder: Court denies bail to father-in-law

Noida.(Agency)
A district sessions court on Friday rejected the bail application of Satvir, who is accused of aiding the death of his daughter-in-law, Nikki Bhati, in Sirsa village last Aug. Additional sessions judge Atul Srivastava ruled that the seriousness of the allegations and the risk of witness tampering had made Satvir's release inappropriate at this stage.

On Aug 21, Nikki Bhati (32) was allegedly set on fire by her husband Vipin, mother-in-law Daya, brother-in-law Rohit, and father-in-law Satvir. According to a complaint filed by Nikki's sister, Kanchan Bhati, Nikki had faced persistent harassment for dowry since her marriage in 2016. On the evening of the incident, Kanchan, who is married in the same household, claimed the family poured a flammable liquid on Nikki and set her alight.She also alleged she was assaulted when she tried to intervene. Neighbours rushed Nikki to Fortis Hospital and later to Safdarjung Hospital in Delhi, where she succumbed to her injuries during treatment.Satvir was arrested on Aug 25 following the FIR filed by Kanchan. Rohit, the brother-in-law, had previously been denied bail, while Daya and Vipin have not yet applied for bail.During the bail hearing, Satvir's counsel, Manoj Mati, argued that Satvir was at his grocery shop on the ground floor when the incident occurred and only arrived upstairs after hearing a commotion.The defence cited CCTV footage showing Satvir at the hospital and highlighted Nikki's reported statements to medical staff, in which she claimed her burns were caused by a gas cylinder explosion.

Mati insisted the FIR was the result of family disputes and that Satvir, who has no criminal record, was being falsely implicated.

DEHLI/NCR

MCG expands anti-smog fleet, 5 new machines to combat dust in Gurgaon

Gurgaon.(Agency)
PMCG has procured five new sprinkler-cum-anti-smog gun machines, with plans to double the fleet to 10 in the coming weeks.Officials said the purchase was mandated by Central Pollution Control Board (CPCB), which released a grant of Rs 4.8 crore for the purpose. Each machine costs around Rs 50 lakh. An MCG official said, "This is the first time that the MCG has bought its own machines to tackle pollution."The remaining five machines are expected to be purchased soon, after which deployment schedules will be finalised in coordination with the district pollution authorities. MCG officials said the enhanced fleet will "help extend coverage" to more areas and allow for more frequent rounds of dust suppression.Anti-smog guns are typically used along construction corridors, arterial roads and areas where



dust resuspension from traffic is high, officials said, adding they have decided the routes of these machines. According to officials, the machines will be deployed across pollution hotspots,

especially during the winter months when air quality dips sharply.The routes to be covered with these five machines include the stretch extending from Mahavir Chowk to Maharana Pratap Chowk and

Raid reveals big grey mkt of foreign liquor in Gurgaon

Gurgaon.(Agency)
Foreign liquor that flies under the excise department's radar is available in abundance in the city, investigations that began with the discovery of a consignment of 47,000 bottles worth Rs 10 crore earlier this week at a vend called 'The Theka' at Signature Towers indicate.

The supply to multiple vends in the city has been happening for the past five years through a well-oiled syndicate, sources said. These are bottles for which customs and excise duties are not paid, helping traders make a much bigger grey profit than official sales, which have an end-to-end tracking system with holograms.

The raid was conducted after a trader who has been in the city's liquor business for several years filed a complaint with the state and central govts, tipping them off on the thriving smuggling racket.Over the years, Gurgaon has become a goldmine for the excise department in Haryana with vend reserve prices drawing huge bids.

This year, the highest bid was Rs 98.6 crore. The vend from where the bottles were seized earlier this week was auctioned for Rs 50 crore.Retail business in the city has thrived on competitive pricing, with booze here selling at much cheaper rates than in Delhi and UP, and an abundance of premium brands. But has this been possible because of the thriving grey market, which has sustained the official business model? As the investigation tries to map the scale of this smuggling network, it's a question that is being asked increasingly, especially with the share of IMFL (Indian-made foreign liquor) sales falling in the city and that of foreign brands soaring.According to the complaint, IMFL sales in the city now account for only around 30% of the market share. Vend owners TOI spoke to on Friday agreed with this estimate.How were the bottles smuggled?Investigations have revealed that the syndicate set up at least 58 dummy customs bond companies

— essentially fake warehouses on paper — to siphon off imported liquor into the retail market without paying customs duties.Imported liquor arrives in India by sea and is transferred to two govt-owned Customs warehouses in north India in Okhla and Gurgaon. From there, stocks are supposed to move to private warehouses that have received a space certificate from Customs. Normally, the state excise department would track the movement of each bottle through a licensing process, ensuring all duties are paid before the liquor hits the retail shelves. That's how the official business model operates.But the syndicate bypassed this system entirely. On paper, the imported liquor was transferred from these two govt warehouses to other private warehouses. In reality, these warehouses did not exist at all. The liquor instead was diverted straight to the retail market of the city and sold without any excise duties paid.

Two die as car skids, overturns and gets hit by truck near Kherki Daula

Nuh.(Agency)
Two men returning from a wedding function in Jaipur were killed and five others injured after the car they were travelling in skidded, overturned and was hit by a truck near the Rampura flyover in the Kherki Daula area on Thursday.

The victims were part of a wedding band and were on their way back to their rented accommodation in Delhi when the accident took place at 4am, police said.

The deceased were identified as Govinda Singh, 23, from Faridkot in Punjab, and Mangal Singh, 20, from Fatehabad in Haryana. The two were close friends and had been performing together for several years.According to the police, the car, which had been rented for the band members, lost control after running over stones scattered on the road. A senior officer said initial findings suggest the stones may have fallen from a truck that had passed through the stretch earlier. The



vehicle hit the divider and overturned onto the opposite lane, where it was struck by a truck.Govinda and Mangal died on the spot due to head and internal injuries. The other occupants were rescued by passersby and taken to hospitals in Delhi, where they are undergoing treatment.Police seized the truck involved

in the collision and a case was registered under sections 281 (rash driving) and 106 (causing death by negligence) of BNS at the Kherki Daula police station.Police are also checking CCTV footage from the expressway and nearby toll points to find out how the stones came to be on the road and to identify the vehicle they may have fallen from.The bodies of the deceased were sent for postmortem on Friday and later handed over to their families.In another accident in Pataudi, a 73-year-old woman died after the auto she was travelling in overturned in Ransika village on Thursday afternoon. Kunki Devi was a resident of Nanukalan in Pataudi and was travelling to Khor village when the accident occurred. Police said four other passengers and the auto driver suffered minor injuries. A postmortem was conducted and the body was handed over to the family.

Noida expressway's parallel sector roads to be linked as riverside highway stalls

Noida.(Agency)
A plan to build a second expressway along Noida Expressway has run into a roadblock after the irrigation department refused a no-objection certificate for construction along the Yamuna embankment from Okhla Barrage near Kalindi Kunj to Yamuna Expressway near Pari Chowk.With the proposed 30km corridor stalled, but traffic pressure growing on the expressway, Noida Authority has shifted focus to making a 45-metre-wide sector road running alongside the expressway fully operational. But this will be an interim measure. Efforts to build the second expressway, officials said, would continue and regulatory approvals would be sought again.The 25km Noida Expressway is a six-lane corridor. On both sides of the main carriageway run narrow service lanes. Beyond these service lanes lie wider 45-metre-wide sector roads that are, for now, parallel connectors for local traffic. It is these outer

45-metre stretches that the Authority wants to develop as relief corridors.Officials said this road could absorb a portion of the traffic currently using the expressway, which carries lakhs of vehicles daily. But the sector roads currently are not continuous stretches and have interruptions at three points between Greater Noida and Noida, where land acquisition remains pending. These gaps, extending 74 metres, 75 metres, and 81.5 metres, respectively, are between sectors 163 and 167.

DGM (Civil) Vijay Rawal said the breaks on the sector road stem from farmers' resistance to handing over land and pending acquisition. Negotiations, Rawal said, were underway to acquire the parcels so that the road could function as a diversion route during heavy congestion, breakdowns or construction work on the expressway.Residents of several sectors, including 150, 151, 152, 153, 155, 163, 167, 135 and 168, cannot use these sector roads for an end-to-end

commute and have to enter the expressway to travel towards Noida, adding to congestion.

The existing 11 km Yamuna embankment road, opened in 2014, which had also deteriorated within years, also cannot serve as a bypass pending redevelopment.

An elevated embankment expressway was proposed earlier this year after a ground-level road was deemed unfeasible due to floodplain encroachments.A shift in strategy has become necessary now as the irrigation department's Meerut division recently reiterated that construction near the Yamuna embankment could disturb the levee and drainage channels and withheld NOC for an elevated expressway. A second hurdle in the plan, which surfaced soon after the proposal was tabled, was declaring the Pushta Road a national highway so that National Highway Authority of India (NHAI) could take up its construction.

Noida Authority earlier considered an eight-lane

internal roads of Sector 14; internal roads of Sector 15 Part 1; Jharsa to Artemis Hospital Road; Jharsa to Huda City Centre, etc.

While such machines have become increasingly common across NCR cities, residents said that the authorities should work towards a long-term solution since such machinery offers only temporary relief, working best as part of a broader dust management plan that includes enforcing construction norms, covering debris and improving road maintenance.

Kundan Lal Sharma, a city resident, said, "In the face of widespread dust pollution, the proposed step is inadequate. Such reactionary measures achieve little. What we need is a continuous, system-wide dust-mitigation plan sustained through all seasons. Even for a temporary measure, at least 50 machines should have been procured."

Owners of key commercial hub served notice for breaches in building code

Gurgaon.(Agency)
The district town planner (enforcement) has served a show-cause notice to the owners and collaborators of 32nd Avenue, a popular commercial hub in Sector 15-II. The move follows a recent inspection that uncovered deviations from the approved building and layout plans. The notice comes nearly 10 months after another one was issued in Jan 2025, which sought rectification of key breaches that, according to the department's latest findings, were not fixed.32nd Avenue is known for its vibrant food and retail offerings.

The first notice flagged several violations, including complete closure of a 6-metre fire tender path, operation of an office in basement-1, and illegal closure of the basement's second exit. The actions directly contradicted the sanctioned plans for the area known as "32 Avenue". Despite being given time to respond, officials reported that no satisfactory reply or corrective action was received over the past year.District town planner (enforcement) Amit Madholia said, "The latest inspection has revealed that not only were the earlier violations left unaddressed, but several additional contraventions have emerged. These include encroachment of an unlicensed green belt or service road by erecting a wall, obstruction of the service road through kiosks, and conversion of a banquet hall — approved under the occupation certificate — into multiple shops, cafés and restaurants."

The notice further indicates that parking areas have been encroached upon by raising platforms and using them as open seating spaces for restaurants, exacerbating congestion in an already busy commercial zone.Officials also said construction of unauthorised metal staircases and a metal bridge connecting two buildings, as well as creation of an illegal gate linking two separately licensed sites. This, according to DTP, violates Section 3B of the Haryana Development and Regulation of Urban Areas Act, 1975, which prohibits any erection or re-erection not in accordance

for a parallel traffic route has grown more urgent," Noida Authority CEO Lokesh M said.

THE SIKH TIMES

Edited, Printed, Published
Owned by Simmi Babbar
N - 31, Dr. Mukherjee Nagar
Delhi-110009
Printed at Qaumi Patrika Printing
Press, A/4-A-144, Tronica City
(Lonli), Ghaziabad (Uttar Pradesh)
Corporate Office:
5, Bahadur Shah Zafar Marg,
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RNI No. DELENG/2008/25465

Technical and Mechanical Employees Union meeting held Copies of four labor codes passed by the central government burned

The Sikh Times
Malagar khamano

Khamano, 13, December The meeting of Technical and Mechanical Employees Union Branch Shri Fatehgarh Sahib, an organization of field employees of PWD Bhawan and Roads, Water Supply and Sanitation, Irrigation and Sewerage Board, was held at Water Works Kalewal under the chairmanship of Tarlochan Singh. Releasing the proceedings of the meeting to the press, General Secretary Didar Singh Dhillon said that in the meeting, field employees from Branch Fatehgarh Sahib will participate in the convention being organized by Kirti Kisan Morcha in village Mirpur in the memory of Ghadri Baba Kirpa Singh, Bibi Gulab Kaur. In the meeting, while strongly condemning the negative role being adopted by the Punjab government regarding the demands of

employees and pensioners and unskilled workers, a large number of people will participate in the



protest programs drawn up by the Punjab Employees and Pensioners United Front and the Kisan Sanyukta Morcha. During the meeting, a memorandum was given to the Executive Engineer Fatehgarh Sahib regarding the demands of the field employees of the Water Supply and Sanitation Department and it was decided that if the memorandum and the Executive Engineer do not give time for the meeting, the organization will declare a protest against

the engineer. During the meeting, the Central Government's decision to repeal 29 labor laws and



convert them into four pro-corporate codes was strongly condemned and after the meeting, as called by the State Committee of IFTU, all the leaders burned copies of the four labor codes passed by the Central Government and raised slogans against the Central Government. Harjinder Singh Khamano, Jasbir Singh, Sukh Ram Kalewal, Malagar Singh Khamano, Lakhvir Singh Baljit Singh Hindupur etc. leaders were present in the meeting.

‘Lady Don’, 7 others chargesheeted in Seelampur teen’s murder case

New Delhi: Feared across the narrow lanes of Seelampur and known to wield more authority than many local gangsters, Zikra Khan, who is widely known in the area as ‘Lady Don’, is now at the centre of a chilling murder case that has exposed the dark underbelly of Delhi’s street vendettas. Once whispered about in fear and rarely named aloud, Zikra now stands formally chargesheeted, alongside seven others, for the brutal stabbing of a 17-year-old boy, Kunal, a crime, the police say, that was plotted with ruthless precision as an act of revenge.

For months, her name had instilled silence in street corners. But on July 26, in a courtroom far removed from the world she once controlled, her alleged empire of fear began to unravel as a judicial magistrate took cognisance of the police findings. The chargesheet, filed under multiple provisions of the Bharatiya Nyaya Sanhita (BNS), paints Zikra not just as a conspirator, but also as the architect of a revenge plot that ended in a teenager’s death, all for a grudge rooted in a past assault on her cousin. Judicial Magistrate First Class (JMFC) Anmol

Nohria took cognisance of the case and said, “From the perusal of material available on record, I take cognisance of the offence.” Zikra, along with her cousin Sahil Ansari, believed to be the key conspirators, were produced before the court from judicial custody. The court has also issued summons to the remaining accused identified as Zahida, Shahid, alias Shuaib, Anas, Aneesh, Nafees and Vikas. The matter is now scheduled for further hearing on August 8. The murder dates back to April, when Kunal, a minor, was allegedly stabbed to death in the Seelampur locality. During custodial interrogation, Zikra confessed that her cousin Sahil was attacked in November last year by two individuals, Lala and Shambhu, who were reportedly close friends of

Kunal. While Kunal was present during the attack, he was not named in the FIR due to his minor status. Zikra and Sahil allegedly suspected Kunal of having orchestrated the assault and decided to retaliate. Following her arrest in April, Zikra was remanded to judicial custody by the Karkardooma Court. Sahil was also taken into police custody for two days before being remanded to judicial custody. Investigators believe the revenge plot was meticulously planned, with each accused playing a role in executing the fatal assault. The chargesheet has been filed under Sections 103(1), 61(2), 351(3), 3(5), 249(a) and 238(a) of the BNS, indicating a broad spectrum of offences tied to premeditated murder and criminal conspiracy.

Married man killed by live-in partner for talking to his ailing wife

New Delhi: A 40-year-old scrap dealer was stabbed to death by his live-in partner in the DLF Phase 3 area here early on Saturday after an argument over him talking to his wife, police said. Harish Sharma, a resident of Baliawas village in Gurugram, had been in a live-in relationship with the 27-year-old accused, Yashmeet Kaur, for more than a year. They lived in a rented flat. Sharma was married and had two daughters who lived with his wife in the village. His wife was not keeping well for some time, and Sharma would often talk to her, which infuriated Kaur, police said. On Friday night, Kaur saw Sharma talking to his wife, and the couple had a heated argument. In a fit of rage, Kaur stabbed Sharma in the chest with a kitchen knife. He was taken to a hospital but was declared dead on arrival. A friend of the deceased, Vijay alias Sethi, who was reportedly present in another room, is also under the scanner. The victim’s nephew has alleged in his complaint that both Kaur and Vijay planned the murder. Kaur, a resident of Delhi’s Ashok Nagar, has been arrested and has confessed to the crime, police said, adding that the murder weapon and a blood-stained T-shirt were seized from the flat.

Delhi Police SI held for taking Rs 40,000 bribe

New Delhi: The Central Bureau of Investigation (CBI) on Wednesday apprehended a Sub-Inspector (SI) of the Delhi Police for allegedly accepting a bribe of Rs 40,000 from a complainant, the agency said. The Sub-Inspector, Vijay Singh, who was posted at the North Rohini police station, has been suspended with immediate effect. “The CBI apprehended SI Vijay Singh, who was posted at the North Rohini police station, while accepting a bribe of Rs 40,000 in a case being investigated by him. SI Vijay and his supervisory officer, SHO of the North Rohini police station, have been placed under suspension with immediate effect and departmental proceedings have been initiated against them,” the Delhi Police said in a statement on X. The CBI registered a case against the SI on Tuesday based on a complaint alleging that the officer had demanded a bribe of Rs 50,000 for not arresting the complainant’s cousin and also helping him to secure anticipatory bail. After negotiation, the SI agreed to accept the bribe of Rs 40,000. A trap was laid and the SI was caught red-handed while accepting the money, an official said. The official said further investigation was on in the case. The CBI has urged people to report any instances of corruption or bribery by government officials. Complaints can be submitted at the CBI office on the first floor, CBI Building, CGO Complex, Lodhi Road, New Delhi. People can also call 011-24367887 or 9650394847 to report such cases or share relevant information.

Over 8 Lakh people screened for tuberculosis

New Delhi: Delhi Health Minister Pankaj Kumar Singh on Thursday reviewed the TB Mukta Bharat Abhiyan. He was apprised by officials that 8.78 lakh individuals have been screened and 3.8 lakh chest X-rays conducted since the campaign began. “We will continue to strengthen our screening and support systems, and community participation to ensure that every TB patient receives timely care, nutrition and encouragement,” the health minister said. Officials from the ministry said Delhi achieved 99% of its National TB Elimination Programme Delhi operates 190 diagnostic centres and 365 treatment centres.

Woman dies by suicide in Southeast Delhi’s Sunlight Colony area

New Delhi: Her family has alleged that she faced sustained abuse from her husband and in-laws since her marriage nearly two years ago. According to police, a PCR call about the incident was received around noon on Saturday. When officers arrived at the scene, the woman, identified as Sadhna, was found hanging in her room in the Sidharth Basti locality. Her body was sent for post-mortem and later handed over to the family. Statements of her mother and brother were recorded by the Sub-Divisional Magistrate of Defence Colony. Sadhna’s mother, Sunita, alleged that her daughter endured constant harassment. “She was never happy in that house. They kept hurting her,” she said tearfully. Recalling the morning of the incident, Sunita said she had spoken to Sadhna around 8.30 am. “She didn’t say anything was wrong. I left for work soon after. Later, my elder daughter called to inform me that Sadhna had taken her life. By the time I got home, her body had already been taken down.” The family has filed a written complaint with the police and submitted a video as evidence. “We want justice. Those responsible for pushing my daughter to this must be punished,” Sunita demanded. Police said the case is under investigation and action would be taken based on the findings. Meanwhile, a video circulating on social media shows Sadhna in tears, alleging repeated physical abuse by her husband, Yogesh, and his family. In the footage, she claims the violence began after she married Yogesh against the wishes of both families. Police are currently verifying the video’s authenticity.

NAME CHANGE

I, Kulsum w/o Rozuddin R/o B-17, Gali No.3A, Near Mohalla Dilshad Masjid, Old Mustafabad, Delhi-110094, have changed my name to Kulsoom for all future purposes.

NAME CHANGE

I, ANITA BANSAL W/O PAWAN BANSAL residing at B-504, MAYUR-DHWAJ APARTMENT, I.P. EXTN. EAST DELHI-110092 have changed my name to ANITA RANI BANSAL for all future purpose.

PUBLIC NOTICE

I, Jyoti pal W/O Sunil Kumar R/O WZ-125, Village Begumpur, North West Delhi, -110066 declare that name of mine has been wrongly written as Jyoti in my minor Daughter Yashika aged 14 years in her school cords and birth certificate no MCDOLR09368299. The actual my name is Jyoti Pal.

NAME CHANGE

I, PUNNAM DEVI Wife of No-14913053K Rank-HAV Name-NARENDER SINGH R/O C-7, LAXMI GARDEN, NAJAFGARH, NEW DELHI-110043 have changed my name from PUNNAM DEVI to POONAM DEVI for all future purposes. Affidavit Dated 30/09/2023 before Executive Magistrate, Delhi.

NAME CHANGE

I, ABDUL TAWWAB S/O Shri Abdul Rehman Resident of House No. C-16, Akhimenyu Gali, Near Babu Ram Chowk, Arjun Mohalla, Meipur, Delhi-110053 have changed my name ABDUL TAWWAB to ABDUL TAWWAB for all future purposes.

NAME CHANGE

I, SIDDHARTH RANA S/O BHAGWAN RANA residing at H/O-1074, SIRASPUR, DELHI-110042 have changed my name to SIDDHARTH RANA for all future purpose.

NAME CHANGE

I, Kapil Kumar Yadav S/O Dinesh Yadav R/o House No-523 P Sector-14, Gurgaon, Haryana-122001, Have Changed My Name To Kapil Yadav For All Purpose

NAME CHANGE

I, Pradeep Kumar S/o Prem Chand R/O D-75/4, Gali No.1, Ashok Nagar, Shahdara, Delhi-110093 have changed the name of my minor son from Arjun to Arjun Vaidwan.

NAME CHANGE

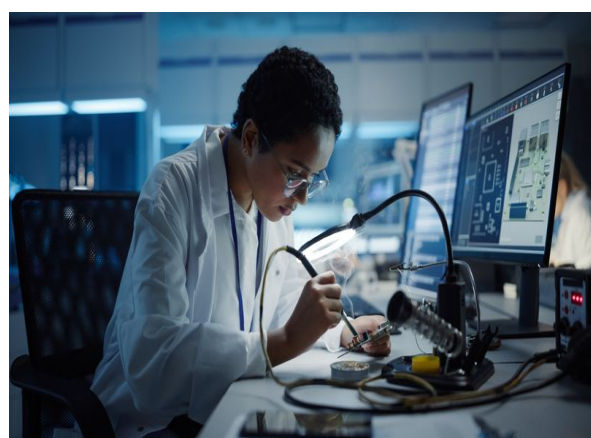
I Manoj Ram S/o Ram Blash Ram R/O Flat No-6, Tower-8, Hamelia Street, IRIS, Vatika City, Sector-49, Gurgaon, Haryana-122018, Have Changed My Name To Manoj Kumar For All Purpose

The Sikh Times

New Delhi: A state-of-the-art national research and development centre for next-generation display devices and optical technologies based on semiconductors is being established by Council for Scientific and Industrial Research at Central Scientific Instruments Organisation (CSIO) in Chandigarh. This centre, named Opto Microelectronic Research Centre, will address the needs of strategic sectors like defence and space, as well as healthcare, telecommunications, and automotive sectors. The facility, the first of its kind in the country, will initially focus on the design, assembly, testing, and packaging of mini-displays and later move on to other equipment like new types of head-up displays for aircraft. This will fill the gap in the indigenisation of futuristic high-technology gadgets. “Our aim is to address the existing and future challenges obstructing indigenisation in strate-

gic and commercial display devices and optical technologies and to take a step forward in providing a well-

oment ecosystem for the rising semiconductor industries in India,” a scientist at CSIO said. Semiconductors



versed research and devel-

Caretaker exploits phone access to dupe elderly woman of Rs 14 lakh, arrested

New Delhi: The Delhi Police have arrested a man from Rajasthan for allegedly defrauding an elderly woman of over Rs 14 lakh while working as her caretaker in southwest Delhi’s Dwarka, an official said on Sunday. The accused, identified as Deepak Kumar Saini (31), hails from Chokdi village in Rajasthan, he said. According to the police, Manjusha Rani Gupta, a resident of Royal Residency in Dwarka, filed a complaint that her former caretaker had accessed her mobile phone without permission and transferred money from her bank account to his account using Paytm between January 30 and June 6. Saini, who had been working in Gupta’s house since March 2020, exploited his occasional access to her phone to install financial applications, retrieve OTPs, and carry out all unauthorised transactions without her knowledge, police said. He stole a total of Rs 14.35 lakh from Gupta’s mobile phone. During the investigation, the police identified the accused by analysing call records, customer application forms, bank transactions, and IP logs. “It was also discovered that he was involved in online gambling,” Saini was arrested from Sikar, Rajasthan, and his mobile phone, containing evidence of the fraudulent transactions and gambling activity, was seized.

Man out on bail for raping woman opens fire at her in Delhi’s Vasant Vihar

New Delhi: The woman, a head manager at a salon, was hit on the chest and was rushed to the AIIMS Trauma Centre in a PCR van. The woman remains under treatment and is reported to be in stable condition, officials added. Abuzair Safi (30) and his accomplice Aman Sukhla have been arrested for attempting to kill the woman on Wednesday. The arrests were made on Thursday and Friday. According to police, two men on a black motorcycle fired at the woman on Wednesday. Safi, who got bail for a rape case the woman filed last year, was the one who allegedly fired at her, they said. Police reached the spot and found an abandoned auto-rickshaw. The driver, Ranjeet Yadav, told police that his female passenger had sustained a gunshot wound and was rushed to the AIIMS Trauma Centre by a PCR van. A case was registered at Vasant Vihar Police Station under Sections 109(1) (attempt to murder) and 3(5) (common intention) of the Bharatiya Nyaya Sanhita and provisions of the Arms Act, based on the woman’s statement, police said. “During interrogation, it emerged that Safi was enraged at the victim for getting a criminal case registered against him. He had tried to contact her multiple times, but she refused to respond, which further aggravated his anger,” a senior police officer said. Police said they used CCTV footage, technical surveillance, and social media to nab Shukla and recovered the motorcycle used in the crime. The next day, on August 1, Safi was apprehended and the firearm allegedly used in the shooting was seized from his possession. “Further investigation is under way to ascertain if more people were involved and to verify the background of the accused,” the officer said.

NAME CHANGE

I, NO-17007475L Rank-NK Name-JITENDRA GANGWAR S/O LATE NIRANJAN LAL GANGWAR R/O WARD NO-11, MOHALLA GYASPUR, NEAR BANGALI BABA MANDIR, BILASPUR, PILIBHIT, UTTAR PRADESH-262201 have changed my minor son's name from DAKSHI GANGWAR to YASH GANGWAR for all future purposes. Affidavit Dated 05/09/2023 before Notary Public, Delhi.

NAME CHANGE

I, SH AUTAR SINGH Father of JC-14367X RANK-SUB MAJ Name-BHAGAT SINGH presently residing at VILL-BULTIYA SOKOLI TALLI, DIST-PAURI GARHWAL, UTTARAKHAND-246155 have changed my name from SH AUTAR SINGH to AVTAR SINGH for all future purposes. Affidavit dated 12/03/2024 before Notary Public, Delhi.

NAME CHANGE

I, D BABU Father of NO-1484224Y Rank-HAV/MT Name-ANOO P R/O AALAYAM, VILL -KEEZHTHONNAKKAL, PO-POTHENCODE, DIST-TRIVANDRUM, KERALA-695584 have changed my name from D BABU to BABU D for all future purposes. Affidavit Dated 12/03/2024 before Notary Public, Delhi.

NAME CHANGE

I, Jaspreet Singh S/o Jagdeep Singh R/o 52/43 Ramjas Road Near Khalsa college Karol Bagh Delhi -110005 Have Changed My Name To Jaspreet Singh Baweja For All Purpose.

NAME CHANGE

I Sandeep Ved S/o Khushi Ram Ved R/o H.No-139/1-B-Block, Street No-3, Qutub Vihar Phase-2, Dwarka, Delhi-110071, Have Changed My Name To Sandeep Vaid For All Purpose

NAME CHANGE

I Rohini Bhatnagar W/o Amitabh Bhatnagar R/o M-7075, Devinder Vihar, Gurgaon sector 56, Gurgaon Haryana-122011, Have Changed My Name To Rohini Dhanraj Bhatnagar For All Purpose

NAME CHANGE

I, Anil Balakrishna Panicker S/o Angakattil Narayan Balakrishna Panicker R/o A-6/334-A, Janta Flats, Paschim Vihar, Delhi-110063, have changed my name to Anil Bala Panicker permanently.

of the industry because they are the foundational building blocks of modern electronics, acting as the “hidden brains” that make devices work. They are crucial for a vast array of technologies across different disciplines. Acting as a brain, semiconductor chips help machines take decisions while processing heavy data, giving them iterative direction. Their ability to control electrical conductivity makes them ideal for use in virtually all electronic devices, ranging from smartphones and computers to cars and spacecraft. Semiconductors are materials whose electrical conductivity lies between that of conductors and insulators. They can behave as either, depending on the conditions and requirements, making them ideal for electronic devices. This unique property allows them to be used

in the creation of tiny electronic chips that control modern devices. Semiconductors are also essential for the development of advanced technologies such as artificial intelligence, edge computing, and 5G communication. A great deal of resources is being devoted to semiconductor technology, and its advancement is fuelling innovation in various fields, leading to smaller, faster, and more powerful electronic devices. With greater digitalisation and automation in day-to-day activities, semiconductors have become integral to economic security and strategic independence. The acute shortage of chips during the Covid pandemic and its aftermath, as well as the Ukraine-Russia war that affected the manufacture of cars, mobile phones, and other electronics, is a pointer towards this end.

Woman, two daughters found dead in Delhi’s Karawal Nagar

New Delhi: A 28-year-old woman and her two daughters, aged 7 and 5, were found dead in their home in Northeast Delhi’s Karawal Nagar area in the wee hours of Saturday, the police said. The husband of the deceased, who is suspected to have killed them, is absconding, they added. As per the police, a call regarding the death of a woman and her two daughters was received at Karawal Nagar police station. On reaching the spot, a police team found the bodies of a woman and police teams have been formed to trace the husband of the deceased, he said. A case under Section 103(1) (murder) of BNS has been registered at Karawal Nagar police station and further investigation is under way, the official said.

NAME CHANGE

I, KRISHAN KANTA W/O NO-98820P (Late) Col SHY KUMAR (Retd.) R/O H-104, VIVEK VIHAR, NEAR KENDRIYA VIHAR-2, SEC-82, NOIDA, SALARPUR, GAUTAM BUDHA NAGAR, UTTAR PRADESH-201304 have changed my name from KRISHAN KANTA to KRISHAN KANTARANDEV for all future purposes. Affidavit Dated 12/03/2024 before Notary Public, Delhi.

NAME CHANGE

I, MEENA DEVI wife of JC-493248F Rank-NB/SUB Name-RAVINDER KUMAR R/O VPO-MURTHAL, TEH-SONIPT, DISTT-SONIPT, HARYANA-131027 have changed my name from MEENA DEVI to MEENA for all future purposes. Affidavit Dated 11/03/2024 before Notary Public, Delhi.

NAME CHANGE

I, ANITA W/o NO-2806617A HAV TANGADKAR SUBHASH SITARAM R/o VPO-GHARGAON, TEH-SANGAMNER, DISTT-AHMADNAGAR, MAHARASHTRA-422620, have changed my name from ANITA to ANITA SUBHASH TANGADKAR for all future purposes. Affidavit dated 29/11/2022 before Notary Public, Delhi.

NAME CHANGE

I, DATTATRAY NAGOJI PATIL father of NO-JC-379904X SUB MAJ PATIL MAHENDRA DATTATRAY R/O VILL-BONJURDI, PO-ADKUR, TEH-CHANDGAD, DISTT-KOLHAPUR, MH-416509, have changed my name from DATTATRAY NAGOJI PATIL to DATTATRAY NAGOJI PATIL for all future purposes and in my son’s service record my date of birth wrongly mentioned as 01/07/1953 instead of my correct date of birth as 17/01/1950. Affidavit dated 29/11/2022 Before Notary Public, Delhi.

PUBLIC NOTICE

MY CLIENT NARENDER PAL AGARWAL, S/O, LATE SARDARI LAL AGARWAL AND NEETU AGARWAL W/O NARENDER PAL AGARWAL BOTH R/O H.NO. 49, NARELA ROAD, BAWANA, NEAR STATE BANK OF INDIA, NEW DELHI, PRESENTLY AT H.NO.122, WHITE HOUSE APARTMENT, SECTOR-13, ROHINI, NEW DELHI-110085, HAVE DEBARRED THEIR SON NIKHIL AGARWAL AND HIS WIFE ANCHAL AGARWAL FROM THEIR ALL MOVABLE-IMMOVABLE PROPERTIES AND SHALL NOT HAVE ANY RIGHT, TITLE OR INTEREST IN MOVABLE AND IMMOVABLE PROPERTIES AND SEVERED ALL THEIR RELATION DUE TO MISCONDUCT AND DISOBEDIENCE ANYBODY DEALING WITH THEM SHALL BEAR AT THEIR OWN COST, RISK & CONSEQUENCES

PINKI LAMBA MANN

ADVOCATE OFF. A-205A, NORTH EX.MALL, SECTOR-9, ROHINI, NEW DELHI

NORTH EASTERN RAILWAY

OPEN TENDER NOTICE NO. NER-BSB05Nt-OT-28-2025

“Open Tenders” through Online (E-Tendering) are invited by Divisional Railway Manager (Signal & Telecom)/Varanasi/North Eastern Railway for and behalf of the President of India for the following works:-
SI No.-1, Tender Notice No. and Description of Work: NER-BSB05Nt-OT-28-2025, Name of Work: Replacement work of overage battery and battery charger for OFC system in Srdste-II BSB section in Varanasi. Details: Approx. Value (Rs.): ₹ 90,48,112.77, Earnest Money (Rs.): ₹ 1,81,000/-, Cost of Tender Form (Rs.): ₹ 00.00, Completion Period: 180 Days. Tender Closing Date & Time: 05-01-2026 up to 15:00 Hrs.
(1) Tender Online will be submitted up to 15:00 hrs. on date 05-01-2026.
(2) For full details and submission of bid kindly visit the official website of Indian Railways i.e. www.iregs.gov.in
Divl. Rly. Manager (S&T) Varanasi
CPRO-Signal-74
Never travel on roof and foot boards.

NEWS BOX

On Camera, Australian Politician's Pet Dog Welcomes Bull, Horse Into Home

world. (Agency)
A lawmaker in Australia was left in udder disbelief when he came home to discover his pet dog had let a bull and a horse into his living room.
Andrew Mackay, a Northern Territory politician, posted the incriminating evidence from his pet cam to social media at the weekend.His two pet dogs can be seen exiting the living room into a yard after one of them, a mutt named Thunder, nudges open a glass door. Then a pet steer, or castrated bull, named Sue gingerly wanders into the Darwin home.It's followed by a pet horse, Cricket, which has a good sniff of the couch.The animals embarked on their escapade while Mackay and his fiancée were out for a meal.
The couple raced home after the lawmaker checked his pet cam remotely and noticed "a cow's head moving into the frame"."And then we've discovered that about 10 minutes after we'd left to go to dinner, the dogs had decided to nuzzle open the glass door and let themselves out," he told AFP.Soon after, the steer scratched his neck on the door and accidentally opened it all the way, allowing him and the horse inside.Over the next hour and a half, they took turns playing inside, knocking things off cabinets," Mackay said.
The horse found a bowl of vegetable scraps meant for the chickens, and threw pieces around the room.
"The fish tank has been drunken from, and I don't know how many fish I had before, but I assume they're all still alive," he headed.

Iran Detains Nobel-Prize Winner In "Brutal" Arrest

HONG KONG.(Agency)
Iranian security forces on Friday detained the 2023 Nobel Peace Prize winner Narges Mohammadi along with at least eight other activists in an arrest condemned as "brutal" by the Norwegian Nobel committee.Mohammadi, who was granted temporary leave from prison in December 2024, was detained along with eight other activists at the ceremony for lawyer Khosrow Alikordi, who was found dead in his office last week, her foundation wrote on X.Those arrested at the ceremony in the eastern city of Mashhad included Mohammadi's fellow prominent activist Sepideh Gholian, who had previously been jailed alongside her in Tehran's Evin prison."These individuals were present solely to pay their respects and express solidarity at a memorial ceremony," her foundation said, adding the arrests "constitute a blatant and serious violation of fundamental freedoms and basic human rights".
"Narges was beaten on the legs and she was held by her hair and dragged down," one of her brothers, Hamid Mohammadi, told AFP in Oslo where he lives.
The Norwegian Nobel Committee said it was "deeply concerned by today's brutal arrest" of Mohammadi, calling on Iran to "immediately" clarify her whereabouts.The arrest came two days after the ceremony in Oslo for the 2025 prize winner, Venezuelan opposition leader Maria Corina Machado, a fierce critic of Venezuelan President Nicolas Maduro who is an ally of Tehran.
The Nobel committee said it "notes" the timing "given the close collaboration between the regimes in Iran and Venezuela".Within Iran, the Mehr news agency cited the Mashhad governor Hassan Hosseini as saying the individuals were arrested at the ceremony after "chanting slogans deemed contrary to public norms" but did not name them.

Americans Skeptical Of Trump On Epstein, But Republican Doubts Ease: Survey

Washington . (Agency)
Americans are deeply skeptical of President Donald Trump's handling of the Jeffrey Epstein scandal, though he is shoring up support among his core Republican followers who have long focused on the case, a new Reuters/Ipsos poll found.The poll, completed on Monday, found that most Americans believe Trump's administration is covering up information about the late sex offender, including his 2019 death and his ties to rich and powerful people, and do not believe Trump's claim that he was unaware of Epstein's alleged trafficking of teenage girls when the two were friends decades ago.Only 23% of Americans approve of the way Trump is handling the ongoing scandal, the poll found, while 52% disapprove.However, the poll found he appears to be easing the concerns of his supporters: 53% of Republicans said they approved of the way he was handling the issue, up from 44% last month. That is still well below the 85% approval rating Trump enjoys overall among Republicans. That could prove crucial. Trump stoked conspiracy theories about Epstein before he returned to the White House this year, and prominent supporters have accused his administration of a cover-up. Republicans and Democrats in Congress defied Trump last month and passed a law requiring the Justice Department to release documents by December 19 from its long-running investigation into Epstein. The online poll of 4,434 U.S. adults, conducted December 3 through December 8, found lingering suspicion about the U.S. government's role.Some 62% of those surveyed, including 56% of Republicans, said they believed the government is hiding information about Epstein's death, which was ruled a suicide, in a Manhattan jail in 2019 as he faced federal sex trafficking charges.An even higher proportion - 70% - said they thought the government is hiding information about people who may have participated in the late financier's alleged sex trafficking of teenage girls, including 62% of Republicans.

UN Expert Warns Pakistan Over Imran Khan's Detention Conditions Amid Political Turmoil

Imran Khan's detention has become a focal point of Pakistan's deep political divisions following his removal from office in April 2022 and the subsequent crackdown on his Pakistan Tehreek-e-Insaf (PTI) party.

DHAKA . (Agency)
A United Nations human rights expert has urged Pakistan to urgently improve the detention conditions of former Prime Minister Imran Khan, warning that his treatment in prison could amount to torture or other cruel, inhuman or degrading punishment. The intervention comes amid heightened political tensions in Pakistan, where Khan's imprisonment remains one of the most polarising issues in the country's turbulent political landscape.In a statement

issued on Friday, Alice Jill Edwards, the UN Special Rapporteur on torture, called on Pakistani authorities to ensure that Khan's detention complies with international human rights standards. Khan, 72, has been held at Adiala Jail in Rawalpindi since 26 September 2023 and is currently facing multiple legal cases that his supporters describe as politically motivated, a claim denied by the government and military establishment.Edwards said she had received “credible information” that Khan has been subjected to prolonged solitary confinement, spending up to 23 hours a day alone in his cell with highly restricted access to the outside world. His cell is reportedly under constant camera surveillance. Under international law, prolonged or indefinite solitary confinement is prohibited, and isolation lasting more than 15 days may constitute psychological torture. “Khan's solitary confinement should be lifted without delay,” Edwards said, warning that extended isolation can have severe physical and mental health consequences. According

to the information shared with the UN expert, Khan has been denied outdoor exercise, interaction with other prisoners and



participation in communal prayers. Visits by lawyers and family members, even when authorised by courts, are frequently cut short or interrupted.The Special Rapporteur also raised serious concerns about the physical conditions of Khan's cell, which is described as small, poorly ventilated and lacking natural light. Extreme temperatures during summer and winter, foul odours and insect infestations have reportedly led to nausea,

vomiting and significant weight loss. “Anyone deprived of liberty must be treated with humanity and dignity,” Edwards said, adding that detention conditions must take into account an individual's age and health. Khan has a history of serious medical issues, including a spinal injury sustained in a 2013 accident and gunshot wounds from a 2022 assassination attempt. Edwards said he has reportedly been denied adequate medical care and urged authorities to allow visits by his personal physicians.Khan's detention has become a focal point of Pakistan's deep political divisions following his removal from office in April 2022 and the subsequent crackdown on his Pakistan Tehreek-e-Insaf (PTI) party. While the government insists that Khan is being held in accordance with the law, his supporters argue that the cases against him and the restrictions on his detention are part of a broader effort to sideline him politically.

Thailand continues Cambodia strikes despite Trump truce calls

BURIRAM . (Agency)
Thailand said Saturday it was continuing military strikes against Cambodia despite US President Donald Trump saying the countries had agreed to stop fighting after calls with him.Renewed clashes between the Southeast Asian neighbours, which stem from a long-running dispute over the colonial-era demarcation of their 800-kilometre (500-mile) border, broke out this month and have displaced around half a million people on both sides.Each side blamed the other for reigniting the conflict -- which has killed at least 20 people this week -- but there were signs that tensions might be easing when Trump said a truce had been agreed.However, on Saturday, Thai Prime Minister Anutin Charnvirakul said the country would "continue to perform military actions until we feel no more harm and threats to our land

and people".Bangkok's joint press centre confirmed that Thai forces had "retaliated" against Cambodian



military targets at 5:50 am (2250 Friday GMT).The statements came as Cambodia said Thai fighter jets had dropped several bombs on its territory. A Thai navy spokesman said the air force "successfully destroyed" two Cambodian bridges used to transport weapons to the conflict zone.Trump

had hailed his "very good conversation" with Anutin and Cambodian Prime Minister Hun Manet on Friday."They have agreed to CEASE all shooting effective this evening, and go back to the original Peace Accord" agreed in July, Trump wrote on his Truth Social platform.After the call with Trump, Thailand's Anutin said Cambodia "is going to comply with the ceasefire", adding: "The one who violated the agreement needs to fix (the situation)." Cambodia's Hun Manet said his country "has always been adhering to peaceful means for dispute resolutions". Cambodian information minister Neth Pheaktra said Saturday Thai forces had "expanded their attacks to include civilian infrastructure and Cambodian civilians".Royal Thai Air Force spokesman Chakkrit Thammavichai said the army was "using high-

California, 19 other states sue Trump administration over USD 100,000 H-1B visa fee

BANGKOK .(Agency)
President Donald Trump's USD100,000 fee on new H-1B visas for highly skilled foreign workers, according to a report by Reuters.California Attorney General Rob Bonta is leading the 20-state coalition lawsuit, calling the policy unlawful and warning it could disrupt sectors that rely on skilled foreign workers.
The lawsuit, filed Friday in federal court, argues that the Department of Homeland Security (DHS) imposed the fee outside the bounds of congressional authority and bypassed required notice-and-comment procedures. Bonta's office said the fee, more than 10 times the typical H-1B cost, would place significant strain on schools, universities, and hospitals that depend on H-1B employees.
The H-1B program allows employers to hire highly skilled foreign workers, including engineers, researchers, doctors, and teachers. While many government and nonprofit employers are exempt from the program's annual cap, they are not exempt from the new



fee, which critics say will make it harder to recruit essential personnel amid nationwide shortages.
Trump signed the executive order on September 19, introducing the USD 100,000 charge for new H-1B petitions. DHS retains discretion over which applications are subject to the fee, prompting states to argue it could be applied selectively.Joining California in the lawsuit are Arizona, Colorado, Connecticut, Delaware, Hawaii, Illinois, Maryland, Massachusetts, Michigan, Minnesota, Nevada, North Carolina, New Jersey, New York, Oregon, Rhode Island, Vermont, Washington, and Wisconsin. In 2024, Indian nationals accounted for a

staggering 71% of all H-1B visa beneficiaries, with China a distant second at 11.7%. The legal challenge adds to mounting opposition from corporate and nonprofit sectors. The US Chamber of Commerce, along with unions, nonprofits, and a healthcare staffing firm, have filed separate lawsuits, calling the fee “draconian,” “extortionate,” and a violation of Congress's constitutional taxing authority.
The White House defended the policy. Spokesperson Taylor Rogers said, “President Trump promised to put American workers first, and his commonsense action on H-1B visas does just that by discouraging companies from spamming the system and driving down American wages, while providing certainty to employers who need to bring the best talent from overseas.”
The fee has raised concern in Silicon Valley, where companies such as Amazon, Microsoft, Meta, and Apple rely heavily on H-1B hires. Industry leaders warned it could push jobs overseas.

Trump sued by preservationists seeking reviews, congressional approval for White House ballroom project

BANGKOK . (Agency)
President Donald Trump was sued on Friday by preservationists asking a federal court to halt his White House ballroom project until it goes through multiple independent reviews and wins approval from Congress.The National Trust for Historic Preservation, a privately funded group, is asking the U.S. District Court to block Trump's White House ballroom addition, which already has involved razing the East Wing, until it goes through comprehensive design reviews, environmental assessments, public comments and congressional debate and ratification.
The project has prompted criticism in the historic preservation and architectural communities, and among his political adversaries, but the lawsuit is the most tangible effort thus far to alter or stop the president's plans for an addition that itself would be nearly twice the size of the White House before the East Wing's demolition."No president is legally allowed to tear down portions of the White House without any review whatsoever — not President Trump, not President Biden, and not anyone else," the lawsuit states. "And no president is legally allowed to construct a ballroom on public property without giving the public the opportunity to weigh in."
Additionally, the Trust wants the court to declare that Trump, by fast-tracking the project, has committed multiple violations of the Administrative Procedures Act and the National Environmental Policy Act, while also exceeding his constitutional authority by not consulting lawmakers.No more work should be done, the Trust argues, until administration officials "complete the required reviews — reviews that should have taken place before the Defendants demolished the East Wing, and before they began construction of the Ballroom."White House maintains that Trump has 'full legal authority' over the building
Asked questions about the lawsuit, White House spokesman David Ingle responded with a blanket assertion that Trump is within his "full legal authority to modernize, renovate and beautify the White House — just like all of his predecessors did."Ingle did not specifically address an Associated Press question asking whether the president would consult Congress at any point.The White House response correctly notes that essentially every president makes some changes to the White House. But Trump's efforts are the most sweeping since a nearly complete gutting of the decaying interior of the oldest portion of the mansion during President Harry Truman's tenure.

Iran arrests Nobel Peace Prize laureate Narges Mohammadi, supporters say

DUBAI. (Agency)
Iran has arrested Nobel Peace Prize laureate Narges Mohammadi, her supporters said Friday.A foundation in her name said she was detained in Mashhad, some 680 kilometers (420 miles) northeast of the capital, Tehran, while attending a memorial for a human rights lawyer recently found dead under unclear circumstances.A local official reportedly acknowledged arrests had been made, but did not directly name Mohammadi, 53. It wasn't clear if authorities would immediately return her to prison, where she had been serving a sentence until her temporary release in December 2024 for medical purposes.However, her detention comes as Iran has been cracking down on intellectuals and others as Tehran struggles with sanctions, an ailing economy and the fear of a renewed war with Israel. Arresting Mohammadi may spark increased pressure from the West at a time when Iran repeatedly signals it wants new negotiations with the United States over its nuclear program — something that has yet

to happen.The Norwegian Nobel Committee said it was “deeply concerned” by Mohammadi's arrest.The committee “calls on the Iranian authorities to immediately clarify Mohammadi’s whereabouts, ensure her safety and integrity, and to release her without conditions,” it said in a statement. Activist detained at ceremony for dead lawyerHer supporters on Friday described her as having been “violently detained earlier today by security and police forces.” They said other activists had been arrested as well at a ceremony honoring Khosrow Alikordi, a 46-year-old Iranian lawyer and human rights advocate who had been based in Mashhad.“The Narges Foundation calls for the immediate and unconditional release of all detained individuals who were attending a memorial ceremony to pay their respects and demonstrate solidarity,” a statement read. “Their arrest constitutes a serious violation of fundamental freedoms.”Alikordi was found dead earlier this month in his office, with provincial officials in describing his

death as a heart attack. However, a tightening security crackdown coincided with his death, raising questions. Over 80 lawyers signed a statement demanding more information.”What we witnessed



today is the Islamic Republic’s latest assault on the most basic human freedoms — where even mourning a slain lawyer becomes a punishable act,” said Hadi Ghaemi, the executive director of the New York-based Center for Human Rights in Iran.“When peaceful citizens cannot mourn without being beaten and dragged away, it reveals a government terrified of

truth and accountability. It also reveals the extraordinary bravery of Iranians who refuse to surrender their dignity."Footage purportedly of the ceremony showed Mohammadi with a microphone, calling out to the crowd gathered without wearing a hijab, or headscarf. She started the crowd chanting the name Majidreza Rahnavard, a man whom authorities hanged from a crane in a public execution in 2022.Footage published by her foundation also showed her without a hijab, surrounded by a large crowd.Hasan Hosseini, the city governor of Mashhad, said prosecutors ordered security officials to temporarily detain a number of participants at the ceremony after the chanting of “norm-breaking” slogans, Iranian state television reported.Hosseini described the detentions as preventive to protect those there from others in the crowd, but did not address claims that security forces used violence in making the arrests.
Other anti-government chants could be heard in purported video footage of the event.

NEWS BOX

Oil depots shut in Manipur over threats; fuel crisis deepens

Imphal. (Agency)

Oil depots across Manipur remained closed on Saturday in protest against threats and extortion demands issued by unknown armed persons. The shutdown has triggered a major fuel crisis, as oil depots had already been closed for the past two days due to a strike called by various organisations. With fuel supplies disrupted for three consecutive days, many people were forced to purchase petrol from the black market.The Manipur petroleum dealers’ fraternity called for the shutdown following an incident on December 6, when a hand grenade was found inside an oil depot at Koirengai in Imphal. An intimidating letter threatening the staff was also recovered from the site. Condemning the incident, the fraternity appealed to authorities to ensure the safety of oil depot staff and demanded an end to intimidation and threats.

Manipur Police seize arms and explosives near Khuga Dam

Imphal. (Agency)

Manipur Police recovered a significant cache of arms, explosives, and other war-like materials during a search operation near Khuga Dam, under Churachandpur Police Station, in Churachandpur district on Friday. The seized items included a locally made .303 rifle, three pistol magazines, a 51 mm mortar smoke bomb, a stun grenade, and an improvised mortar (PUMPI). Authorities also recovered four improvised explosive devices (IEDs), 12 rounds of ammunition of various calibres, two ammunition clips, and a cartridge belt for a 12-bore weapon. In addition, two Baofeng hand-held wireless sets, two helmets, and a tactical belt fitted with magazine and pistol pouches were recovered from the area, police said today.

Messi unveils his statue in Kolkata

Kolkata. (Agency)

World Cup winner Lionel Messi on Saturday unveiled his 70-ft tall iron statue, billed as the tallest statue of any footballer in the globe, on VIP Road - the gateway to the city. The statue has been erected around four kilometres south of the NSCBI Airport near the Big Ben Clock tower on the VIP Road-Lake Town crossing. Hours after the Argentine great arrived in the city aboard a private jet, he virtually unveiled the white statue from the Hyatt Regency hotel, where he is staying with his entourage, including several Inter Miami players. Bollywood superstar Shah Rukh Khan, a self-confessed Messi fan, was present at the unveiling. The statue, a replica of a photograph of Messi holding the World Cup in 2022, was made in 40 days by artist Mintu Pal, West Bengal fire department minister Sujit Bose, who personally took the initiative for the statue, claimed the standing figure is the tallest of any footballer in the world.

Maharashtra braces for cold wave; temperatures drop below 10 degrees Celsius

Pune. (Agency)

Maharashtra is likely to experience a cold wave, with temperatures in several districts falling below 10 degrees Celsius, according to the India Meteorological Department (IMD). Dense morning fog is being reported across many regions, while cold conditions have intensified in Marathwada and Vidarbha. The IMD has warned that chilly weather is expected to persist throughout December. In response, several schools have rescheduled opening hours to cope with the low temperatures. Northern India is also witnessing a sharp drop in temperatures, with states such as Punjab, Uttarakhand, Jammu and Kashmir, Haryana, Madhya Pradesh, Bihar, and Uttar Pradesh experiencing intensifying cold waves. Cold northerly winds sweeping across the region are contributing to falling temperatures in Maharashtra as well. The IMD has cautioned that the cold is likely to strengthen further in the coming days. Cities including Pune, Mumbai, and Nashik are experiencing a significant chill due to incoming cold waves from the north. The IMD forecasts that these waves will continue to persist, keeping winter temperatures unusually low across the state. In terms of minimum temperatures, Jeur recorded 5 degrees Celsius, while Parbhani and Niphad recorded 5.5 degrees Celsius and 5.6 degrees Celsius respectively. Ahilyanagar and Nashik saw temperatures drop below 8 degrees Celsius. Other districts including Washim, Satara, Bhandara, Gondia, and Nagpur recorded minimum temperatures around 10 degrees Celsius. Cold conditions have also intensified in Chhatrapati Sambhajanagar, Jalna, Parbhani, Nanded, Beed, Latur, Hingoli, and Akola, signaling a noticeable increase in winter chill across most parts of the state.

Around Town: How Colaba’s century-old Bagdadi — born as an eatery for workers building the Taj and Gateway — went on to impress actors, cricketers, and even Julia Roberts

Mumbai .(Agency)

In some corners of South Bombay, time holds a different rhythm — meals are hearty, prices are modest, and tables stay full. While portions shrink and prices climb elsewhere, these old eateries still serve generous plates without straining the wallet. One of them is Bagdadi in Colaba, a century-old institution loved for its traditional Mughlai food. Featuring an old wooden structure with a high ceiling now reinforced with iron bars, Bagdadi is a reminder of an era gone by, but earnestly preserved. A fresh coat of white paint, wooden trims, a couple of posters, and bench-style seating keep the space simple and functional. On one wall hang photographs of old Bombay, and next to it, a large, old-style menu board lists biryani, mutton, chicken, dal, and more in English and Urdu, with a note at the top: “Half Plate Price”. **A joint for labourers** Like most eateries of its time, Bagdadi was built to serve those who had left their homes and fields to make a living in the city. “When my great-grandfather, Banne Sukhe, came to Bombay, he noticed a dearth of eateries in the vicinity, especially for labourers constructing the Gateway of India and the Taj Mahal Hotel (now The Taj Mahal Palace). So he started this eatery,” shared Saud Ahmed, 34, the fourth generation at the helm. “There’s no story behind the name, except that he used to

frequent Baghdad,” added his father, Atique Ahmed, 62. Atique recalls coming here during his summer vacations and learning the tricks of the trade. While Bagdadi was officially registered as a “tea stall” in 1936, he estimates that it began sometime in the late 1890s. “Back then, all the licences were issued for tea stalls,” he said. Bagdadi started as a 1,700-sqft eatery serving tea, biscuits, bun maska, keema pav, shami kebab pav, urad dal, rice, and Irani khubz — a soft, chewy, large tandoori roti. Some of these dishes are still on that old menu board. “Back in the day, a lot of ships would come to Bombay. A lot of Arab traders, too. That led us to start these giant tandoori rotis,” said Atique, adding that they were the first to establish a tandoor in South Bombay, if not the entire city. “The tandoors you commonly see have very small capacity. They wouldn’t have met our



Severe cold wave to grip Bengaluru

The south interior parts of Karnataka, too, are poised to experience cold wave conditions. And temperature in Bengaluru is expected to dip as winter progresses.

BENGALURU . (Agency)

Parts of North Karnataka will experience conditions of ‘severe cold wave’ according to a forecast from the India Metrological Department, Bengaluru (IMD). The south interior parts of Karnataka, too, are poised to experience cold wave conditions. And temperature in Bengaluru is expected to dip as winter progresses. The IMD, Bengaluru, on Friday issued a severe cold wave warning for the next few days across several North Interior Karnataka districts - Bidar, Belagavi, Bagalkote, Dharwad, Gadag, Kalaburagi, Raichur, Vijayapura and Yadgir. A cold wave alert is also in place for South Interior Karnataka districts such as Koppal, Ballari, Vijayanagara, Haveri, Shivamogga, Chikkamagaluru, Hassan, Chikkaballapura and Kolar. State to see cold weather for next 5 days, B’luru chills at 12.9°C CS Patil, Senior Scientist, IMD, Bengaluru, said, “Cold weather conditions are expected to continue across Karnataka for the next five days, with several districts in North Interior

Karnataka likely to experience cold wave like conditions.”Bidar, Kalaburagi, Yadgir, Raichur, Vijayapura, Bagalkote, Ballari and

average or dipping below 10°C in the plains qualify as cold wave conditions.” B’luru’s min temp dips



Dharwad will remain the coldest, with temperatures dropping significantly below normal, he added. Throwing light on what and when a cold wave is declared, Patil said, “Temperatures falling 5°C below the 30 year

Tripura CM seeks to reopen 1996 Kalyanpur Massacre Case

Agartala. (Agency)

Tripura Chief Minister Dr Manik Saha here on Saturday said that the state government will move the High Court seeking permission to reopen the Kalyanpur Bazar Colony massacre case that happened on Dec 12, 1996, allegedly by tribal insurgents. He said the move was aimed at delivering justice to the victims and ensuring accountability for those responsible. While paying homage to the victims of the massacre in Khowai district, Dr Saha recalled the tragic incident that occurred 29 years ago. At night, militants brutally killed 26 innocent villagers, including children, elderly people, women, and men, after earlier threatening residents to leave the area. The attackers reportedly harboured ambitions of turning Tripura into a tribal state. Dr Saha expressed his resolve to fight for justice, offering floral tributes to those who lost their lives and seeking their blessings for strength in his mission. He stated that the identities of those responsible are known and insinuated criticism toward the Communist leadership, suggesting they were tied to violence and oppression.

Taking a firm stance against Communism, Dr Saha accused its leaders of creating disorder and alleged that cadres of CPI (M) and its affiliated organisation Ganamukti Parishad have collaborated with local parties to cause unrest. He pointed out an alleged control room operating from Lal Bhavan in Agartala. To address such elements, he noted that a detailed list is being prepared under the guidance of Prime Minister Narendra Modi, Home Minister Amit Shah, and BJP National President J P Nadda, assuring that no wrongdoer would escape accountability. The Chief Minister underscored that his government is committed to fostering peace and stability in the state. Recalling a series of violent killings under the CPI (M) regime in South Tripura district, he mentioned that 69 people had been killed by the All Tripura Tiger Force (ATTF) militant group over the years. He noted that the situation has improved significantly over the past decade, particularly since Narendra Modi became Prime Minister, with 12 accords signed to integrate militants into society and restore stability in the Northeast.

Mekedatu: Govt gets serious, sets up team to implement it

The CNNL director has been instructed to hand over all relevant documents to the KERS director, the GO said.

BENGALURU. (Agency)

The state government has constituted a team headed by the director of Karnataka Engineering Research Station (KERS) for the speedy implementation of



the Mekedatu Balanced Watershed Project. The move comes after the recent Supreme Court order that favoured Karnataka. The project office will be set up in Ramanagara of Bengaluru South district. It will have 30 officials, including an executive engineer. A meeting on

Mekedatu held on November 18 and chaired by Deputy Chief Minister Shivakumar decided to set up the office of superintending engineer to expedite the project work. However, for the finance department approval for staffing and office building, it has been decided to give the responsibility to the KERS director, stated a release from the DCM’s office. The Cauvery Neeravari Nigam Ltd (CNNL) will take steps to set up the Mekedatu project office. The office team will function under the CNNL director and administrative expenses too will be borne by CNNL. The CNNL director has been instructed to hand over all relevant documents to the KERS director, the GO said. Last month, the Supreme Court refused to entertain two applications filed by Tamil Nadu against Karnataka’s move to construct a new reservoir at Mekedatu.

Families who escaped 1984 anti-Sikh riots fear displacement again in Mohali

Residents of a rehabilitation colony in Mohali’s Phase 11 have intensified protests against an anti-encroachment drive, saying the demolitions have revived memories of displacement after the 1984 Sikh riots and threaten their only source of livelihood.

Mohali . (Agency)

The residents of the rehabilitation colony in Mohali’s Phase 11 Friday set up their tents as part of their continuous protests for the last three days against the Municipal Corporation and G M A D A’s joint anti-encroachment drive. The joint drive that began on November 27, from Mohali’s Phase 4, had to be halted as it faced strong resistance from the residents. Following this, the authorities issued a final public notice before 1 December 2025, giving encroachers three days to remove illegal structures on their own. Failing compliance, the MC and GMADA announced that they would proceed with removals

under the directions of the Punjab and Haryana High Court. As the anti-encroachment drive reached Phase 11, the memories of the 1984 Sikh massacre came rushing back to the families who had once escaped the nightmare. Inderjit Kaur, a resident of the colony, said, “We saw our father and two brothers being thrown into fire and burnt alive by a mob. When we survived, we came here. The government at that time gave us these small rooms to live in. We left our homes, our work, everything. We started a new life here: opened small shops, raised our children. And now, the government is coming to demolish

the shops built next to our rooms, citing High Court orders. We were displaced then, and even today our



families haven’t fully recovered. What is the difference between that government and this one if the end result is still our displacement?”

Many families said they did not construct these small shops out of desire, but sheer compulsion. “We never got jobs. To run our homes, we extended a bit of space and opened shops. This is our livelihood... our only support,” the residents said. Another resident, Pinky Soni, recalled how she fled Delhi carrying her young children. “Muslim families saved us. They fed us, sheltered us, and took us to a relief camp. From there we came here. The government gave us matchbox-like rooms, and we made them our homes. Our children grew up here.

Meghalaya: MPSCB will hold scheduled public hearing for setting up of cement plant

Shillong. (Agency)

Despite opposition from a section of the society, the Meghalaya State Pollution Control Board (MSPCB) would hold the scheduled public hearing on the proposed establishment of a cement plant at Daistong village in East Jaintia Hills district. “We cannot cancel the public hearing in Daistong village after receiving the Term of Reference (TOR) from the Central Regulator (CR). The MSPCB must complete the public hearing within 45 days,” MSPCB Member Secretary, G.H. Chyrmang, said on Saturday. “The public hearing will be carried out strictly as per Environment Impact Assessment (EIA) 2006 guidelines. Our responsibility is to organise the hearing in coordination with the district authorities of East Jaintia Hills,” he said. On the demand for the cancellation of the public hearing, Chyrmang said, “I have nothing to say on their demand. Our role is only to ensure compliance with EIA requirements. We will move forward with the public hearing.”The Jaiñtia National Council (JNC), along with residents of Daistong village and surrounding areas of Elaka Nongkhlieh, on December 10 had staged a protest outside the office of the Deputy Commissioner in Khliehriat seeking halt to the upcoming public hearing for Shree Cement Company, citing that the company does not adhere to environmental rules. The groups alleged that the Shree Cement Integrated Cement Plant violated Section 2 of the Meghalaya Transfer of Land (Regulation) Act, 1971, which prohibits the transfer of tribal land to non-tribals without written permission from the Deputy Commissioner. Moreover, they said that the cement company did not received permission from the Jaintia Hills Autonomous District Council and that the project does not adhere to environmental rules.

Passage to Dubai: A
geoeconomic artery
of influence

After an absence of almost a year, I found myself making a couple of visits to Dubai, and I must say I am more impressed than ever. It’s a city that has never been content to accept the horizon as the boundary of possibility. In a landscape where sand once dictated limits, ambition now sketches skylines; where imagination once seemed speculative, innovation now stands in steel and glass. Dubai’s transformation has not been driven by ambition alone, but by the systems that sustain ambition: transparent regulation, predictable frameworks, and institutions that function with consistency and foresight. It has shown that when policy, professionalism and preparedness move in harmony, a city evolves from a centre of activity into a model of confidence for the wider world.

While ambitious geopolitical projects like the India-Middle East-Europe Economic Corridor grab headlines, a more powerful and dynamic economic artery is already pulsating between India and the UAE without any fanfare. There’s a bustling, organic ‘Delhi-Dubai Passage’ forged from an ever-rising exchange of business, people, and ideas. What you see in Dubai is one of the world’s most exciting geoeconomic sites, a powerful nexus of commerce, strategy, and cultural exchange that’s quietly reshaping the possibilities for India. The economic statistics are nothing short of phenomenal. Bilateral trade between India and the UAE has rocketed, reaching an astounding \$100.06 billion in 2024-25. This explosive growth is largely fuelled by the landmark Comprehensive Economic Partnership Agreement signed in 2022, which has eliminated tariffs and streamlined trade across a multitude of sectors. The UAE is now India’s third-largest trading partner and may soon overtake the tariff-laden US, while India has become the UAE’s second-largest. The previously ambitious goal of \$100 billion in non-oil and non-precious metals trade by 2030 has been revised to 2028, and given the 34 percent increase in the first half of 2025, seems entirely attainable.

Dubai’s role as a global marketplace is crucial to this success. Its central location makes it an ideal hub for Indian exports, from textiles and agricultural products to jewellery and cutting-edge technology. This strategic positioning allows Indian businesses to seamlessly connect with international supply chains, leveraging the UAE’s immense influence as a global trade giant. Dubai is connected everywhere. (Indian exports even go to Pakistan, after due repackaging here.)

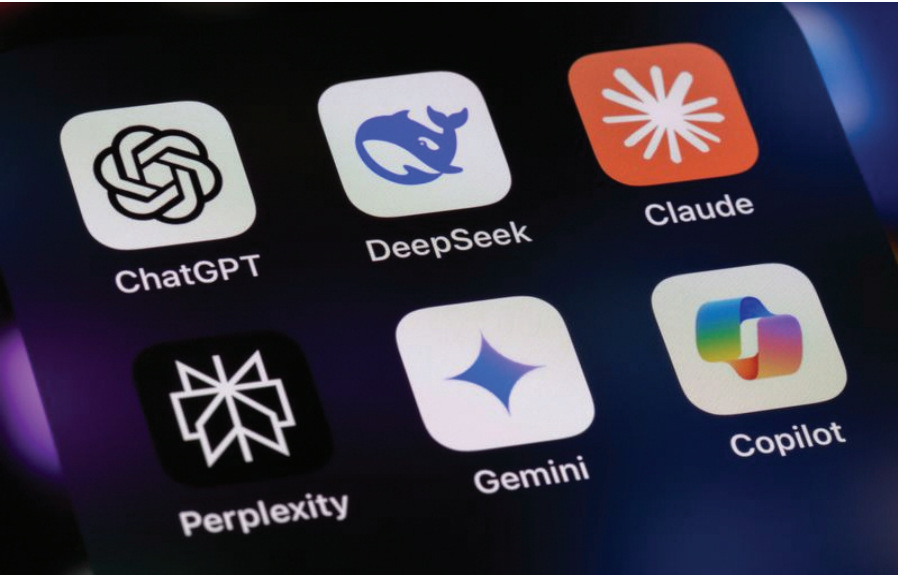
Beyond trade, Dubai, already teeming with Indian talent, is becoming a powerful magnet for Indian capital investment. In the first quarter of 2024, India emerged as Dubai’s largest source of foreign direct investment, contributing a staggering \$3.05 billion and representing 21.5 percent of the Emirate’s total inflow. This isn’t a gradual shift; it’s a seismic leap from just \$589 million in the same period a year earlier. This five-fold increase in just one year propelled India from the fifth to the first place. A key factor in attracting this investment is the UAE’s network of duty-free zones, which offer foreign companies full ownership, tax exemptions, and simplified regulations. The Jebel Ali Free Zone (Jafza), for instance, is now home to over 2,300 Indian companies, marking a 15 percent year-on-year increase. Similarly, the Dubai Multi-Commodities Centre has seen an influx of Indian businesses, with nearly 3,900 Indian companies now operating within this single free zone. These numbers paint a clear picture of Dubai’s role as a launchpad for Indian enterprises looking to go global. Dubai’s significance extends far beyond. On a strategic level, India and the UAE are increasingly aligned on key issues. Our countries collaborate on the security of vital maritime routes, counter-terrorism efforts, and the formation of new regional frameworks like the I2U2 group, which brings together India, Israel, the UAE, and the US (though it has recently been dormant thanks to regional tensions).

IN January this year, a little-known Chinese startup made a dramatic announcement which shook up the world of artificial intelligence (AI). The company was DeepSeek, which released its Large Language Model (LLM) to compete with models developed by American technology giants, such as ChatGPT. What surprised everyone was the minuscule cost of its development in comparison to hundreds of billions of dollars spent by Silicon Valley behemoths. The development showed to the world that China was much ahead in AI and that America was not the only dominant force in technology development. Now, scientific journal Nature has named DeepSeek founder Liang Wenfeng among the top 10 people behind key scientific developments globally during 2025. DeepSeek’s general-purpose V3 model and advanced model, R1, did not just make sensational headlines but have made a substantial difference to the AI landscape in just about a year. R1 is a reasoning LLM that can handle complex tasks in mathematics and coding. The Chinese firm went a step ahead of American companies by making DeepSeek an open model, allowing researchers to adapt the model’s algorithms for different fields. It has also revealed how it kept the ‘training’ costs so low. All LLMs have to be fed with massive amounts of data or must be ‘data-trained’ to make them efficient. An industry survey has shown that Chinese models raced ahead in the AI markets this year, accounting for one-third of the global use of this technology. Chinese-language prompts ranked second in token volume behind English. It shows that the Chinese models are doing well globally and also being used widely within China. Tokens are units of data processed by AI models during training and inference and help in enabling prediction, generation and reasoning.

Soon after the DeepSeek splash, India announced a set of projects to develop foundational models, including LLMs, Small Language Models and problem-specific AI solutions suitable for Indian needs. The plan includes the development of Digital India Bhashini (AI language translation platform for Indian languages), BharatGen (multimodal LLM for public service delivery), Sarvam-1 AI Model (LLM for 10 Indian languages), Chitralekha (video transcreation platform) and Hanooman’s Everest 1.0 (a multilingual AI system for 35 Indian languages). A consortium of technology institutes, BharatGen, was

DeepSeek saga holds lessons for India

State-funded BharatGen will have to walk a tightrope by balancing govt support and public good



formed with headquarters at IIT-Bombay; it was tasked with the development of ‘sovereign multilingual LLMs’ with funding from different ministries, including Rs 980 crore from the National AI Mission. The support makes BharatGen the first such venture mandated to develop LLMs as a national goal. Since the Indian announcement followed soon after that of DeepSeek, BharatGen has been viewed as a direct response to the Chinese initiative. However, there are significant differences. DeepSeek is a commercial venture, built in the startup mode and meant to serve global markets. BharatGen is a strategic national mission, fully funded by the government and focused on achieving technological

take AI models from the lab to the market. BharatGen is an interesting example of what can be called ‘government entrepreneurship’ — a model of the 1970s and 1980s. Two of the most successful technology ventures of that period — Computer Maintenance Corporation (CMC) and Centre for Development of Telematics (C-DOT) — followed this model. Both were formed to assert technological sovereignty and promote self-reliance in strategic areas. In both cases, research institutions like IITs and Tata Institute of Fundamental Research contributed significantly.

The absence of Indian technology companies in the development of foundational models is intriguing, though the private sector has been enthusiastic about collaborating with global firms in creating AI infrastructure such as data centres. The Indian technology services industry, with revenue close to \$200 billion, should not remain just a bystander or mere adopter in the fast-changing AI landscape. It has the necessary talent, experience and financial power that must be used for national ventures like BharatGen.

DeepSeek is owned and funded by a Chinese quantitative hedge fund, High Flyer. The founder and CEO of both companies is Liang Wenfeng. It is not supported by the government, but the models it has developed follow government rules of censorship. The current Chinese regulations require all AI services to “reflect socialist core values” and refrain from delivering content that might “subvert state power” and “undermine national unity”. The Chinese models go silent or provide the official view on topics like the Tiananmen Square protests, status of Taiwan, human rights violations and criticism of the Chinese Communist Party leadership.

The India AI Governance Guidelines, released last month, talk of “responsible AI development” and underscore the need for accountability, fairness, safety and human oversight. The state-funded BharatGen will have to walk a tightrope by balancing government support and public good. Its models must avoid algorithmic bias seen in Western models and also steer clear of misinformation as well as possible political influence as seen in the Chinese models. Given that it is being funded from the taxpayer’s money, BharatGen must follow principles of transparency and accountability while developing its LLMs for different language models. Wider engagement with linguists, social scientists and experts from different fields would go a long way in developing robust AI models and avoiding mistakes of others.

Impeachment not the right tool for judicial disagreement

The grounds against Justice Swaminathan include “serious questions” regarding impartiality and transparency; favouring a particular senior counsel and advocates from a particular community; and

Through an impeachment notice in the Lok Sabha against a high court judge over what essentially was a judicial disagreement in Tamil Nadu, the opposition INDIA bloc weaponised a sparingly-used constitutional tool to serve political ends. While on a single-judge bench of the Madras High Court, Justice G R Swaminathan recently allowed a PIL directing the Subramaniya Swamy temple at Madurai’s Thiruparankundram hill to light an annual lamp at a deepathoon (stone lamp pillar) adjacent a hill-top dargah. Observing that the temple was duty-bound to do so, the judge ruled that lighting the lamp there would not encroach upon the rights of the dargah or the Muslim community. Since the temple authorities refused to comply, the petitioners filed a contempt petition. The judge then allowed the petitioners to go to the deepathoon themselves with security cover from central paramilitary forces to light the lamp. The DMK government, however, blocked it and approached the Supreme Court, which agreed to hear the matter. Yet, the opposition jumped the gun. Impeachment provisions under Article 217 of the



Constitution, read with Article 124, are special tools that deliberately set a high bar for sacking judges in the higher judiciary. Both require rigorous proof of misbehaviour or incapacity, as also a special majority in parliament.

Besides, the presiding officer, who is the gatekeeper, “may either admit the motion or refuse to admit the same” even it has the requisite signatures. The grounds for impeachment of Justice Swaminathan include “serious questions” regarding impartiality and transparency; favouring a particular senior counsel and advocates from a particular community; and flouting secular principles. His supporters, however, argue that the charges not only gloss over his erudition and high disposal rate of cases, but also progressive verdicts like affirming the rights of transgender persons and recognising civil unions of same-sex couples. Judicial independence is part of the basic structure of the Constitution. Browbeating it to align with the executive goes against the spirit of democracy. The Constitution provides various appellate mechanisms to challenge judicial decisions. The state government ought to have waited for the Supreme Court to take a call and bring quietus to the matter. Contesting judicial decisions is a legitimate right, but seeking impeachment is hardly the way to go about it.

Viksit women for a Viksit Bharat: Building on education gains

In 2022, over 62,000 underage girls were registered as victims of sexual offences. Addressing this requires multi-layered action

When the Government of India released a report titled Children in India 2025, one statistic stood out quietly but powerfully: at the secondary school level, girls are now marginally ahead of boys in enrolment. The Gender Parity Index at this stage is close to 1.1, meaning that in many classrooms across the country, girls slightly outnumber boys. Add to this the sharp fall in secondary school dropout rates from 13.8 percent in 2022-23 to 8.2 percent in 2024-25 and the steady decline in child marriage, and a clear story emerges. India’s long-term investment across levels—national policies, state innovations, and community leadership in educating its daughters is paying dividends. This progress reflects years of sustained policy action, with state-level innovations that build on broader policy priorities to strengthen outcomes for girls. This includes initiatives such as free cycles in several states including Jharkhand, hostels for girls in Madhya Pradesh, and Odisha’s ANWESHA scheme, which has supported over 22,000 disadvantaged children including girls in better-equipped urban schools since 2015.

Equally signifiant is Odisha’s Mission Shakti, one of the largest women’s self-help group movements in the country, which shows how women’s collective leadership can inspire adolescent girls. Philanthropies and companies have also complemented government action by piloting adolescent programmes, funding digital classrooms, and supporting safe transport. Together, these efforts have created an environment where families see girls’ education as both possible and valuable. But enrolment is only the first step. The next challenge is ensuring that girls who remain in school can also transition smoothly into higher education, vocational training, and meaningful work. Without this

transition, the current gains risk being short-lived. First, strengthening the bridge from school to higher education. The government can expand transport subsidies, hostel facilities, and targeted scholarships, especially for rural girls. District administrations could consider establishing cluster colleges in semi-urban centres to expand access to higher education beyond distant cities. Digital platforms like DIKSHA and SWAYAM have the potential to reduce the rural-urban gap by bringing quality content to smaller towns. NGOs, philanthropic organisations, and corporates can support bridge courses and remedial learning to ensure that first-generation learners do not fall behind. Initiatives like Odisha’s Mo School Abhiyan, which mobilises alumni to adopt schools, fund infrastructure, and mentor students illustrate how community ownership can reinforce this bridge by combining academic support with aspirational role models.

Second, linking education with employability. The National Education Policy 2020 calls for greater integration of vocational education and flexible pathways, but implementation needs to accelerate. State skill missions could establish regional hubs linked to local economies and create mechanisms for collaboration with employers. A promising example is India’s first skill impact bond, a public-private initiative that uses outcome-based financing to link training with job opportunities, with more than half of its

participants being women. Models like this show how sustainable skilling can be designed with gender at the centre. Just as important is aspiration: girls need to see pathways into careers beyond traditional roles. Mentorship networks linking female professionals with schools and colleges can expand horizons and provide tangible role



models, ensuring education translates not only into employability but also ambition. Third, ensuring safety and agency. The report reminds us that adolescent girls remain especially vulnerable. In 2022, over 62,000 underage girls were registered as victims of sexual offences. Addressing this requires multi-layered action. The government can integrate school and transit safety

audits into the Nirbhaya Fund framework, ensuring improvements are not ad hoc, but systematic. Strengthening police and judicial training can expedite the disposal of such cases. Digital safety modules can be integrated into school curriculums. Panchayats can activate child protection committees to monitor unsafe areas, supported by simple mobile reporting tools. NGOs and philanthropies can strengthen accessible helplines like Childline 1098 by expanding them to WhatsApp and SMS, ensuring girls are aware of their rights and how to seek timely help.

The gains we celebrate today are the result of steady investments in primary education, maternal and child health, and girl-focused programmes over decades. They show how persistence in policy and initiatives across Centre and the states, complemented by community and private efforts, can create change at scale. The challenge now is to consolidate these advances and build on them by making secondary-to-tertiary transitions smoother, ensuring skills match the economy, and creating safe environments where girls can thrive. The story of India’s girl child is shifting from one of marginalisation to resilience and possibility. Today’s 15-year-old girls will be in their thirties at the peak of their careers when the nation marks 100 years of independence. Supporting them now, through accessible higher education, relevant skills, and enabling environments is not just a matter of fairness. It is one of the smartest investments India can make.

NEWS BOX

UP: Wolf terror continues in Bahraich, one-year-old child abducted

Bahraich. (Agency)

The menace of wolf attacks continues unabated in Uttar Pradesh's Bahraich district. In a shocking incident early Saturday morning, a wolf reportedly carried away a one-year-old child who was sleeping beside her mother in Jaruwa hamlet of Godahiya No. 4 village under the Kaiserganj police station area. Panic has gripped the village, and a search operation is underway to trace the missing child.

According to police sources, the victim, one-year-old Aarvi, daughter of Ram Kumar, was sleeping with her mother, Ram Kumari, on the veranda of their house.

At around 3 am, a wolf silently approached, grabbed the child in its jaws, and fled towards nearby sugarcane fields. The child's cries woke her mother, who raised an alarm and attempted to chase the wolf, but it disappeared into the fields.

Hearing the commotion, villagers rushed to the spot armed with sticks. A search operation has been ongoing since early morning, but the child has not yet been found.

On receiving information, Station House Officer Brijendra Mishra and Forest Ranger Omkar Yadav reached the site along with their teams. Ranger Omkar Yadav said that the forest department, in coordination with the police, has launched an intensive search in the fields and surrounding areas and heightened vigilance across the region. He expressed hope that the child would be traced soon.

Notably, Bahraich district has witnessed a series of wolf attacks over the past two months, resulting in the deaths of ten people, including eight children.

Acting on the directions of Chief Minister Yogi Adityanath, the forest department had deployed special shooters to eliminate the wolves, and four wolves have reportedly been killed so far. However, despite these measures, the attacks continue, leading to fear and anger among residents.

Yuva Bharati Stadium in turmoil as fans vent frustration over Messi's brief visit

Kolkata. (Agency)

Chaos unfolded at the Yuva Bharati Krirangan, as irate fans broke chairs and threw plastic water bottles and other items onto the ground on Saturday after being unable to catch a proper glimpse of soccer magician Messi, despite having paid astronomical amounts for tickets.

The Messi show here, part of the first leg of the Argentine soccer star's four-city India tour, descended into a virtual free-for-all as Messi left the ground after a brief 22-minute stay. Organising officials had earlier promised that Messi would be on the ground for over an hour. Even during his brief stay, Messi was surrounded by security personnel, organisers and others including state sports minister Arup Biswas, preventing the fans - many of whom had arrived from various parts of West Bengal, and even beyond - from getting a proper glimpse of the soccer star.

Messi, who arrived at 11:30 am in a white Audi, left at 11:52 am, disappointing the fans.

The disappointment quickly turned into frustration, and all hell broke loose. Fans threw water bottles at those on the ground, uprooted fibreglass seats and seat covers and flung them onto the athletic tracks surrounding the soccer pitch. They also threw whatever else they could lay their hands on.

Invectives were hurled at the security staff and organising officials by angry fans, who had paid between Rs 4,000 and Rs 18,000 for the opportunity to see the football legend from close range.

EOW Kashmir files chargesheet against four in Rs 53 lakh land-sale fraud case

Srinagar. (Agency)

The Economic Offences Wing (EOW) of the Crime Branch Kashmir filed a chargesheet before the Court of the Chief Judicial Magistrate, Srinagar, in connection with a major land-sale fraud case, naming four residents of Srinagar for their alleged role in cheating and criminal conspiracy, officials said on Saturday. The chargesheet was produced in 2025 FIR, against Tariq Ahmad Hajam, Ghulam Hassan Mir, Mohammad Sultan Mir alias Sulla and Abdul Razaq Mir all residents of Barthana Qamarwari, Srinagar. The four have been charged for offences punishable under Sections 420 and 120-B of the Ranbir Penal Code. EOW said the case originated from a complaint alleging that the accused persons deceitfully obtained a sum of Rs 53 lakh from the complainant and his father under the pretext of selling land.

"Preliminary inquiry and subsequent investigation by the Economic Offences Wing revealed that the accused, acting in connivance, received the full payment but fraudulently sold the same patch of land to other parties and even transferred portions of it to their own family members," they said. Through meticulous examination of both oral and documentary evidence, investigators established that the accused had orchestrated a deliberate criminal conspiracy to cheat the complainant and unlawfully grabbed the amount paid for land measuring 2.09 kanals at Estate Barthana, Srinagar, EOW said, adding the matter is ready for judicial adjudication.

Dharam ji was a simple, humble and a life full of joy and humour : Hema Malini

The Sikh Times

Mathura, December 13 - People rushed to offer prayers to legendary actor Dharmendra in a prayer meet organised today by Mathura MP Hema Malini. In an emotional speech, Hema Malini said that she never imagined that a time would come in her life where she would have to organise a prayer meet for her beloved Dharm ji. "It was an inconceivable shock, the snapping of companionship that stood the test of time. It was a long association of 57 years, we did 45 films together, where more than 25 movies were superhit," she added. "Dharam ji was a simple, humble and a life full of joy and humour, who remained connected to roots in spite of his stardom," she said. Hema Malini said she feels surprised and happy at the same time about her fate as her onscreen love becomes her life partner in real life. "Since our love was true, we both faced challenges together and got married. He was loving, affectionate, an inspiration, a dedicated life partner and a strong pillar of my family who stood firmly behind us," She added. He was a proud father of my daughters Esha and Ahana, full of affection and love, and got them married at the right time. He was a loving grand-father (Nanu) for his five grand-children. He shared love with all the members of my family, she said. Speaking about his illustrious acting career, Mathura MP said that "Dharm ji loves the camera and was passionate about acting." A versatile actor, Dharm ji played action, romance, angry man and comedy in more than 300 movies, but comedy was his favourite. A writer of Naya Zamana, Action Hero of Jugnu, Viru in Sholey, Truck Driver in Pratigya, Avid Hindi lover of Chupke Chupke, Kinara, Tum Haseen Main Jawan, Sanskrit Teacher of Dillagi, Satyakam, Yadon Ki Barat, Yakut of Rajia Sultan, Ali Baba of an Indo-Russian joint production movie, Ali Baba Chalees Chor has

won the hearts of millions across the world. Dharm ji was a wonderful Urdu Shyar and penned down some wonderful Urdu Shayri (poem), which is unknown to many. He was able to

earn so much respect, which Dharm ji got from others. His life is a celebration, who influenced so many people in this world as an actor, as a family man and as a lovable human being. We all will

when I met him in October. He asked me to come out with a good character for him. I want to do something," Anil Sharma said. Janardan Sharma, who is working with Hema Malini as her repre-



come up with a "sher" at any time, as per the situation. He was planning to write a book on Shyari, on her advice, but unfortunately left before it could be executed. "I will get this work done, and we will come out with a book of his Urdu shyari", she added. He contested and won the Bikaner Lok Sabha constituency with a huge margin in the 2004 Lok Sabha Election and performed remarkably well in his five year term. But acting was his only love, and he never enjoyed politics and left it. He campaigned for me in the 2014 and 2019 Lok Sabha elections, Hema Malini said. He promised that next time he will visit Mathura, he will go inside any house and eat, but unfortunately, this was not fulfilled, she added. Dharm ji treats every individual with dignity. People love him for his beautiful smile, joyfulness, humour and the way he treats individuals. It is hard to

miss him. I am learning to live with it, Hema Malini said. Director Anil Sharma, who hails from Mathura, said that he still can't believe that Dharam ji is no more. This is a heartbreaking moment for me. I am sure that all of Dharm Ji's friends are feeling the same pain. I met him for the first time when I was working with B.R. Chopra as an assistant Director. I became his fan after watching his movies. I saw him being friendly with everyone. While shooting for Hukumat in Nainital, some 40-50 thousand people came to see him, but he never complained and even ate in between them. He helped me when we had a financial crisis during the shoot and asked me to make a good film, the money comes and goes, he said. He used to give 7 to 8 hit movies, but never got intoxicated by fame. He was humble and was friendly with everyone. "He was full of life

sentative, shared one incident where, while campaigning at Baldev area in 2014, he very joyfully said, "agar Hema ko vote nahi diya to main pani ki tanki pe chad jaunga." Sharing his memories, Baldev MLA Puran Prakash said that the people of this city had fond memories of Dharm ji. Everyone remembers his joyful, loving and humorous nature, which makes every moment fun. Ex-CLP leader Pradeep Mathura describes Dharmendra as a legendary actor and a wonderful human being. The prayer meet also presented two documentaries, one made by Director Anil Sharma and the other having Urdu Shayri by Dharmendra as background. A Bhajan Evening was also organised at the prayer meet. Daughters of Hema Malini Esha Deol and Ahana Deol couldn't accompany her due to some problems.

Cong-led UDF leads in Municipal Corporations as Kerala local body vote counting progresses

Thiruvananthapuram. (Agency)

Early counting of votes in the Kerala Local Body Elections 2025 shows the Congress-led United Democratic Front (UDF) gaining a notable edge in several municipal corporations, while the Left Democratic Front (LDF) and the Bharatiya Janata Party-led National Democratic Alliance (NDA) are also putting up robust performances in key areas.

According to the emerging trends, the UDF is leading in multiple corporations, with strong showings in Thrissur and Kochi. In the Thrissur Municipal Corporation, the Congress-led front has steadily increased its lead in several wards, signaling a potential comeback in the city's civic body. Kochi also shows the UDF maintaining a clear advantage as counting progresses.

In Thiruvananthapuram Municipal Corporation, the contest remains highly competitive, with the NDA emerging as a strong challenger. The BJP-led alliance is ahead in more than two dozen wards, posing a serious challenge to the long-standing dominance of the LDF, which has controlled the corporation for decades.

Other municipal corporations, such as Kollam, are witnessing tight contests, with the UDF holding a narrow lead over rivals in the early rounds of counting.

Several notable individual victories have been reported. UDF candidate Vyshna Suresh won the Muttada ward in the Thiruvananthapuram Corporation, flipping a seat previously held by the CPI(M).

In another significant result, BJP's former DGP R. Sreelekha IPS registered a decisive victory in the Sasthamangalam ward against LDF's Amrutha Arun, strengthening her position as a leading mayoral contender in the capital.

BJP's V.V. Rajesh, former district president and another mayoral hopeful, won the Kodunganoor ward, while UDF's K.S. Sabarinathan secured Kavadiyar by a narrow margin of 69 votes.

MMC issues challans worth Rs 26,802 for improper littering in Sector 37C, Dhanas

On her way to the office, Dr Inderdeep Kaur, Medical Officer of Health, noticed waste dumped irresponsibly outside a residence in Sector 37C, and directed the area health supervisor to inspect and clear the site, according to an MC statement.

Mohali. (Agency)

The Municipal Corporation of Chandigarh (MMC) has taken strict action against violators involved in improper waste disposal at Sector 37 C and EWS

Kaur, Medical Officer of Health, noticed waste dumped irresponsibly outside a residence in Sector 37C, and directed the area health supervisor to inspect and clear the site, according to an MC statement.



Flats in Dhanas and issued challans worth Rs 26,802 in separate cases, according to an MC statement. On her way to the office, Dr Inderdeep

citizens to maintain cleanliness, follow waste segregation rules and support the city's mission toward a cleaner and healthier Chandigarh.

Acting promptly, the supervisor and sanitary inspector visited the spot, conducted an inquiry and issued a challan of Rs 13,401 to the violator near the 36-37 roundabout for improper waste disposal, officials said. In a separate incident at EWS Flats in Dhanas, a discarded gas receipt was recovered from mixed household waste. Upon identifying the erring resident, the sanitation team issued another challan of Rs 13,401 for violating waste management norms.

The MCC authorities warned that strict penalties would be imposed on individuals found littering or failing to adhere to proper waste disposal practices. The authorities urged the

Light snow likely in high reaches over next few days

Shimla. (Agency)

After a gap of nearly two months, higher reaches of Himachal Pradesh are likely to witness a brief change in weather, bringing partial relief from the prolonged dry spell.

The India Meteorological Department (IMD) has forecast light cloud cover over high and mid-hill areas on Saturday, with chances of light rain and snowfall during afternoon hours.

The inclement weather is expected to persist till late night and early morning of Sunday, followed by a sharp dip in temperatures across the state. As per the district-wise forecast, Keylong in Lahaul may witness a 40 per cent chance of snowfall on December 13 and about 35 per cent on December 14, while Udaipur could receive light snow with a probability ranging between 25 and 40 per cent during the same period. In contrast, Kaza in Spiti valley is expected to remain largely dry with mostly sunny conditions and negligible chances of precipitation. No IMD warning has been issued for Lahaul and Spiti as of now. In the capital Shimla, the

maximum temperature is likely to stay between eight and ten degrees Celsius, compelling residents to switch to woollens and thermal wear as winter tightens its grip. Meanwhile, road connectivity in tribal Lahaul and Spiti continues to be affected due to seasonal closures. The Gramphu-Rohtang Pass stretch on NH-03 and the Gramphu-Batal section on NH-505 remain closed.

The Darcha-Sarchu road has also been shut as per district administration orders, while the Darcha-Shinkula route is open only for 4x4 vehicles. The Lassar-Batal stretch is closed, though Sumdo-Lassar remains open. Authorities have advised commuters to avoid unnecessary travel in view of fluctuating weather conditions. The prolonged dry spell of nearly three months has already impacted agriculture and tourism in the state.

According to the State Agriculture Department, only 30 to 35 per cent of farmers, mainly those with irrigation facilities, have been able to complete sowing wheat, barley, mustard, peas and potatoes.

Week after audio row, Patiala sees maximum candidates in fray in Zila Parishads

In Patiala, 143 candidates passed the scrutiny on December 5 and 30 of them withdrew their nominations on last date of withdrawal of nominations on December 6.

Chandigarh. (Agency)

With 113 candidates in the fray for Zila Parishad elections, Patiala topped the district contestant list for the upcoming zila parishad and block samiti elections scheduled to be held on Sunday.

This comes days after an audio clip purportedly of Patiala SSP Varun Sharma heard directing his subordinates to prevent Opposition candidates from filing their nomination papers for the rural polls went viral zila parishad and block samiti elections, stirred a controversy prompting SAD chief Sukhbir Singh Badal and Congress leader Partap Singh Bajwa moving PILs in the Punjab and Haryana High Court. SSP Sharma is now on

a week's leave.

However, even after the controversy, Patiala is the only district that has seen number of candidates in fray crossing the 100 mark.

In Patiala, 143 candidates passed the scrutiny on December 5 and 30 of them withdrew their nominations on last date of withdrawal of nominations on December 6. Punjab's largest district Ludhiana, is also trailing behind Patiala with 97 candidates in the fray for Zila Parishad elections. As many as 130 were able to file nominations and 33 withdrew their papers on the last day. Jalandhar has 83 candidates in fray with 31 withdrawing after 114 had passed the scrutiny. Sangrur

and Hoshiarpur districts both have 80 candidates in fray each.



In Amritsar, the district saw maximum number of withdrawals at 51 and only 65 candidates in fray even as 119 had filed their nominations. In Barnala, out of 40 nominations clearing the scrutiny, 35 are left in the fray. In Bathinda,

out of 86 nomination papers accepted, 63 candidates are in fray with 23 withdrawing their papers.

The Opposition parties in Punjab had alleged "excesses" by the ruling party government for not allowing the Opposition candidates to file their papers. In Patiala, an off video had gone viral in which papers of a Congress candidate was snatched by a man, trying to cover his face with his jacket.

In Ferozepur, nomination papers of 90 candidates were found to have passed the scrutiny with 24 withdrawing the papers and 66 remaining in the contest. The minimum number of 16 candidates

in fray were in Tarn Taran district out of which 12 were elected unanimously. As many as 13 had withdrawn their papers. Pathankot, Ropar and Nawanshahar have only 32, 36 and 38 candidates respectively. Barnala and Faridkot also have 35 and 38 candidates respectively.

Fazilka, Fatehgarh Sahib, and Gurdaspur have 65, 39 and 73 candidates respectively. In others - Kapurthala (44), Moga (69), Mansa (42), Malerkotla (40) and Muktsar (51). Only two districts have seen unanimously elected candidates. Besides Tarn Tarn, where 13 candidates were elected unopposed, three candidates were elected unanimously in Amritsar.

Kerala: NDA wins Munambam, centre of dispute between Christians and waqf board

Munambam, located in Kerala's Ernakulam district, has been at the centre of protests and court cases after over 404 acres of land were declared as waqf property.

New Delhi.(Agency)
The NDA secured an emphatic win in Munambam in the Kerala local body elections, marking an important chapter in a ward that has been at the centre of a long-running dispute involving the state waqf board. The result comes against the backdrop of year-long protests by over 500 Christian families who face the threat of eviction due to an alleged illegal claim by the Waqf over their land.

Anoop Antony Joseph, Kerala BJP general secretary, called it a "historic" victory for the NDA.

"The Modi government and the BJP stood with the Munambam people in fighting the Waqf, and they have now chosen the BJP as their mandate," Joseph tweeted. The ward was won by the Congress in the previous polls. The win in Munambam will give the BJP a massive boost ahead of the 2026 Kerala assembly polls in a state where it has struggled to gain even a foothold. The BJP is also ahead in the Thiruvananthapuram corporation - the constituency which is held by Congress MP Shashi Tharoor.



Munambam, located in Kerala's Ernakulam district, has been at the centre of protests and court cases after over 404 acres of land were declared as waqf property by the Kerala Waqf Board in

2019. The disputed land in Munambam is inhabited by about 500 families, most of them Christians. The families, under the banner of Munambam Land Protection Council, have been protesting for over 400 days, fearing eviction. They have demanded that the revenue rights of their land holdings be restored. The government had stopped accepting land tax from the families living on the disputed land. The protests led by Munambam's Christian residents gained national attention earlier this year when the Centre passed the Waqf Amendment bill. The law expands the government's role in regulating waqf properties. Initially, the families decided to boycott the local body polls, but eventually participated in the election process. The decision came after the Kerala High Court ruled that the land in Munambam was not waqf property, in a big win for the protesters. However, on Friday, the Supreme Court paused the High Court's finding and ordered status quo on the dispute.

CAQM forms expert panel to curb air pollution in Delhi



New Delhi.(Agency)
As vehicular pollution continues to significantly contribute to rising levels of air pollution in the capital, the Commission for Air Quality Management (CAQM) has constituted an expert committee to draft a comprehensive strategy for reducing vehicular emissions.

According to the CAQM, the new committee brings together a diverse group of specialists, including academicians, public health experts, automotive researchers and policy advisers. The 15-member panel will be chaired by Ashok Jhunjhunwala, professor of IIT Madras, with Dr Randeep Guleria, former director of AIIMS Delhi, serving as co-chair. Representatives from key ministries, think tanks, research institutions and civil society groups will form the rest of the committee. The committee has been mandated to review existing clean mobility policies ranging from Bharat Stage (BS) emission norms to electric vehicle (EV) initiatives and fuel-efficiency standards and assess how well they are working across Delhi-NCR.

It will also examine the contribution of different vehicle categories to overall emissions and identify the associated exposure risks for the population. The panel has been given two months to submit its recommendations. The first meeting is scheduled for December 15, 2025.

Delhi government notifies law to regulate private school fees, cap charges

New Delhi.(Agency)
Four months after the Delhi Assembly passed the Delhi School Education (Transparency in Fixation and Regulation of Fees) Bill, 2025, the Delhi government officially notified the Act, with Lieutenant-Governor V K Saxena issuing the notification on Thursday. The move comes after years of protests over arbitrary fee hikes in private schools. The Act introduces a three-tier committee structure to regulate fees: a School-level Fee Regulation Committee, a District Fee Appellate Committee, and a Revision Committee.



Under the new set of rules, complaints to the district-level committee must be supported by at least 15% of affected parents, ensuring parental participation in decision-making. Parent associations had raised concerns over this threshold, citing difficulties in mobilising support, but the provision remains intact. Registration fees have been capped at Rs 25, admission charges at Rs 200, and caution money at Rs 500, which will be refundable with interest. Development fees cannot exceed 10% of the annual tuition fee. Any fee not expressly permitted in the Act will be treated as an "unjustified fee demand". It applies to over 1,500 private unaided schools and strictly prohibits collection of capitation fees, direct or disguised.

IndiGo Will Pay Over Rs 500 Crore To Customers Who Were "Severely Stranded"

IndiGo said it is in the process of "identifying flights where customers were severely impacted and stranded at airports on 3, 4, and 5 December."

New Delhi.(Agency)
IndiGo said on Friday that it has estimated the compensation amount will exceed Rs 500 crore for customers whose flights were cancelled within 24 hours of departure and who were left severely stranded at certain airports across the country. In a statement released on X on Friday, the airline mentioned, "Our goal is to make this process (of refunds) as transparent, easy, and hassle-free as possible for you. We will be provided compensation which, in our current estimation, will be in excess of Rs 500 crores to customers whose flights were cancelled within 24 hours of departure time and/or to customers severely stranded at certain airports." The airline said it is in the process of "identifying flights where customers

were severely impacted and stranded at airports on 3, 4, and 5 December" and will "reach out to all such customers in January so that compensation can be extended smoothly." The airline reiterated its



commitment to issuing refunds promptly. "At this stage, our primary focus through December 2025 is ensuring that all refunds for affected

customers are processed efficiently, expeditiously, and with the utmost urgency. Most of them have already been completed, and the remaining ones will reflect shortly," IndiGo said on X.

Earlier today, the airline said it is set to operate more than 2,000 flights nationwide today, with daily performance improving since last week. "Demonstrating continuous operational normalisation and stability since the last four days, IndiGo is set to operate over 2,000 flights today, as per its revised scaled-down schedule. All our 138 operational destinations are connected, and our on-time performance has been consistently normal as per IndiGo standards," the airline said in a statement.

Residents of Delhi's Chilla village battle overflowing sewers, contaminated water for decades

New Delhi.(Agency)
The residents of Delhi's Chilla village continue to live amid filthy lanes and overflowing drains. In this village near East Delhi's Mayur Vihar, it is common to see household pipes releasing waste directly onto the roads, turning the narrow streets into stagnant, foul-smelling stretches. Many residents, who have been living here for almost 40-50 years, say the sewage system has remained damaged and clogged for as long as they can remember. Despite repeated complaints, they claim no meaningful action has been taken. Ravinder, 37, who runs a tyre-repair shop and has lived in the village for several years, says, "The main sewer line has been clogged

since 3-4 years now." He adds that the drinking water pipeline and the waste pipeline often witness a "mix-up" because of cracks and damage. "It largely affects the quality of our drinking water," he says. An elderly resident, Jiten Bhati, points to another persistent issue. "The washroom drains of many houses here are not connected properly to the sewage system. That is why waste, including human faeces, can be seen on the road in front of houses," he says. According to him, requests to authorities have gone unheard for years. "Even if they fix some pipelines, within a few months they get damaged again," he adds. Echoing similar concerns, another resident, Ashok Kumar, says, "There

is not a single lane in this village where you will not find overflowing sewers. The foul smell makes these places a den of diseases." He also blames some residents for carelessness. "All their toilets end up on the road. We have complained several times, but they have not taken any steps," he says. "Not just damaged sewage systems but also lack of awareness keeps this area so unclean." Walking through the lanes, children are seen playing around these dirty drains. Mothers sit on one side of the lane doing household work, resigned to the conditions. "We live on rent, so our say is limited. The landlords live elsewhere and remain unconcerned," they say.

Anti-Pollution Curbs Under GRAP-3 Invoked In Delhi As Air Turns 'Severe'

In the early hours of Saturday, Delhi recorded an overall Air Quality Index (AQI) of 390, which comes under the 'very poor' quality.

New Delhi.(Agency)
Anti-pollution curbs under GRAP-3 were imposed in Delhi on Saturday after the air quality worsened to the 'severe' category. At noon, the national capital recorded an Air Quality Index (AQI) of 405, as per data presented by the Central Pollution Control Board (CPCB). In the early hours of Saturday, Delhi recorded an AQI of around 390.

During winters, Delhi and the surrounding NCR (National Capital Region) enforce restrictions under GRAP, which categorises the air quality into four stages: Stage 1 (Poor, AQI 201-300), Stage 2 (Very Poor, AQI 301-400), Stage 3 (Severe, AQI 401-450) and Stage 4 (Severe Plus, AQI above 450).

The curbs under GRAP-3 include a ban on non-essential construction and demolition work and stone crushing and mining activities. It entails a ban on older

diesel goods vehicles in Delhi, while schools up to Class 5 shift to a hybrid mode, and offices may operate with 50 per cent staff in Delhi-NCR.

Delhi's Wazirpur Sees Worst AQI
Early Saturday, several areas in the national capital recorded their AQI in the severe category. Wazirpur emerged as the worst-hit area with an AQI of 443, followed closely by Jahangirpuri at 439 and Vivek Vihar at 437. Other areas included Anand Vihar (AQI- 435), Burari Crossing (AQI- 415), Chandni Chowk (AQI- 419), Ghazipur (AQI- 435), Jahangirpuri (AQI- 442), RK Puram (AQI- 404), and Rohini (AQI- 436).

Dangerous levels of AQI have become increasingly common in several parts of

Delhi during the winter season. Citing environmental experts, a report by the news agency IANS attributed the worsening conditions to a combination of stagnant winds, vehicular emissions, industrial activity and seasonal factors, including crop residue burning in

neighbouring states. Health experts, on the other hand, have warned that prolonged exposure to such high pollution levels can lead to aggravated asthma, reduced lung function, cardiovascular stress and eye and throat irritation.

Delhi Airport Issues Advisory
In a post on X, the Delhi Airport said all flight operations were normal for now. "Low visibility procedures are in progress at Delhi Airport. All flight operations are presently normal. Passengers are requested to contact the airline concerned for updated flight information," the advisory said.

On Friday too, there was a thick blanket of smog in Delhi, with the AQI at 386. A thick haze was reported in areas such as Ghazipur and Anand Vihar, where visibility remained severely low.

After Settlement, Court Quashes FIR Against Hospital In Cotton Mop Case

New Delhi.(Agency)
The Delhi High Court has quashed an FIR registered against a private hospital and one of its senior doctors after noting that the medical negligence dispute -- arising from allegations that a cotton mop was left inside the patient's abdominal cavity during a Lower Segment C-Section -- had been "amicably resolved" between the parties.

Opining that continuing the proceedings would serve no purpose, a single-judge bench of Justice Amit Mahajan allowed the petition filed by Venkateshwar Hospital and Dr. Dipti K. Yadav, seeking quashing of the FIR registered at Dwarka North police station under Sections 336, 337, and 34 of the IPC. The complainant, who had undergone a C-section at the hospital in January 2021, told the Delhi High Court that she had received compensation of Rs 14 lakh and no longer wished to pursue the proceedings. "All the disputes have since been settled, without any coercion, pressure or undue influence," she told Justice Mahajan adding that "continuation of the proceedings would amount to further harassment". The FIR stemmed from the complainant's allegation that a cotton mop had been left inside her abdominal cavity during the C-section, causing severe infection and necessitating a second surgery. A prior inquiry by the Delhi Medical Council (DMC) had found that while the mop was "in all likelihood" left behind during the C-section, the lapse apparently arose from an error in counting surgical mops.

DMC held that Dr. Yadav "did not exercise due diligence which is expected from an ordinary prudent doctor", but highlighted that her conduct was "not reckless or patently want to invite criminal liability".

It further directed removal of the doctor's name from the State Medical Register for 30 days and recommended disciplinary action against the scrub nurse who had incorrectly counted the number of mops.

While acknowledging the hardship suffered by the complainant, Justice Mahajan said, "The incident was unintentional and due to oversight, bereft of the necessary means and such degree of rashness to attract the rigours of a criminal trial."

"The possibility of conviction is remote and bleak and continuation of criminal cases would put the accused to great oppression and prejudice," the judge added. Quashing the FIR and all consequential proceedings, the Delhi High Court directed the petitioners to deposit Rs 25,000 with the Delhi Police Martyrs' Fund within four weeks.

NEWS BOX

Ignored for T20Is, Mohammed Siraj sends strong message to selectors with SMAT heroics

NEW DELHI . (Agency)

India fast bowler Mohammed Siraj delivered a match-winning spell against Mumbai in a Super League Group B match of the Syed Mushtaq Ali Trophy (SMAT) 2025–26. The right-arm seamer registered figures of 3/21 to bundle out Mumbai and set up a comprehensive nine-wicket victory for Hyderabad.Mumbai, led by Shardul Thakur and boasting players such as Yashasvi Jaiswal, Sarfaraz Khan and Ajinkya Rahane, struggled for momentum and were restricted to 131 runs. Siraj was deservedly named Player of the Match for his match-winning performance as he continued his brilliant run in the SMAT. He began his wicket-taking spree in the 17th over, first removing Suryansh Shedge with a sharp return catch.On the very next ball, he trapped Mumbai captain Shardul Thakur leg-before wicket, putting Hyderabad in a commanding position. Siraj's third wicket came soon after, dismissing Tanush Kotian for just two runs, effectively ending Mumbai's hopes of posting a competitive total.With a target of



132 set, Hyderabad's batting unit made light work of the chase, completing the win in just 11.5 overs while losing only one wicket. Siraj's performance comes at a time when he finds himself out of favour with the Indian T20I side.He was part of India's triumphant campaign in the T20 World Cup 2024 and played his last game in the shortest format in the same year against Sri Lanka in July. The 31-year-old has played 16 T20Is so far and has scalped 14 wickets, with best figures of 4/17 to his name.Earlier, Siraj bowled an economical spell of 1/15 against Uttar Pradesh in his first appearance of the SMAT this season. He was recently rested for the three-match ODI series against South Africa after playing both Test matches against the same opposition. Siraj will next feature in the three-match ODI series against New Zealand, beginning on January 11, 2026.

Four Assam cricketers suspended for corrupt practice

CHENNAI. (Agency)

In a dramatic development, the Assam Cricket Association has suspended four players for trying to “influence and attempted to instigate players” during the Syed Mushtaq Ali Trophy held in Lucknow. This was stated in a statement issued by the state cricket body on Friday. What seems



interesting is that the Anti-Corruption and Security Unity Unit of the Indian Cricket Board (BCCI) conducted an enquiry into allegations of trying to ‘influence’ players and found the four cricketers guilty.

Amit Sinha, a former Ranji Trophy team captain, is also among those found guilty by the BCCI's ACSU. The other players are Ishan Ahmed, Aman Tripathi and Abhishek Thakuri and, according to the statement, they have been suspended “with immediate effect after allegations emerged that they were involved in corrupt practices relating to the game of cricket.”“The above four players, who have represented Assam at various stages, are accused of influencing and attempting to instigate some of the current Assam team players, who took part in the Syed Mushtaq Ali Trophy 2025 held in Lucknow from November 26 to December 8,” said Sanatan Das, the ACA secretary said.The top tier BCCI T20 event was played across centres in India. “Following the emergence of these allegations, the Anti-Corruption and Security Unit (ACSU) of the BCCI conducted an enquiry,” said the ACA secretary. “The ACA has also initiated criminal proceedings. Prima facie, there appears to be involvement of the aforementioned four players in serious misconduct, affecting the integrity of the sports.” Of the four, Thakuri was part of the team that travelled to Lucknow for the matches. Sinha played his last T20 match in 2019.According to ACA, the suspension was done to curtail any scope of further deterioration of the situation. The four cricketers have been barred from all cricketing activities in the state.

Global players union advocates for rest periods to alleviate player workload in women's soccer

Among the game's top players, Ballon d'Or winner Aitana Bonmati had the most matches, playing in 60 games for Barcelona and Spain, with less than five days of recovery between 57% of her matches.

BRISBANE. (Agency)

Top women's soccer players are increasingly having to juggle more club and international matches while getting less time for rest and recovery, according to a report by the global players' union.FIFPRO's report released Friday noted that the rise of women's leagues worldwide, expanded fields for international competitions and the addition of new tournaments have added to elite player workload. But it also noted there's a vast disparity in the women's game, with many players not getting enough matches or time in training environments, which can hamper development and possibly lead to injury. FIFPRO is calling for a more balanced competition calendar and greater player



protections on both ends of the workload spectrum, including mandated rest periods. "It is about the calendar and the cadence of the calendar, but it's also about the conditions in which those games are played and the rest and recovery for the players," said Alex Culvin, FIFPRO director of women's football. "We take this as a very holistic view. It's all about growing the game sustainably, but allowing the players to be in environments where they can thrive."

The report compiled data from 300 players across 30 leagues over the 2024-25 season. For the first time since FIFPRO started collecting workload data in 2020, the top 15 players played 50 matches or more.

Among the game's top players, Ballon d'Or winner Aitana Bonmati had the most matches, playing in 60 games for Barcelona and Spain, with less than five days of recovery between 57% of her matches. Bonmati recently fractured her fibula in

training with Spain and was expected to be sidelined at least five months.And it's not just playing time that adds to fatigue, Linda Caicedo, playing for Real Madrid and Colombia, travelled 95,000 kilometers, more than 59,000 miles, in 18 trips during the season, the report said.At the same time, some players in France and Germany's top divisions played just 13 or 14 matches across all competitions in a season, the report said."I was really concerned when I read the overload data, but also underload, it's a reality," said Maitane Lopez, who plays for the Chicago Stars and Spain. "All of these young players that come to the league and they're really young, they're not having enough time to develop. And I think that's also important because all of us, we want to win. The coaches want to win. The club wants us to win. So, if you are not developing and taking care of the players, that will have an impact. And maybe not right now, short term, but long term it is going to be huge."

Culvin said FIFPRO continues to advocate for mandated rest periods within the FIFA competition calendar. But the current women's calendar is set through 2029.

"Having rest periods within the calendar that are untouchable is really important," Culvin said.

Chaos at Messi's Kolkata event after he leaves in 10 mins, angry fans throw bottles

New Delhi. (Agency)

What was meant to be a once-in-a-lifetime experience for fans who paid Rs 5,000 and more to watch Lionel Messi in Kolkata spiralled into chaos at the Vivekananda Yuvabharati Salt Lake Stadium. Supporters who had waited for months to catch a glimpse of their football hero grew restless when it became clear that Messi would remain on the field for only a brief appearance, despite the high ticket prices and long hours of waiting.According to eyewitnesses, frustration peaked once Messi left the field in under 10 minutes, triggering anger among sections of the crowd. Fans, many of whom had arrived early in the morning, protested inside the stands, questioning the planning and access arrangements. Bottles were thrown, hoardings were damaged and security personnel were forced to intervene as the situation threatened



to get out of hand.Messi's short on-field appearance became the flashpoint of the unrest. The World Cup winner was swiftly escorted away under heavy security along with other VVIPs, leaving large sections of the stadium stunned and disappointed. For thousands who had paid premium prices hoping for a meaningful interaction or extended viewing, the fleeting glimpse felt far removed from what had been promised.

Soon after, dramatic visuals from inside the stadium surfaced on social media, showing agitated fans, damaged signage and objects being hurled. The footage stood in sharp contrast to the celebratory mood that had surrounded Messi's arrival in Kolkata and quickly changed the tone of the day.

A section of fans openly voiced their anger, alleging that Messi's visit had been dominated by celebrity interactions, leaving regular supporters sidelined. Many said they had waited months for the event, only to feel excluded from the experience. Some went as far as accusing the organisers of gross mismanagement, with a few even calling the event a “scam” due to unmet expectations.

Robin Uthappa flags lack of role clarity in India's batting during big chase

Uthappa said the issue was not the loss of early wickets but the strategy adopted after Shubman Gill's dismissal, particularly with a deep batting line-up at India's disposal.

NEW DELHI. (Agency)

Former India batter Robin Uthappa has flagged a lack of role clarity in India's batting approach during a big chase, saying excessive flexibility early in the innings

made run-scoring more complicated.India suffered a 51-run loss in the second T20I against South Africa after folding for 162 in 19.1 overs while chasing a target of 214 at Mullanpur on Thursday.



Uthappa said the issue was not the loss of early wickets but the strategy adopted after Shubman Gill's dismissal, particularly with a deep batting line-up at India's disposal.

"When Shubman Gill got out, Axar Patel walked in with plenty of batting still to

come. At that stage, he had to play the role of a pinch-hitter -- someone you are willing to risk early to get quick runs and take pressure off Abhishek Sharma," Uthappa said on Jio Hotstar.Instead, Uthappa felt Axar's cautious run-a-ball 21 failed to ease the pressure, forcing a shift in approach as wickets fell around him and slowing the chase further."At the international level, batters need clear roles and a clear idea of how they're going to construct an innings," he said."Flexibility with match-ups after the first six to eight overs is fine, but you still need a solid foundation before you can chase a big score -- you can't build a skyscraper without a base."Asking players to prepare for multiple roles in the same game makes run-scoring more complicated, and that's where India are missing a trick. I don't agree with being overly flexible so early in the innings beyond the openers," said the key member of the 2007 T20 World Cup winning side.

Wrestler Vinesh training in Bengaluru, eyes LA 2028 medal

CHENNAI. (Agency)

In a dramatic turnaround of events, one of India's most decorated wrestlers, Vinesh Phogat has announced her intention to come out of retirement on Friday. She has posted on her social media accounts that the fire is still burning and she would take one final shot at an Olympic medal at the LA 28 Olympic Games. Though the announcement seemed sudden, the wrestler had hinted comeback when she moved to Bengaluru with her just-born child for training. Vinesh along with her husband Somvir Rathee welcomed a baby boy into the family in July and soon after she started fitness sessions at Pratap Sports School, Kharkhoda in Sonapat, Haryana.Om Prakash Dahiya, Vinesh's childhood coach, said his ward has already moved to Bengaluru to train. “She is already in Bengaluru. Once again, the goal is to win an Olympic medal. She is accompanied by a woman there as she needs someone to take care of her son and training,” Dahiya said. As always, Olympic Gold Quest is



supporting her. Vinesh, multiple World Championships, Asian Games and Commonwealth Games medallist, suffered heartbreaks at the Olympics not once but thrice.From her Olympic debut at the 2016 Rio Games where she was stretched out after suffering a knee injury on the mat to unfathomable loss at the 2021 Tokyo Games to disqualification hours before the gold medal bout for being 50 grams overweight at the 2024 Paris Games, the 31-year-old somehow always had a torturous outing at the world's biggest stage.But the road to glory will not be easy.

Vinesh, who contested and won from Haryana's Julana constituency during the Assembly elections last year, has to start from the scratch. She was an Indian Railway employee but resigned before joining politics. She may have to earn her berth first in district and then state squad before making it to the Haryana team for the next nationals in 2026. It needs to be seen in which weight category she would compete. At Paris Olympics, Vinesh had competed in 50kg.I still love this sport. I still want to compete'Throwing light on her decision, Vinesh in her post said, "People kept asking if Paris was the end. For a long time, I didn't have the answer. I needed to step away from the mat, from the pressure, from the expectations, even from my own ambitions. For the first time in years, I allowed myself to breathe."“I took time to understand the weight of my journey — the highs, the heartbreaks, the sacrifices, the versions of me the world never saw. And somewhere in that reflection, I found the truth, I still love this sport.

Most would hit it: Ferguson reacts to viral MS Dhoni leave in World Cup 2019 semis

Lockie Ferguson recalled MS Dhoni's famous leave in the 2019 World Cup semi-final, admitting he bowled a poor ball and praising Dhoni's calculated approach despite India's heartbreaking exit.

WELLINGTON. (Agency)

Lockie Ferguson has reacted to MS Dhoni's viral leave during the Men's ODI World Cup 2019 semi-final between India and New Zealand at Old Trafford in Manchester. Chasing 240, India needed 52 runs off 31 balls when Dhoni surprisingly left the final delivery of the 45th over bowled by Ferguson, despite the required run rate being over 10.The moment drew a shocked reaction from Ferguson, who later recalled that he had bowled a poor delivery and



expected any other batter to go after it for a boundary. In the 49th over, with India needing 31 runs from the final two overs, Dhoni then struck Ferguson for a six over Mitchell Santner's head at backward

point.“It was a sh*t ball, short and wide. I expected most batters to hit it for a four or six, but Dhoni left it. So the plan was to have him caught the next time, knowing he would play the shot — and he did. Unfortunately, in

that game it just went over the fielder's head. I think it was Santner on the boundary,” Ferguson told The Quint in an interview.

DHONI IS VERY CALCULATED

With Dhoni hitting the six, hopes of him taking India home were reignited. However, just two deliveries later, a stunning direct hit from Martin Guptill sealed Dhoni's downfall. Attempting to run two to retain the strike with Chahal at the other end, Dhoni was caught short as Guptill charged in, picked up the ball, and struck the stumps with surgical precision.But Dhoni is very calculated, especially at the death. So it was nice for Gup (Martin Guptill) to run him out in that game,” Ferguson added.

After Dhoni's dismissal, it was all but over for India, who eventually lost the match by 18 runs after being bowled out for 221 in 49.3 overs. Dhoni scored 50 off 72 balls, including a four and a six, but his effort went in vain. The defeat knocked India out of the World Cup and also marked Dhoni's final appearance in national colours.

HSBC lists stocks that can rally next year: Check the list; do you have any

Kolkata. **(Agency)**

There is no doubt that most investors will urge Santa to bring back the bulls in the Indian equity markets in the New Year. While there are several factors that point to an enabling condition such as improved corporate earnings, rising demand, rising GDP and lower inflation, ample policy support like GST rejig and new labour codes, improved trade relations with the US could provide the much-needed impetus. It could also bring back he FIIs amid the continued support of domestic investors. In fact, Morgan Stanley has estimated that in the bull case scenario, Sensex could surge to 1,07,000 by the end of 2026. In the midst of this gathering optimism, HSBC has listed a few stocks that could rally in 2026. There are forecasts of 10% growth in FY26 and 16% in FY27 which can be driven by rising demand and declining interest rates. India’s premium over other emerging markets are coming back to normal levels. Let’s have a look at the stock picks by HSBC.State Bank of India

Target price: Rs 1,110

HSBC has predicted 16% upside from current market levels. It has flagged that SBI’s loan growth could be higher or on par with system loan growth in two successive years FY26 and FY27.

Target price: Rs 1,720

HSBC thinks FY27 could witness a pick-up in IT spending. HSBC also expects a 5-7% CAGR against 3-4% over the past three years. There could also be a higher share of discretionary projects.

Mahindra & Mahindra

Target price: Rs 4,000

HSBC thinks M&M has strong earnings resilience. It has aimed at achieving 8 times growth in auto sector between 2020 and 2030 business, which indicates a 20% revenue CAGR in the next five years. In FY26, M&M could grow at a rate higher than peers.Adani Ports

Target price: Rs 1,700

This Adani group major in the infrastructure sector has started showing growth on all fronts. The most visible is rise in margins in its HSBC has mentioned emerging businesses usually need lower capex which can lead to higher ROCE.

Boost for Makhana sector! Government holds first meeting; Rs 476-crore scheme for expansion rolled out

NEW DELHI.(Agency)

In a major push for India's makhana sector, Union government approved a multi-year development programme with an outlay of Rs 476.03 crore for the six-year period from 2025-26 to 2030-31. The scheme, rolled out on Friday, aims to mordermise and expand the ecosystem.

Ministry of agriculture and farmers welfare, said in an official release, that the programme has been designed to focus on the research and innovation, production of quality seeds, farmer capacity building, improved harvesting and post-harvest management, value addition, branding and marketing, export promotion, and quality assurance.

The implementation process formally began with the inaugural meeting of the National Makhana Board, held at Krishi Bhawan in New Delhi. The meeting was chaired by Devesh Chaturvedi, secretary in the department of agriculture and farmers welfare, and focused on operationalising both the Board and the Central Sector Scheme.

According to the ministry, the board reviewed the annual action plans submitted by states and research institutions and approved budget allocations for various components of the programme. These steps are intended to support comprehensive development of the sector.The meeting also drew attention to the need for streamlining the seed supply, saying that seed requirements from states should be consolidated and met through SAU Sabour and CAU Samastipur in Bihar for the ongoing year and the next.

Rail rides get better Indian Railways begin branded meal trials begin on Vande Bharat, Amrit Bharat; hygiene and freshness in focus

Mumbai.(Agency)

Train travel could soon become even better, with passengers able to savour their favourite delicacies from popular brands, right on board!Indian Railways has begun testing a revamped on-board catering model on selected trains, as the Indian Railway Catering and Tourism Corporation Ltd (IRCTC) looks to upgrade the quality and delivery of meals served to passengers.Under a Proof of Concept (PoC) currently underway, IRCTC has separated meal preparation from meal service, allowing established food and beverage brands, including industrial kitchens, restaurant chains and flight caterers, to step in and supply meals. The aim, the corporation said, is “to provide fresh, hygienic meals for service to the passengers” and drive “perceptible improvements in on-board catering services in trains”.The trials are being conducted across multiple railway zones on some of the newly introduced Vande Bharat and Amrit Bharat trains. IRCTC, a Navaratna Central Public Sector Enterprise under the ministry of railways, presently caters to nearly 16.50 lakh meals every day across the Indian Railways network.According to an official release, the corporation has initiated the trials to bring about a “paradigm shift in quality of meal services in trains”. “In order to have paradigm shift in quality of meal services in trains and with an objective to have perceptible improvements in on-board catering services in trains, IRCTC has commenced meal trials in some select trains,” it said.

Goa fire tragedy and beyond: From compensation to insurance, what victims can claim

The Uphaar cinema fire in Delhi, the Kumbakonam school blaze, the Mumbai Kamala Mills fire, the Surat coaching centre tragedy, each incident left behind not just casualties, but families pushed into years of legal battles simply to secure basic compensation.

New Delhi.(Agency)

A night meant for music and celebration turned into a scene of panic and loss in Goa, leaving families shattered. The tragedy felt painfully familiar with previous incidents, a crowded venue, a sudden fire, people scrambling for exits that were never meant for emergencies.India has seen this pattern

before. The Uphaar cinema fire in Delhi, the Kumbakonam school blaze, the Mumbai Kamala Mills fire, the Surat coaching centre tragedy, each incident left behind not just casualties, but families pushed into years of legal battles simply to secure basic compensation. The Goa fire has now joined this grim list, forcing the same questions to surface again: when lives are lost due to negligence, what rights do families really have?How does compensation work? And does insurance, personal, accidental, or third-party, actually help in such cases, or does it get stuck in technicalities while victims struggle?

At a time when families are grieving, they also find themselves navigating complex laws, paperwork, and blame games between venue owners, event organisers, insurers, and authorities. Understanding what they can legally claim becomes not just a matter of justice, but a lifeline in the months that follow.

VICTIMS’ RIGHTS AND WHY

COMPENSATION IS OFTEN A LONG BATTLE



Legal expert Anisha Mathur, Founding Partner at Shepherd Law Associates, said the first thing families must remember is that compensation is not a favour, but a legal right when negligence is involved.She explained that in cases like Goa, “If any fire-related deaths or injuries occur due to negligence, families have

several legal remedies available. They can file a FIR under IPC provisions like Section 304A for causing death by negligence, Section 336/337/338 for endangering life, and Section 285 for negligent conduct with fire or combustible materials.”

Mathur said families can claim compensation under civil law as well. “The victims or their families can file civil suits seeking monetary compensation for death, injuries, medical expenses, and loss of livelihood. Compensation can be claimed under the law of torts for negligence. Courts consider factors such as age, earning capacity, the circumstances of the accident, and long-term impact while determining compensation amounts.”

She added that criminal and civil cases can run parallel. At the same time, families do not have to wait for years for a final verdict. “Courts may grant interim compensation in cases of severe negligence,” she said.

BSE, Department Of Posts Enter Agreement To Expand Mutual Fund Access Across India

MUMBAI. (Agency)

The Bombay Stock Exchange (BSE) on Friday signed a memorandum of understanding (MoU) with the Department of Posts to enable distribution of mutual fund products through India Post’s extensive postal network. Under the three-year agreement, selected employees and agents of the Department of Posts will be trained and onboarded as certified mutual fund distributors to offer products and investor services via the BSE’s StAR Mutual Fund platform, the statement said.

The StAR MF platform handles more than 85 per cent of exchange-based mutual fund transactions and records over 7 crore transactions monthly — to extend investor access into rural and semi-urban areas. The Department of Posts, with over 1.64 lakh post offices across the country, can enable last-mile access, investor education, and trust-driven mutual fund distribution nationwide.This strategic partnership aims to deepen financial inclusion by leveraging India Post’s physical reach, particularly in rural and



semi-urban areas, and BSE’s StAR MF platform, India’s largest online mutual fund distribution ecosystem, the statement said.We extend our sincere gratitude to the Government of India for their vision in reimagining the role of India Post as a catalyst for inclusive growth," BSE MD &CEO Sundararaman Ramamurthy said, adding that the collaboration aims to democratise access to financial products and empower millions with investment opportunities and financial literacy.

Department of Posts' GM, CCS & RB, Manisha Bansal Badal, said the vision aligns with the BSE’s vision of nurturing a professional, transparent, and investor-friendly mutual fund ecosystem in India. "India Post has always been a trusted institution for the common man, offering a wide range of savings and financial services," she said.This initiative is expected to accelerate mutual fund penetration in Tier-2 and Tier-3 towns, strengthen investor confidence, and contribute to India’s vision of a financially empowered society.

According to the latest NITI Aayog reports on India’s services sector and state-level economic performance, the services industry now drives most of the country’s economy.

New Delhi.(Agency)

India’s economic growth is strong overall, but it is unevenly spread across states and regions. Some states have become powerful centres of modern economic activity, while many others lag behind in jobs, income, and opportunities.According to the latest NITI Aayog reports on India’s services sector and state-level economic performance, the services industry now drives most of the country’s economy. Services contribute around 55 percent of India’s gross value added (GVA) and account for roughly 30 percent of total employment, with much of this growth concentrated in a few states. States such as Karnataka, Maharashtra, Tamil Nadu, and Telangana have become services-led economic hubs. Together, they generate about 40 percent of India’s total services output. These regions host high-value industries like IT, finance, professional services, and digital platforms, attracting investment and skilled workers. By contrast, many

other states — especially in the north and east — remain dependent on agriculture or low-value industries and have not kept pace with this shift. This pattern is reflected in rising income gaps. NITI Aayog leadership has



highlighted that high-income states (about 26 percent of India’s population) contribute 44 percent of the country’s GDP, while low-income states (about 38 percent of the population) generate only 19 percent of GDP, illustrating major regional disparity.

These differences are more than just numbers — they affect people’s lives.

Historic Surge: Silver Breaks Rs 2 Lakh Mark, Gold At New Peak — Here’s Why

NEW DELHI.(Agency)

New Delhi: Silver prices soared past the Rs 2 lakh-per-kg mark on Friday, marking a major milestone for the precious metal. Backed by strong investor demand and supportive global cues, silver futures continued their rally for the fourth straight session. On the MCX, March delivery contracts climbed by Rs 1,420 (0.71 per cent), hitting a record high of Rs 2,00,362 per kg. The bullish sentiment was mirrored globally as well, with Comex silver futures touching a new peak of USD 64.74 per ounceSilver has been on a powerful upward run, fuelled by rising industrial demand, shrinking global stockpiles and growing interest from investors. Additional triggers



including US Federal Reserve rate cuts and heightened geopolitical tensions have only strengthened its appeal. So far this year, domestic spot gold has risen by 70 per cent, while spot silver has delivered an impressive 115 per cent jump.The US dollar is trading close to a two-month low and is

heading for its third consecutive weekly decline, making precious metals cheaper for global buyers. According to analyst Zain Vawda of MarketPulse by OANDA, the jump in US weekly jobless claims and rising tensions between the US and Venezuela are also boosting safe-haven demand, helping gold maintain its strong momentum.US jobless claims rose last week by the most in nearly four and a half years, reversing the sharp drop seen earlier. This comes just after the US Federal Reserve cut interest rates by 25 basis points for the third time this year, while signalling the possibility of more cuts ahead.

Johnson & Johnson ordered to pay \$40 million to 2 women in talc powder case

The verdict comes as the company faces tens of thousands of similar lawsuits nationwide and after its latest attempt to resolve the litigation through bankruptcy was rejected by US courts.

New Delhi.(Agency)

A California jury on Friday awarded USD 40 million to two women who said Johnson & Johnson’s (JNJ.N), open-new tab baby powder was to blame for their ovarian cancer.The jury in Los Angeles Superior Court awarded USD 18 million to Monica Kent and USD 22 million to Deborah Schultz and her husband after finding that Johnson & Johnson knew for years its talc-based products were dangerous but failed to warn consumers.Erik Haas, Johnson &

Johnson's worldwide vice president of litigation, said in a statement the company plans to "immediately appeal this verdict and expect to prevail as we typically do with aberrant adverse verdicts." A spokesperson for the plaintiffs did not immediately respond to a request for comment.Kent was diagnosed with ovarian cancer in 2014, according to court records. Schultz was diagnosed in 2018. Both women are California residents who say they used J&J's baby powder after bathing for 40 years. Their treatments for ovarian cancer have involved major surgeries and dozens of rounds of chemotherapy, they testified at the trial.In closing arguments that Reuters viewed on Courtroom View Network, Andy Birchfield, an attorney for the women, told the jury that Johnson & Johnson knew as far back as the 1960s that its product could cause cancer."Absolutely they knew, they knew, and they were doing everything they could to hide it, to bury the truth about the dangers," Birchfield said.

Allison Brown, an attorney for Johnson & Johnson, said the only people to tell Kent and Schultz that their cancers were caused

by talc were their lawyers, as the alleged connection isn't backed by any major US health authority and there is no study that shows talc can migrate from the outside of the body to the reproductive organs."They don't have the evidence in this case, and



they hope you don't mind," Brown told the jury.J&J is facing lawsuits from more than 67,000 plaintiffs who say they were diagnosed with cancer after using its baby powder and other talc products, according to court filings.The company has said its products are safe, do not contain asbestos and do not cause cancer. J&J stopped selling talc-based baby powder in the US in 2020, switching to a cornstarch product.J&J has sought to resolve the

litigation through bankruptcy, a proposal that has been rejected three times by federal courts, most recently in April. The bankruptcies have put most cases on hold. Brown and Kent's cases are the first to go to trial since the latest Chapter 11 attempt was dismissed.Before the bankruptcy attempts, J&J had a mixed record in talc trials, with verdicts as high as USD 4.69 billion awarded to women who said baby powder caused their ovarian cancer. The company has won some trials outright and had other verdicts reduced on appeal.

The majority of lawsuits involve ovarian cancer claims. Cases alleging talc caused a rare and deadly cancer called mesothelioma make up a smaller portion of the claims J&J is facing. The company has previously settled some of those claims but has not struck a nationwide settlement, so many lawsuits over mesothelioma have proceeded to trial in state courts in recent months.In the past year, J&J has been hit with several substantial verdicts in mesothelioma cases, including one for more than USD 900 million in Los Angeles in October.



Shivangi Joshi

Keeps It Elegant And Contemporary At Single Papa Red Carpet Event

Netflix's latest series Single Papa began streaming on the platform on December 12 and early reactions from viewers have been overwhelmingly positive. Audiences are praising its heartfelt storytelling, relatable humour, and engaging performances, making it one of the most talked-about new releases of the week. A special premiere for the show was held last night, drawing a crowd of well-known celebrities who arrived to show their support.

Among the notable attendees was television star Shivangi Joshi, whose appearance quickly became a highlight of the evening.

Shivangi Joshi Steals the Spotlight With an Elegant Look

In a video from the event, Shivangi Joshi is seen posing gracefully for the cameras before making her way inside the venue. She opted for a stylish light-blue, pinstriped shirt dress featuring a classic collar. Her outfit was tastefully accessorised with gold hoop earrings and a gold-toned watch or bracelet on her left wrist. Her hair was styled sleekly in a pulled-back ponytail, and her makeup remained soft and natural—perfectly complementing the understated elegance of her ensemble.

Cast Members and Celebrities Join the Celebration

Along with Shivangi, several cast members from the show marked their presence. Prajakta Koli, lead actor Kunal Kemmu, and his wife Soha Ali Khan were also spotted at the premiere, adding to the star power of the night.

A Stellar Ensemble Cast Brings Single Papa to Life

Single Papa features an impressive ensemble cast, including Manoj Pahwa, Ayesha Raza and Prajakta Koli, among others. Together, they bring depth, humour and warmth to a story that celebrates the true essence of family. It highlights that family isn't defined by blood alone, it's about love, laughter and standing by one another when it matters the most.

A Heartwarming Story of Growth, Love and Unexpected Parenthood

At the center of the series is Kunal Kemmu, who plays Gaurav Gehlot, an impulsive and emotionally immature young man whose life is a chaotic mix of unfulfilled ambitions and avoidance. His carefree world takes a dramatic turn when he surprises his family by adopting a baby. The decision is not driven by preparedness but by an impulse, setting the stage for a journey filled with humour, confusion and emotional revelations.



'Below The Belt': Shehbaz Badesha, Shehnaaz Gill Take A Dig At Malti Chahar



Bigg Boss 19 ended a week ago, but the drama online shows no signs of stopping. Contestants are busy taking jabs at each other through interviews, events, and, of course, social media. The latest to join the fray is the sibling duo who owe much of their career success to the show, Shehnaaz Gill and Shehbaz Badesha.

The pair recently took a playful dig at Malti Chahar, who, like Shehbaz, had entered the Bigg Boss 19 house as a wildcard. One of Malti's comments inspired the siblings to create a cheeky Instagram reel, which quickly became the talk of the internet.

Shehnaaz and Shehbaz's 'Below The Belt' Reel

In the reel posted by Shehbaz, captioned 'Below the belt', he's seen frantically shouting, searching for his belt. Shehnaaz walks in and asks, teasingly, why he's making such a fuss. When Shehbaz explains, Shehnaaz cheekily tosses the belt on the floor and quips, 'Below the belt.' A smiling Shehnaaz walks away, while the camera pans to Shehbaz sitting on the floor, stunned by the jab.

For context, the reel was inspired by a comment Malti Chahar made during the Bigg Boss 19 finale while talking to host Salman Khan. She complained to the superstar about Shehbaz's 'below the belt' remarks, saying he had continued making them even after the show. Shehbaz tried to defend himself, but Malti was pissed at him. This is what ultimately gave way to Shehbaz's cheeky reel.

Internet Can't Stop Talking About It

The video's comments section was buzzing with reactions. Some viewers enjoyed the siblings' cheeky jab, while others insisted that the show was over and it was time to move on. A user said, "Bhai, Bigg Boss khatam hogaya, ab toh trolling chod do. Kya milega troll karke? Accha nahi lag raha." Someone added, "This brother and sister roasting is on another level." A user remarked, "Malti bohut pyaari hai by the way."

Parul Gulati Gets Emotional As Her First Hindi Theatrical Film Releases: 'Never Stop Believing'



Actor Parul Gulati shared an emotional video on social media today, opening up for the first time about the deeply personal highs and lows of her 15-year journey in the entertainment industry. The heartfelt moment comes as she celebrates a major milestone, the release of her first Hindi theatrical film, Kis Kisko Pyaar Karoon which released today.

Parul Gulati Gets Emotional

In the video, Parul Gulati breaks down in 'happy tears' as she reflects on years of perseverance, reinvention, and unwavering belief. She began her career in television before transitioning to Punjabi films, an attempt she candidly admits did not unfold as she had hoped. When acting opportunities slowed, Parul pivoted and built a successful business. Kis Kisko Pyaar Karoon 2 stars Kapil Sharma, Manjot Singh, Ayesha Khan, Tridha Choudhary, Parul Gulati, Hira Warina and others. The film is directed by Anukalp Goswami.

Parul Gulati Recalls Facing Rejections

In her caption, Parul wrote, "15 years of long wait... Is it too long... is it too little i don't know but whenever i would get rejected for projects i would always think something might be wrong in me and mumma would remind me - no nishu there is something better written for you and today i have faith in the almighty & in my kismat #kiskiskopyaarkaroon2."

Despite her entrepreneurial success, Parul reveals that acting has always remained her deepest passion. "Acting is like my marriage and business is like my child," she says in the video. "The first love will always be acting." She credits her mother for instilling in her the philosophy that guides her even today: keep trying, because what is meant to happen will always find its way to you.

Parul Gulati said, "I have worked my way up from nothing but hope, belief, and the willingness to start over, again and again. There were years when the phone didn't ring, when auditions didn't go my way, when I felt like maybe this dream wasn't mine to live. I tried different paths, I built a business, I learned how to stand on my own feet. But the voice and desire inside of me never stopped wanting to see myself on the big screen. Today, after 15 years, that wish has finally come true. These tears you see are not of sadness, they are the tears of someone who never stopped trying, even when it hurt. I am proud of this journey, of its scars, of its surprises, and of where it has brought me today."

Shanaya Kapoor, Manjari Fadnis, Others React

Soon after she shared the post, Shanaya Kapoor dropped red heart emojis. Manjari Fadnis commented, "Parul I'm so proud of you! Watched the film last night... u r looking STUNNING in every frame! & i enjoyed the film so much! May this be the beginning for you to bag some amazing roles in big films & series." Jiya Shankar wrote, "Congratulations Gulati! Sending you all the love and my best wishes."



Hina Khan's

Cozy Getaway With Rocky Jaiswal, Rubina Dilaik And Abhinav Shukla Is Pure Therapy

Hina Khan just reminded the Internet of something we often forget. In a post shared on Instagram, she remarked "friends are therapy" and the pictures attached to it were proof of her claim. Her joy-filled carousel was from a relaxing getaway with her husband Rocky Jaiswal along with their close friends from Pati Patni Aur Panga, Rubina Dilaik and Abhinav Shukla. The four bonded beautifully while filming the show, which went off air just last month.

The holiday album opens with a stunning solo shot of Hina, radiating charm in a blue chequered dress as she laughs her heart out. Slide next, and you see a wholesome group photo of the four, smiling ear to ear, posing in the most candid, unfiltered way.

More solo shots of Hina follow, each one reflecting her happy vibe. But the frame that instantly grabs attention is the one where Hina, Rocky and Rubina stand close together, with the actress holding her husband's hands.

Then comes the most romantic click of the entire carousel, Rocky hugging Hina from behind, the two soaking in golden sunlight, enjoying the sunset view together. Now let's talk about the picture that looked like nothing short of friendship goals. Hina and Rubina, standing with their backs to the camera, matching vibes, it was pure bestie aesthetic. And yes, there's even a standout moment

where Hina twinned with Rubina's daughter, as what it seems.

Finally, the last slide is all about bromance. Abhinav and Rocky share a candid, goofy moment that perfectly reflects on the genuine warmth between them.

Hours before the carousel, Hina Khan shared a peek into her "choti choti khushiyaan." The Instagram entry included a string of pictures,



featuring the former Bigg Boss contestant, posing for some pictures which can instantly lift up anyone's mood. Dressed perfectly for the day out, Hina opted for a yellow fit and flare mini dress, effortlessly balancing charm and comfort.

One of the images captured her standing with her back facing the camera in a serene beach scene during sunset. The text on the image, "Rubi filming me from the opposite side," suggests that Rubina clicked the picture and it seems the two had a blast together.

Paint Your house Green this winter



Love plants, but not sure if you can maintain them with ease? Ashok kumar mundetiya tells you how to add an extra edge to your balcony garden and interiors this season...

The glory of gardening: hands in the dirt, head in the sun, heart with nature. To nurture a garden is to feed not just on the body, but the soul

With space being a rarity these days, it is difficult to dream of a garden space — more so, if you are staying in a small apartment. But fear not! For terrace garden — big or small — is a wonderful way to add colour to your otherwise dull life. You can just sit there, listen to music, read books or simply pull up a couch to lie down and soak in the natural beauty. Low space in metros and big cities has also compelled plant lovers to grow vegetables on their balconies. It is not only a great stress-buster, but the benefits of consuming home-grown vegetables also compensate for the time spent on pruning it. But wait... Before you start painting your house green, a few things should be taken into account, because no matter how much you care, your plants aren't going to thrive if you are ignorant of their specific needs. CT provides the basic guidelines to beginners...

Know your plants

Before adding a plant to your potted collection, it is advisable to ask an expert at a nursery about the conditions the plant needs. "It's usually much easier to grow plants that do well in your region, temperature and soil. For instance, don't

try to grow a flower like a rose — which requires six hours in the sun — on a porch that gets sunlight only for an hour in the morning. While it's important to maintain a steady temperature for indoor plants, a terrace garden needs adequate sunlight. Again, if you notice your plant becoming thin and reaching out toward the light, it needs to be closer to sunshine," informs AB Karmakar, executive/ administrator for The Globe Nursery on Lindsay Street.

Maintenance of indoor plants

- Most indoor plants do best in partial shade, which works out well since indoor areas don't usually get direct sunlight. Keep this in mind before you decide to put a potted plant in a place where it will get hours of direct sunlight; you may end up exposing it for too long.

- One must select the right size of the pots. For indoor plants, go for pots either 4 inches or 6 inches in size. Allow enough space for the roots to grow. Make sure the pots are light and strong, so as to hold the plant for a long time.

- Place plastic saucers under the pots to avoid soil and water spillage.

- Ficus Elastica, Areca Palm, a variety of philodendron or dracaena are best suited for indoors. These plants can do without sunlight for 7-10 days with minimum requirement of water.

Water the plants carefully

"Water the plants as and when required. Many first-time gardeners or potted plant owners water plants more than necessary, believing that the more water the plant gets, the better they grow. While it holds true for certain plants, it can kill others," suggests Dr SL Rahman, consultant at Agri-Horticultural Society of India.

Kitchen garden in pots

- If you thought a kitchen garden only works in bigger houses, you are highly mistaken. Get creative. Don't throw away buckets, containers etc. Use them along with hanging baskets for smaller plants. You can even

- Do not use soil from the garden. It can be filled with weed seeds, insects, and fungal diseases. It is better and easier to buy readymade potting soil (a mixture comprising clay, bone dust, vermicompost, neem cake and mustard cake) from the local nursery. You can also go for coco peat, which are made from coconut husks and is a medium for growing plants.

- Get various seedlings from the nursery. Remove the plants from its nursery container. Never pull a plant out by its stem. If it is stuck, tap the sides of the pot to loosen it. Gently tease the ends of the roots free before planting it in the bigger pot.

- For the proper growth of vegetables in your balcony, the pot size should be between 8-10 inches.

- Make one or more drain holes in the pot. Place small chips right over them so that they don't clog and excess water can pass through.

- Do not pile soil on top of the plant; make sure the stem is completely above the surface. Leave about an inch between the soil surface and the rim of the pot.

- All vegetable plants need constant moisture. Some plants need water on a daily basis.

Veggies for beginners

Coriander: How many times did you get sad looking at half-dried coriander leaves (dhania) in the market? Coriander is something that is used in everyday cuisine to spice it up. And that makes it a must-grow for every kitchen garden. The seed is technically a fruit containing two seeds in it. When split, it increases the germination rate since it scarifies the seed. Take a tray with potting mix filled up to half inch from the top. Then make rows by drawing a line with your index finger or a stick. Simply sow the split coriander seeds in each row. Once done, water them and wait! It starts germinating between 5-7 days.

Potatoes: Plant potatoes during late February and March. When the green shoots begin to appear above the soil, cover them with more compost. You only need remember to water them. After 10 to 20

weeks, dig around in the soil to collect your home-grown potatoes!

Peas: It's a trouble-free crop that enjoys cooler weather. Sow them in the pots between March and June. Erect some sticks or posts for support. You'll be amazed at how good fresh peas taste and the more that you pick them, the more they produce!

Tomato: With a little water and a lot of sun, tomato plants are quick to grow. Roots of a tomato plant grow deeper into the soil. So, choose a bush variety like 'Cherry Cascade' that can be planted in hanging baskets and window boxes. Just cut a tomato into four pieces and bury it about 1/2 an inch into the soil. Wait for 3-4 weeks for the seeds to start sprouting.

Cucumber: These grow best when the soil is warm. Cucumber plants tend to sprawl all over. Provide your plants with ample space to stretch their roots. Again, since these are climbers, you must get a proper support. Go for smaller varieties if there's less space.

Green chilli: These are good companion plants for tomatoes and coriander. Just take two or three dried red chillies. Slit them open and sprinkle the seeds in a pot filled with soil and a little manure, available in the nurseries. Ensure the seeds don't go too deep. Cover it with little soil and water it. It takes about a week or so for the seeds to sprout. If the pot is not large enough, you can replant the sprouts into a bigger pot. You may need to tie up the chili plant to a pole to let it grow and avoid bending.

Winter blossom

- According to Nirupom Sen, secretary-cum-CEO, Agri-Horticultural Society of India, if you have a garden without flowers, you have got to do something about it. So, before deciding where to plant your flowers, you should know when the best time to grow flowers is. "During winter, the best flowers to grow in Indian climate are Petunia, Cockscomb, Antirrhinum, Cineraria, Zinnia, Calendula, Chrysanthemum, Marigold and Dahlia," he says.

- Flower plants need up to 5 inches deep soil. So take an earthen pot of 6-8 inches in height. Dig a hole in the potted soil. Bury the seed

water-selected.

- One has to bear in mind that the area selected to build a terrace garden should have a slight slope, so that it can drain water easily and has the capacity to bear the load.

- It is always advisable to pick plants which don't grow big in size.

- You can install a separate tank to store water or have a mechanical watering arrangement. But most often, people love to water their garden themselves and see the plants grow.

Preparing the potting mixture & sowing seeds
'These days, one can easily get exotic and hybrid seeds of capsicum, chilly, cabbage, broccoli, coriander, tomatoes, brinjal, basil and parsley. The potting mixture should have 20% of leaf mould, 40% sand and 40% soil. You can add mustard cake and cow dung cake as fertilizers. After the seeds are sown, one should cover the soil with a layer of fine sand. Sand makes the soil porous and helps the roots grow. Keeping insects away

'Use neem-based organic pesticides. Or you can take 100 gram of chillies, 4-5 cloves of garlic and a few bulbs of turmeric, paste it and mix it in 1 litre of water. Pour the liquid in a container and simmer it till it is reduced to half. Refrigerate it and use it whenever necessary. All you need to do is take out about 20 ml or the concentrated paste, mix it in a litre of water and sprinkle it on the plants. However, if insects or diseases do strike your plants, go for the safest botanical or microbial pesticides'

- For the proper growth of vegetables/ flowers, the pot size should be between 8-10 inches. Make one or more drain holes in the pot

- Place small chips right over them so that they don't clog and excess water can pass through

- Do not pile soil on top of the plant

- Get various seedlings from the nursery

- Carefully remove the plants from its nursery container. Make sure the stem is completely above the surface

- Leave about an inch between the soil surface and the rim of the pot

about 2 inches deep. Flowers do not need to be smothered with the soil. Do not bury them too deep. After 6 weeks, you will see the seeds sprout into saplings.

- The after-care is very essential. Sprinkle water as and when required.

Terrace talk

- As the main element of a terrace garden comprises watering of plants and keeping the soil wet, it is important that the best quality proofing material is