

'Significant Stride In India's Space Sector': PM Modi Hails ISRO's BlueBird Block-2 Launch

PM Modi hailed the successful LVM3-M6 launch as a major boost to India's youth-driven space programme, stressing its role in strengthening future missions like

Every effort of Punjab Govt is aimed at channelizing unbounded energy of youth in positive direction, weaning them away from menace of drugs: CM Mann

The Sikh Times

CHANDIGARH, December 24: At a high level review of the Sports and Youth Services Department held on Wednesday, Chief Minister Sardar Bhagwant Singh Mann issued clear, time bound directions to overhaul Punjab's sports infrastructure, asking officers to complete 3,100 stadiums across the state by June 2026 at a cost of ₹1,350 crore. The Chief Minister also rolled out a sweeping package that includes ultra modern gyms at nearly 3,000 locations, distribution of 17,000 sports kits worth ₹50 crore, launch of a comprehensive sports portal, and construction of a new



Yuva Bhawan at a cost of ₹43 crore, stressing that the government's central objective is to channel the vast energy of Punjab's youth into productive, disciplined pursuits and pull them away from the menace of drugs. Chairing a review meeting of the Sports and Youth Services department on Wednesday, CM Bhagwant Singh Mann said that in consonance with the New Sports Policy 2023 these stadiums are being constructed in the villages across Punjab. "₹1350 crore will be spent on these stadiums with fence, gate, jogging tracks, leveled playground, Trees, Volleyball court, Store and others. The work on these stadiums should be completed within the stipulated time frame adding that quality work should be ensured by all means," he asserted. The Chief Minister said that ultra modern gyms will be set up at around 3,000 locations across the state to channelize the energy of youth in a positive direction. "In the first phase ₹35 crore will be spent on setting up such ultra modern gyms in 1000 locations across the state. These gyms will have ultra modern equipment like barbell, weight lifting Sets, benches, dumbbell sets, kettlebell Sets, racks, floor mats and others at all locations," he highlighted. CM Bhagwant Singh Mann also said that 17,000 Sports Kits for players will be distributed by the state government at a cost of ₹50 crore. "These kits will have Volleyball and Football (three balls and two nets each), Cricket (two Bats, Wickets, six Tennis balls) at every location." The Chief Minister asked the officers to ensure that 5,600 sports kits are distributed in the villages by March 31, 2026. He also said that it is a matter of immense pride and satisfaction that the Department is all set to launch a comprehensive Sports Portal. "The sports lovers and sportspersons will be able to get facilities like registry of Players, Online Gradation, Online DBT, organizing Sports Events, ground Reservation, e-Certificates, recording Results, pension / Scholarship and others on a single click.

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New Delhi (Agency)
Prime Minister Narendra Modi on Wednesday hailed ISRO's successful LVM3-M6 mission, describing it as "a significant stride in India's space sector" and a proud milestone in the country's expanding space journey. Sharing a video of the launch on X, the Prime Minister said the mission underscored India's growing heavy-lift launch capability and reinforced its role in the global commercial launch market.

"The successful LVM3-M6 launch, placing the heaviest satellite ever launched from Indian soil, the spacecraft of USA, BlueBird Block-2, into its intended orbit, marks a

proud milestone in India's space journey," PM Modi mentioned in his post. He added that the achievement "strengthens India's heavy-lift launch capability and reinforces our growing role in the global commercial launch market."

Highlighting the broader significance of the mission, the Prime Minister said it was also reflective of the country's push towards self-reliance.

"This is also reflective of our efforts towards an Aatmanirbhar Bharat. Congratulations to our hardworking space scientists and engineers," he



said, concluding with the message, "India continues to soar higher in the world of space!"

In a second post on X, PM Modi emphasised the contribution of young Indians to the country's space programme and linked the success

of LVM3-M6 to future ambitions.

"Powered by India's youth, our space programme is getting more advanced and impactful," he said.

The Prime Minister noted that with LVM3 demonstrating "reliable heavy-lift performance," India is "strengthening the foundations for future

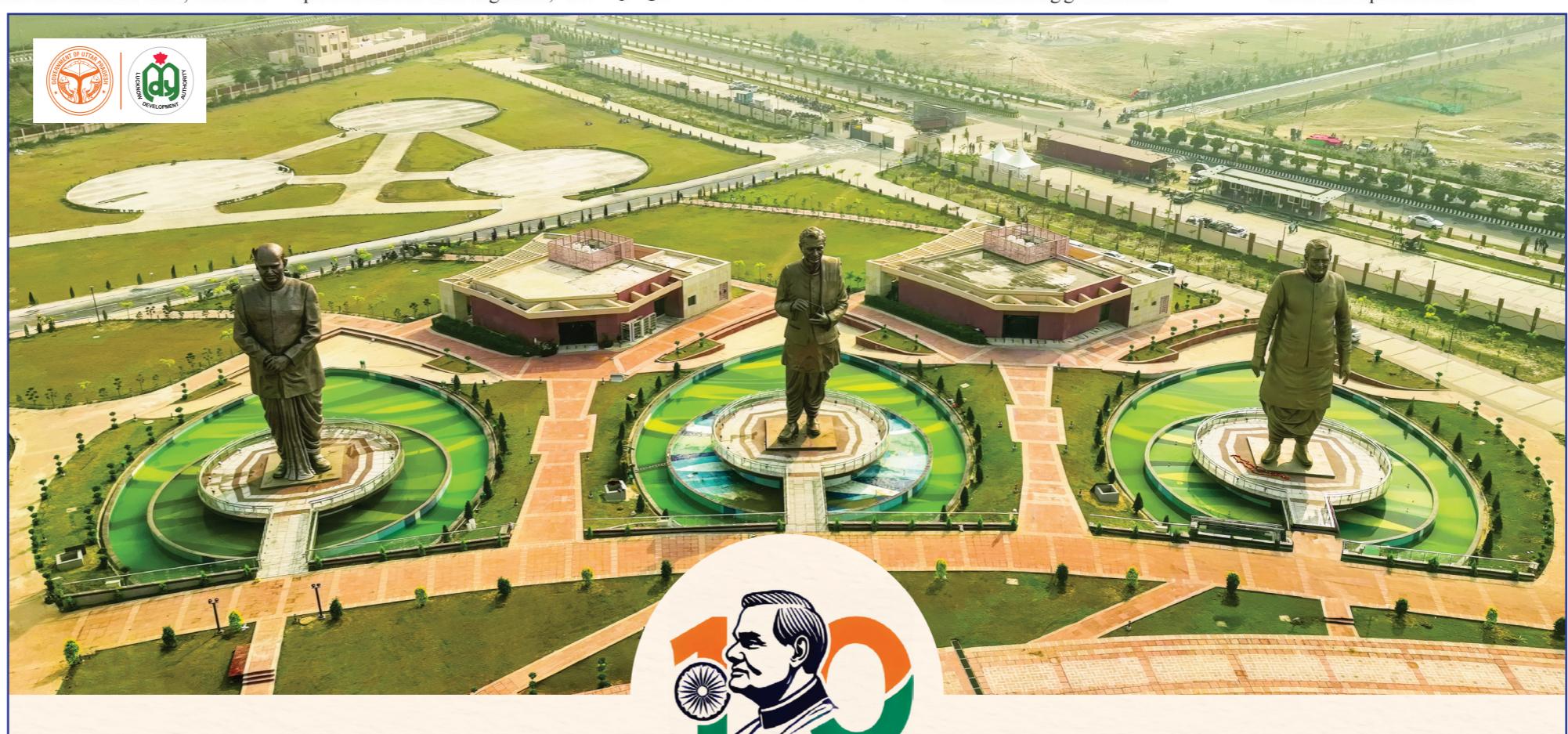
missions such as Gaganyaan, expanding commercial launch services and deepening global partnerships." He added that the enhanced capability and increased self-reliance would be "wonderful for the coming generations."

The Prime Minister's remarks came after ISRO successfully carried out the LVM3-M6 launch on Christmas Eve, marking a historic milestone for India's space programme.

According to PTI, the 43.5-metre-tall LVM3-M6 rocket lifted off at 8.54 am from the second launch pad at the Satish Dhawan Space Centre in Sriharikota.

After a flight of about 15 minutes, the vehicle successfully placed the BlueBird Block-2 communication satellite into its intended orbit.

The mission was executed as part of a commercial agreement between NewSpace India Ltd (NSIL), the commercial arm of ISRO, and US-based AST SpaceMobile.



On the Occasion of the Birth Centenary Celebration of
Former Prime Minister, Bharat Ratna

Atal Bihari Vajpayee Ji Inauguration of Rashtra Prerna Sthal

• Cost-₹230 crore • Area-65 acres

- 65-feet-tall bronze statues of great national icons
- Capacity-2 lakh visitors • Museum area-6300 sq. metres
- A grand amphitheatre with seating for 3000 people

by

Narendra Modi
Prime Minister

In the august presence of



Anandiben Patel
Governor, Uttar Pradesh

Yogi Adityanath
Chief Minister, Uttar Pradesh

Rajnath Singh
Raksha Mantri, Government of India



Keshav Prasad Maurya
Deputy Chief Minister, Uttar Pradesh

Brajesh Pathak
Deputy Chief Minister, Uttar Pradesh

Pankaj Chaudhary
Minister of State, Finance,
Government of India

Suresh Kumar Khanna
Minister, Finance and
Parliamentary Affairs, Uttar Pradesh

Jaiveer Singh
Minister, Tourism and Culture,
Uttar Pradesh

Dr. Dinesh Sharma
Member,
Rajya Sabha

Dr. Sudhanshu Trivedi
Member,
Rajya Sabha

Brij Lal
Member,
Rajya Sabha

Sanjay Seth
Member,
Rajya Sabha

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Lucknow

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MLA,
Lucknow North

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Malihabad

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MLA,
Lucknow East

Amresh Kumar
MLA,
Mohanlalganj

Dr. Mahendra Kumar Singh
MLC

Er. Awanish Kumar Singh
MLC

Mukesh Sharma
MLC

Umesh Dwivedi
MLC

Ram Chandra Singh Pradhan
MLC

Dr. Lalji Prasad Nirmal
MLC

Date: 25th December, 2025 | Time: 11:30 AM | Venue: Rashtra Prerna Sthal, Basant Kunj Yojna, Sector-J, Lucknow

News box

Mastermind behind Rs 10cr foreign liquor racket arrested at IGI

Gurgaon.(Agency)

The main owner of 'The Theka', the liquor vend from where a large cache of untaxed imported foreign liquor was recently seized, has been arrested.

Sugree Kumar (41), who had fled to Bali in Indonesia immediately after the raid, was detained at Delhi airport on Tuesday in connection with the Rs 10-crore illegal liquor haul recovered from a wine shop in the city. Kumar told police that he held a 50% stake in the shop. The SIT found that Kumar has a previous criminal record — he was booked under the Excise Act at DLF Phase-2 police station in 2011. So far, police have arrested five people in the case, including 25% stakeholder Ankush Goyal, shop manager Ajay, delivery driver Ajay and Manoj, who allegedly prepared fake transport documents. Another stakeholder, a relative of Goyal, remains on the run. The racket came to light on Dec 9 when the excise department received a tip-off about a large stock of illegal foreign liquor hidden at the Signature Tower wine shop. A joint police-excise raid led to the recovery of 3,921 cases and 176 bottles of foreign liquor from two secret rooms. None of the bottles carried mandatory holograms or track-and-trace strips.

FIR registered for hunting of migratory birds in Nuh lake

Gurgaon.(Agency)

An FIR has been filed following complaints about the poaching of migratory birds at Akera-Kotla Lake in Nuh. The complaint said hunters were allegedly laying nets to trap birds during the winter season.

Acting on a written complaint by wildlife inspector Rajnish Kumar, Akera police station lodged the case under Section 9 of the Wildlife (Protection) Act, 1972. Police officials said an investigation was initiated immediately, and teams were dispatched to the site.

Divisional forest officer (wildlife) RK Jangra confirmed the action, stating that field operations were underway. "The FIR has been registered against unknown persons, and around 15 forest staff members have been deployed to remove illegal nets from the lake," he said.

According to the complaint, Akera-Kotla Lake attracts a large number of migratory birds every winter, making it a frequent target for poachers who illegally trap birds using nets. Forest officials said such activities pose a serious threat to rare and protected bird species and constitute a punishable offence under wildlife laws. Officials said patrols were already being conducted in the area, and net-removal operations had begun even before the FIR was registered. However, the task remains challenging as the lake spreads across several hundred acres. The enforcement action comes amid proceedings before the National Green Tribunal (NGT), which earlier this month issued notices to the Centre and the Haryana govt on a plea alleging rampant bird poaching, encroachment and lack of legal protection for the Kotla-Akhera wetland.

Murder an offence against society: Judge rejects state plea to withdraw charges against Akhlaq lynching accused

Noida.(Agency)

A fast-track court on Tuesday rejected UP govt's application for withdrawal of charges against 10 Bisada villagers facing trial for the mob lynching of Mohammad Akhlaq in Sept 2015. Additional district judge Saurabh Dwivedi ordered daily hearings instead to speed up the trial. The judge also asked the Noida police commissioner and Greater Noida DCP to ensure evidence is safeguarded. The court will hear the case next on Jan 6, when statements of the remaining key witnesses — including Akhlaq's son Danish and wife Ikrarman — will be recorded. Judge Dwivedi, citing the gravity of the crime, observed that murder is a serious offence committed against society and the state prosecutes such cases so that fear of law and order is maintained in society.

"The application submitted by the prosecution is without any basis. Therefore, for this reason, this court finds the application liable to be rejected," the judge said.

Categorising the case as "highly important", the judge decided to conduct hearings on a daily basis.

"The principle of criminal jurisprudence has been established for larger public good. In addition, section 321 of CrPC (under which the withdrawal plea was filed) has been enacted for this very reason, which provides for the consent of the court in such matters. Keeping this broader perspective in mind, Section 360 of BNSS also provides for giving the victim an opportunity of hearing," the judge ruled.

"The case in question pertains to the year 2015, and in the present case charges were framed on Feb 25, 2021. Accordingly, keeping in view the legal position laid down by the Hon'ble Supreme Court, this court considers it appropriate to place the case file in the category of 'highly important' and further finds it proper that the disposal of the case file be carried out as expeditiously as possible," the judge said, ordering officials to properly index the case file as "very important" and affixing a sticker on it. Bhag Singh Bhati, the additional district govt counsel, argued that withdrawal of the case was needed for restoring harmony, reiterating what the state application said.

The prosecution pointed to contradictions in the statements of Akhlaq's family members regarding the number of accused — 10, 16 and 19 — and referred to one of the forensic reports that said the meat sample collected from his house was that of a cow or its progeny. The application also highlighted the lack of firearms and personal enmity.

Haryana amends private university law after Al-Falah terror case

Gurgaon.(Agency)

After the discovery of a white-coat terror module operating out of Al-Falah University in Faridabad, the state assembly on Monday passed the Haryana Private Universities (Amendment) Bill to tighten the state's regulatory grip on private higher education institutions. The amendment seeks to plug long-standing legal and procedural gaps by clearly defining the grounds, penalties and process for action against private universities, including financial sanctions, administrative takeover and phased dissolution. Once cleared, the provisions will apply to 26 private universities across the state, including Al Falah, The NorthCap University, Amity University and Apeejay Satya University. The amendment adds a clause B to Section 44 of the Act to introduce stringent penalties for maladministration, providing false or misleading information, and failing to meet prescribed academic and regulatory standards. The revised provision

empowers the state to halt admissions in one or more courses, impose fines ranging from Rs 10 lakh to Rs 1 crore, and, in extreme cases, order the phased dissolution of a university if corrective steps are not taken within 30 days of lesser penalties being imposed. The clause describes an "administrator" as a person or a committee of up to five members appointed by govt that would assume complete control of a university's affairs during the transition. It empowers the administrator to assume powers of a governing body and board of management, with control over a university's assets, properties and records from the date of appointment. The administrator, the clause states, will be authorised to meet day-to-day expenses and, with prior state approval, dispose of assets, if needed, to ensure academic continuity and safeguard students' interests. Education minister Mahipal Dhanda said after a comprehensive review of the Haryana Private Universities Act, 2006, and its

subsequent amendments, the state govt found several provisions required streamlining, particularly Sections 34A, 34B, 44, 44A and 46. At present, sections 44 and 44A of the Act do not prescribe any procedure for the dissolution of a



provisions of Section 46 were also streamlined and broadened in the larger interest to "remove ambiguities, close loopholes and strengthen regulatory oversight over private universities". It has been noticed that certain private universities started new courses, enhanced intake capacity and even changed the nomenclature of courses without obtaining prior approval of the state govt by misusing sub-section (3) of Section 34A. Therefore, the provision needed modification," the minister said.

The amendments come after Dr Umar Un Nabi, an assistant professor of Al Falah University, was identified as the suicide bomber in the Nov 10 blast and two faculty members, Dr Muzammil Ahmad Ganai and Dr Shaheen Shahid, were arrested in the case. The founder and chairman of Al Falah Group was also arrested by the Enforcement Directorate in a money laundering case.

RRTS train operator faces FIR for filming 2 in sexual act

Ghaziabad.(Agency)

NCR Transport Corporation (NCRTC) has suspended an RRTS (Namo Bharat) train operator and lodged an FIR against NCR Transport Corporation (NCRTC) has suspended an RRTS (Namo Bharat) train operator and lodged an FIR against him for allegedly filming two young passengers who had engaged in a sexual act inside a moving coach and later circulating the video. The FIR, registered at Muradnagar police station following widespread public criticism, also mentioned the young boy and girl, who are yet to be traced.

The incident, which took place on Nov 24 in a premium coach between Duhai and Muradnagar, was filmed by the train operator using his mobile phone from the live feed of compartments

"On Monday, we got an FIR registered under BNS sections 296 (obscene acts in a public place) and 77 (voyeurism), and Section 67 of the IT Act, which concerns publishing or transmitting obscene material in electronic form. The FIR mentions the train operator, who was found to have recorded the act from the live CCTV feed and circulated it, as well as the unknown couple involved," an NCRTC official said. "The official confirmed that the train operator, Rishabh, was terminated for violating NCRTC protocols, which strictly prohibit staff from recording or sharing surveillance footage."

CCTV footage showed that the coach in which the incident occurred hardly had any other passenger. The Namo Bharat train system is monitored round the clock by CCTV at both station and central control levels, with additional security provided by the UP Special Security Force and dedicated police stations along the corridor. Asked why it took almost a month to initiate action against the operator, the NCRTC official said, "The incident was under investigation, which took some time. We had to ensure the facts before proceeding." The official emphasised that NCRTC does not tolerate breaches of privacy or misuse of surveillance system. A police official involved in the investigation said,

Dust on busy corridors, debris at building sites choke Gurgaon: Minister asked for visible improvement in 7 days

Gurgaon.(Agency)

Across the Millennium City, there is no dearth of loose dust flying around, from dug up roads to exposed construction materials and trucks carrying garbage. In places like MG Road, Udyog Vihar, Sector 29, Sushant Lok 1, Galleria Market Road, IFFCO Chowk, Atlas Chowk and Gurgaon-Faridabad Road, exposed soil, loose construction material and incomplete resurfacing work contribute generously to pollution load in these busy areas, a visit by TOI has revealed. Last Friday, Union environment minister Bhupinder Yadav had asked Delhi-NCR authorities to show "visible improvement" in air quality within a week by tackling road dust and poorly managed construction activity. Those instructions seem to have bitten the dust in Gurgaon. A permanent dust haze enveloping Sector 29, Hero Honda Chowk, Dwarka Expressway, and Golf Course Road Extension, the regions that are home to numerous construction sites and dilapidated roads. Across MG Road, Udyog Vihar, Sector 29, Sushant Lok 1, Galleria Market Road, IFFCO Chowk, Atlas Chowk, and the Gurgaon-Faridabad Road, exposed soil, loose construction material, and

unfinished resurfacing work were evident. Continuous traffic movement lifted fine dust into the air, creating a persistent haze at street level. On MG Road and near IFFCO Chowk, mounds of sand and cement were being handled



openly along pavements and medians, with no barricading or water sprinkling in place. As cars and buses passed by, dust rose steadily, settling on shopfronts, parked vehicles, and traffic police booths nearby.

"This stretch is always busy, but whenever road work starts, the dust becomes unbearable," said Rakesh Kumar, a daily commuter travelling from Sohna Road to Cyber City. "Within minutes, you can feel it in your throat, especially during peak hours." At Atlas Chowk, large portions of

the road surface were scraped and left uneven for weeks. Gravel and exposed base layers spilled into traffic lanes, and vehicles passing through kicked up dust clouds throughout the day. "Two-wheelers have it the worst here," said Ankit Verma, who works in Phase III, Udyog Vihar. "There are no proper diversions or warning signs. By the time you reach the office, your clothes and helmet are covered in dust."

Interior roads feeding Sector 29 and Sushant Lok 1 show wide patches of bare earth and broken asphalt, particularly near junctions. With no fencing or covering, these stretches have effectively turned into open dust bowls.

"It feels like we are living next to a construction site all the time," said Naina Gupta, a resident of Sushant Lok 1. "Even in the afternoon, windows have to stay shut because dust keeps blowing in."

Galleria Market Road, a high-traffic commercial stretch, also showed poor road conditions, with dug-up shoulders and debris lying close to traffic and pedestrian zones. On Elan Mall road, near Dwarka Expressway, fresh soil exposure along service lanes and junctions continues to add dust to an already

Children, other witnesses, turn hostile; court relies on evidence to convict woman of husband's murder

Gurgaon.(Agency)

A city court convicted a woman for the 2022 murder of her husband, ruling that strong circumstantial and forensic evidence outweighed key witnesses turning hostile during the trial. According to the prosecution, Anita Pathak (47) attacked her husband Raghavendra Pathak (50) with a helmet during a quarrel. When the helmet broke, she picked up a cricket bat and continued assaulting him, inflicting injuries that he later succumbed to. During the trial, the couple's children and other family members turned hostile, refusing to testify against Anita. Raghavendra was found dead on July 8, 2022, at home under suspicious circumstances. Initially, it was reported as an accidental fall in the bathroom, but

further investigations revealed injuries are consistent with a physical assault. Recovery key evidence found at the couple's home, including a broken helmet, a cricket bat and blood-stained items, proved crucial as forensic analysis linked them directly to the fatal assault. The court noted Anita's suspicious behaviour following her husband's death, such as her attempts to expedite the funeral and her inability to provide a credible explanation during her statements. Her previous allegations of domestic disputes with Raghavendra, fueled by his unemployment and drinking habits, were also considered part of the motive. Raghavendra, according to his brother and complainant Vijendra Pathak, got married to Anita in 2008 and had two children. He had been

unemployed for two years after losing his job at ITC during Covid. Anita Pathak runs a beauty parlour. Raghavendra lost his job. Due to this, the couple used to have arguments, and he turned to alcohol," said Vijendra. On the night of July 8, 2022, Vijendra received a call from his cousin, Pushpendra Pathak, informing him that Raghavendra was in critical condition and admitted to Metro Hospital in Palam Vihar. Shortly after, he received another call from a relative, Abhay Jeet Mishra, who informed him of Raghavendra's death. Anita was arrested on July 10, 2022. Based on her disclosure statement, police seized the bat, stick, helmet, pillow, and sheet used in the murder. A chargesheet was filed against her on Sept 26, 2022.

In Gurgaon, illegal market and liquor vends built by criminal demolished in police operation

Gurgaon.(Agency) An illegal market, allegedly built by a 29-year-old man with several criminal cases against him, was demolished on Tuesday. This marks third such action against encroachment on govt land in the city within a week. According to police, action was taken against Ricky, a resident of Khandsa, who is currently lodged in Bhondsi district jail in an Arms Act case. Investigators said, the accused illegally encroached upon land belonging to Haryana State Industrial and Infrastructure Development Corporation (HSIIDC) and constructed around 100 temporary shops and 10 permanent structures, earning an estimated Rs 5-6 lakh per month as illegal rent. The demolition drive was carried out by Sector 37 police under the supervision of inspector Manjeet, SHO, with heavy deployment of police personnel and officials from the district town planning (DTP) department and HSIIDC, an officer said.

After verifying records and gathering intelligence on

properties acquired through criminal activities, action is being taken against such illegal properties," a senior police officer said, adding that similar drives would continue in the coming days. Police described Ricky as a habitual offender with a long criminal history, including cases of murder, attempted murder, extortion, rioting and possession of illegal arms. Records show that he was involved in over 30 criminal cases registered across multiple police stations in the city and neighbouring districts over the past decade.

He is currently in judicial custody in connection with a case registered on Dec 10 under the Arms Act at Sector 50 police station. Meanwhile, another such demolition took place in Sector 5 area. Illegal liquor vends allegedly run by habitual offenders on govt land were taken down. Police said the action was taken against encroachments linked to eight notorious criminals who had illegally set up tin sheds near Chhoti Mata Mandir Road and were allegedly earning money by selling and serving liquor.

According to police, the eight accused, identified as Mohit, Naveen, Izhar, Rahul, Deepak, Prashant, Rahul and Manjeet

Singh Saini, have a long criminal history, with a total of more than 50 cases registered against them under.



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Illegal firearms factory busted, two notorious suspects arrested.

The Sikh Times
Manoj Pal

Muzaffarnagar. In a major crackdown against the manufacture and trafficking of illegal weapons, Budhana police achieved a significant success by busting an illegal arms manufacturing unit operating inside a sugarcane field. Two notorious accused were arrested from the spot, and a large quantity of finished and semi-finished country-made pistols along with weapon-manufacturing equipment was recovered. Addressing a press conference, Senior Superintendent of Police Sanjay Kumar Verma said that a sustained and intensive campaign is being carried out across the district against illegal firearms. Acting on a tip-off, Budhana police received information that illegal pistols were being manufactured in a sugarcane field on the road leading from Budhana-Kandhla towards Mandwada. Taking immediate action, the police team reached the spot, laid a cordon and caught two accused red-handed. From their possession, the police recovered 11

country-made pistols of .315 bore, one .315 bore pauniya, one 12-bore double-barrel pauniya, six semi-finished .315 bore pistols, one semi-finished pauniya and seven iron barrels of different sizes.



In addition, a drilling machine, welding

machine, iron saw, welding rods, iron rods and other tools used in weapon manufacturing were also seized. The arrested accused have been identified as Aslam and Mehtab. During interrogation, both

illegal weapons by frequently changing locations and sold the finished pistols to criminal elements at the local level. A case has been registered against them under the Arms Act, and further legal proceedings are underway. SSP Sanjay Kumar Verma stated that accused Mehtab has a long and serious criminal history, with cases related to robbery, attempt to murder, the Gangster Act and the Arms Act registered against him, while Aslam has also previously been jailed in cases of attempt to murder and illegal arms. He added that this action has delivered a major blow to the illegal arms supply chain and is an important step towards effective crime control. So far, the district police have recovered 512 illegal firearms, 1,022 cartridges and three illegal arms factories. During the press briefing, Superintendent of Police (Rural) Aditya Bansal and Circle Officer Gajendra Pal Budhana were also present. In recognition of this commendable operation, the Budhana police team has been rewarded with a cash prize of ₹20,000.

Every effort of Punjab Govt is aimed at channelizing unbounded energy of youth in positive direction, weaning them away from menace of drugs: CM Mann

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Trekking, adventure, team Activity Camps will also be organized in the state's nine Forest Areas for 10,000 youth," he said. The Chief Minister said that from coming January, camps will be held at Pallanpur, Siswan, Mirzapur (Mohali), Tibba Tapria (Ropar), Nara (Hoshiarpur), and Harike Patti Wetland (Tarn Taran). "A new Yuva Bhawan will come up in Sector 42 A, at a cost of ₹43 crore. This will have hostel facilities for 200 youth, auditorium with capacity of 400, a conference hall, seminar room and others," he added. CM Bhagwant Singh Mann stated that the Punjab government has introduced Sports Policy 2023 and enhanced the budget from ₹350 crore in 2023-2024 to ₹1,000 Crore in 2024-25. "Hockey Turfs are being replaced at Mohali, Bathinda and Ludhiana by spending ₹10.50 crore and have been duly approved by Indian Hockey Federation," he said. The Chief Minister also asked the officers to complete work on a new under construction Synthetic Track at a cost of ₹9 crore in Mohali Sports Stadium Sector 78 by March, 2026. The Chief Minister said that it is a matter of immense pride and satisfaction that Punjab is the first state in the country to have a Sports Medicine Cadre. "92 personnel have been selected in cadre, to attend the players with injuries and to improve their performance. Every effort of the Punjab government is aimed at channelizing the unbounded energy of the youth in a positive direction thereby weaning them away from the menace of drugs," he added.

Stage set for DUSU polls, 73 candidates file nominations for 4 key posts

New Delhi: The nomination process for the Delhi University Students' Union (DUSU) elections concluded on Wednesday with a large number of candidates filing their papers for the four key posts. The last date for the withdrawal of nominations is September 11 (Thursday). Candidates can withdraw their nominations by 12 noon tomorrow and the final list of candidates will be published by 5 pm. Polling for

the high-stakes student body elections will take place on September 18 and the counting of votes will be held on September 19. This year, 21 candidates have filed nominations for the post of president, 15 for vice-president, 20 for secretary and 17 for joint secretary. Among the main student outfits, the Akhil Bharatiya Vidyarthi Parishad (ABVP) has fielded six candidates, National Students' Union of India (NSUI) seven and

Six in CBI net for cheating US nationals of over \$8.5 million

New Delhi: The CBI unearthed a sophisticated cybercrime network that allegedly duped over 8.5 million USD from US nationals using crypto wallets and foreign bank accounts, with the arrest of six key accused, officials said on Friday. The agency arrested Shubham Singh, Daltanian, George T Zamani, L Seiminlen Haokip, Mangkhulam and Robert Thangkhanhual in connection with the fraud. Based on the inputs from the American Federal Bureau of Investigation (FBI), the CBI teams began a crackdown in Noida, where the six suspects were intercepted red-handed while swindling US citizens. The teams also conducted searches in Delhi and Kolkata, resulting in the total seizure of Rs 1.88 crore in cash, 34 electronic devices, including mobile phones, laptops, pen drives and hard disks, and incriminating documents related to the crime, officials said. From 2022 to 2025, the accused operated under pseudonymous identities of US Government officials from the Drug Enforcement Agency (DEA), Federal Bureau of Investigation (FBI) and Social Security Administration (SSA), a CBI spokesperson said in a statement.

NAME CHANGE

I, SHOKAT ALI S/O MEHMOOD ALI R/O H-1834, LAL DARWAZA, SIRKAWALAN, LAL KUAN, DELHI-110006, have changed my name to SHAUKAT ALI for all future purposes.

NAME CHANGE

I, PARMJEET S/O ZILE SINGH R/O RZG-1/64 MANDIR MARG MAHARAJ ENCLAVE PALAM VILLAGE SOUTH WEST DELHI 110045 HAVE CHANGED MY NAME TO PARMJEET SINGH

NAME CHANGE

I, BHUPENDER SINGH ASWAL S/O GOVIND SINGH ASWAL R/O FLAT NO-47 POCKET A SECTOR G MG FLAT MAYER VIHAR PHASE -3 EAST DELHI 110096 HAVE CHANGED MY NAME TO BHUPENDRA ASWAL

NAME CHANGE

I, SAYEDA W/O KHALIL AHMED QURESHI R/O 218/17, MASJID QUARTER, SADAR BAZAR, DELHI-110010, have changed my name from SAYEDA to SAHIDA for all future purposes.

PUBLIC NOTICE

It is for general information that I, Sachender Kumar S/o Mahipal Singh R/o 343, Samay Pur, Libas Pur, Samai Pur, North West Delhi, Delhi-110042 declare that name of my wife has been wrongly written as Simpy in my minor daughter Jyoti Mathur aged 15 years in her School Record and Birth Certificate No. 87187. The actual name of my wife is Simp.

PUBLIC NOTICE

It is for general information that I, NEETU W/O RAGHVENDRA GUPTA R/O 98, BAL MUKUND KHAND, GIRI NAGAR, KALKAJI, PO: ALI, DIST: SOUTH DELHI, DELHI-110019, declare that name of my wife has been wrongly written as NEETU GUPTA in my minor daughter namely SANVI GUPTA aged 13 years in her School Record and Birth Certificate No. 87187. The actual name of mine is NEETU which may be amended accordingly.

OVERHAULING OF 1400 HP TRACTION MOTOR AT SILIGURI JN.

E-Tender Notice No. GEM/2025/B/703055 Dated: 22-12-2025. E-Tenders are invited by the undersigned for the following works:

Name of work: Overhauling of 1400 HP traction motor & traction alternator (make -CGL & BHEL) at DEMU Shed, Siliguri Jn. including to and FRO transportation. **Tender Value:** ₹ 2,22,95,479.33/- **Earliest Money:** ₹ 2,50,000/- **Date & Time of closing of tender:** At 18.00 hrs. & opening at 18.30 hrs. on 12-01-2026. The complete information of above e-tender will be available in website www.Gem.gov.in

NAME CHANGE

I, hitherto known as SANJAY KHURANA alias SANJAY KUMAR KHURANA S/O RAMJI DASS KHURANA R/O Kh 123/13 Gali No-15 Sant Nagar Burari, North Delhi-110084 have changed my name and shall hereafter be known as SANJAY KHURANA.

NAME CHANGE

I, USHA DEVI Mother of No. 16018569M Rank-L/HAV Name-GAUTAM KUMAR residing at VILL-KHANPUR MADHO URF TIMARPUR, PO-KHANPUR MADHO URF TIMARPUR, TEHSIL&DIST-BUNJAR, UTTAR PRADESH-246721, have changed my name from USHA DEVI to MUNNI for all future purposes Vide Affidavit dated 24/12/2025 before Notary Public Delhi.

NAME CHANGE

I, hitherto known as SANJAY KHURANA alias SANJAY KUMAR KHURANA S/O RAMJI DASS KHURANA R/O Kh 123/13 Gali No-15 Sant Nagar Burari, North Delhi-110084 have changed my name and shall hereafter be known as SANJAY KHURANA.

NORTHEAST FRONTIER RAILWAY

Serving Customers With a Smile

Dismissal from service, imprisonment too harsh a punishment for overstaying leave, rules AFT

New Delhi: The Armed Forces Tribunal (AFT) has ruled that dismissal from service and imprisonment is too harsh and excessive a punishment for overstaying leave, even though the soldier had reported for duty after almost three years. Setting aside the sentence of dismissal awarded by a court martial, the Tribunal has held that the punishment imposed upon the soldier was not commensurate with the gravity of the charges levelled against him and the same deserves to be reviewed. While confirming the one-month imprisonment that the soldier had to undergo, the Tribunal's Bench comprising Justice Suresh Kumar Gupta and Maj Gen Sanjay Singh set aside the dismissal does not mean that the soldier will, as a logical consequence, be entitled to reinstatement in service. Observing that reinstatement is a matter of discretion, the Bench, in their order of September 3, said that if the dismissal is being set aside without reinstatement, the soldier would be treated as discharged from service and entitled to certain benefits as admissible in accordance with the length of his service. The soldier had proceeded on 10 days' casual leave in September 2017 but did not join duty after expiry of the leave period. He reported for duty in June 2020 and requested for continuation of his service. He had averred that due to a paralytic attack suffered by his father and his mother suffering from various diseases,

NAME CHANGE

I, No-6945837N Rank-NK Name-OM PRAKASH SINGH Father of SAPNA SINGH Presently residing at VILL-BHATWALIA, PO-BARAHNI BAZAR, TEH-DIST-SIWAN, BIHAR-841227, have changed my minor daughter's name from SAPNA SINGH to SAPNA O SINGH for all future purposes vide Affidavit dated 24/12/2025 before Notary Public, Delhi.

NAME CHANGE

I, MUMTAZ ALI S/O AHMAD ALI R/O 41, SHEKHUPURI, ROORKEE, HARIDWAR, UTTARAKHAND-247667, have changed my name to Sunita Jain.

NAME CHANGE

I hitherto known as Usha Jaiswal W/o Basant Lal Jain R/o 18/1st Floor, B Block, Panchwati Colony Azadpur, N.S. Mandi, North West Delhi, Delhi-110033 have changed my name and shall hereafter be known as Preeti Jain.

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NEWS BOX

Trump's newly appointed envoy to Greenland says US not looking to 'conquer' the Danish territory

WEST PALM BEACH . (Agency)

President Donald Trump's newly appointed envoy to Greenland said Tuesday that the Republican administration is looking to begin a conversation with residents of the semi-autonomous Danish territory about the best way forward for the strategically important island.

In his first extended comments since being appointed to the role this week, Louisiana Gov. Jeff Landry said the Trump administration isn't going to "go in there trying to conquer anybody" or try to "to take over anybody's country." The governor's comments seemed somewhat at odds with Trump, who has repeatedly said the U.S. needs to take over the Arctic territory for the sake of U.S. security and has not ruled out military force to take control of the mineral-rich, strategically located Arctic island. "Well, I think our discussions should be with the actual people in Greenland — the Greenlanders," Landry said in an appearance on Fox News' "The Will Cain Show."

"What are they looking for? What opportunities have they not gotten? Why haven't they gotten the protection that they actually deserve?" Trump's

announcement of Landry's appointment has once again stirred anxiety in Denmark and Europe.

Denmark's foreign minister told Danish broadcasters that he would summon the U.S. ambassador to his ministry. "We have said it before. Now, we say it again. National borders and the sovereignty of states are rooted in international law," Danish Prime Minister Mette Frederiksen and her Greenlandic counterpart, Jens-Frederik Nielsen, said in a joint statement Monday. "They are fundamental principles. You cannot annex another country. Not even with an argument about international security." Trump called repeatedly for U.S. jurisdiction over Greenland during his presidential transition and in the early months of his second term. In March, Vice President JD Vance visited a remote U.S. military base in Greenland and accused Denmark of under-investing there.

US border patrol agents arrest 30 Indian nationals living illegally in America

NEW YORK . (Agency)

US border patrol agents have arrested 30 Indian nationals, living illegally in America, operating semitrucks with commercial driver's licenses.

Border Patrol agents in the El Centro Sector in California arrested 49 illegal immigrants with commercial driver's licenses during vehicle stops at immigration checkpoints and in interagency operations, US Customs and Border Protection (CBP) said in a statement last week. Between November 23 and December 12, agents apprehended 42 illegal individuals operating semitrucks with commercial driver's licenses while travelling on interstate or traversing immigration checkpoints. Of those arrested, 30 were from India, two were from El Salvador, and the remainder were from China, Eritrea, Haiti, Honduras, Mexico, Russia, Somalia, Turkey, and Ukraine.

California issued 31 of the commercial driver's licenses; eight licenses were issued by Florida, Illinois, Indiana, Ohio, Maryland, Minnesota, New Jersey, New York, Pennsylvania, and Washington, the agency said. In addition, on December 10 and 11, Indio Station agents participated in Operation Highway Sentinel, a two-day, joint, large-scale enforcement operation led by U.S.

Immigration and Customs Enforcement's Homeland Security Investigations in Ontario and Fontana, California. Operation Highway Sentinel resulted in 45 arrests of illegal individuals with commercial driver's licenses. On the first day, Indio personnel apprehended two individuals: one Indian national and one Tajik national.

Explosion at a Pennsylvania nursing home kills at least 2

BRISTOL . (Agency)

A thunderous explosion Tuesday at a nursing home just outside Philadelphia killed at least two people, collapsed part of the building, sent fire shooting out and left people trapped inside, authorities said.

Pennsylvania Gov. Josh Shapiro said in a news conference several hours after the explosion that at least two had been killed after emergency responders braved the flames, a heavy odor of gas and a second explosion to evacuate residents and employees.

Fire officials said they were in "rescue mode" five hours later, with responders still digging by hand and using search dogs, earth-moving equipment and sonar to locate potential victims. The explosion happened at Bristol Health & Rehab Center in Bristol Township, just as a utility crew had been on site looking for a gas leak. A plume of black smoke rose from the nursing home, as emergency responders, fire trucks and ambulances from across the region rushed there, joined by earthmoving equipment.

Authorities did not identify those who died and did not know the total number of those injured after residents and employees were evacuated to a number of different hospitals. Shapiro asked his fellow Pennsylvanians to take a moment to pray "for this community, for those who are still missing, for those who are injured, and for those families who are about to celebrate Christmas with an empty chair at their table." The town's fire chief, Kevin Dippolito, said at the Tuesday evening news conference that there were five people still unaccounted for, but he cautioned that some may have left the scene with family members. Dippolito described a chaotic rescue where firefighters found people stuck in stairwells and elevator shafts, and pulled residents out of the fiery building through windows and doors.

Bangladesh government pledges responsibility for family of lynched Hindu worker Dipu Das

Yunus's office reconfirmed that financial and welfare assistance would be provided to Das' family, and relevant authorities would remain in close contact with them.

DHAKA. (Agency)

Bangladesh interim government's senior adviser has said that the state will take responsibility of the family of the Hindu worker who was lynched on blasphemy charges last week. Education adviser CR Abrar on Tuesday met the bereaved family of 25-year-old Dipu Das, who was killed by a mob and his body set on fire on December 18 in Mymensingh.

The state has taken the responsibilities of taking care of Dipu Das' child, wife and parents," Abrar said, calling the killing of the garment factory worker a "brutal crime which has no excuse." Abrar said ahead of



meeting the family, he held talks with Chief Adviser Muhammad Yunus, who asked him to convey to them the government's "profound sorrow and deepest condolences." According to local media reports, Das' father, Rabi Chandra Das, demanded justice for his son's killing,

describing the condition of the family to the adviser. Yunus's office, meanwhile, reconfirmed that financial and welfare assistance would be provided to Das' family, and relevant authorities would remain in close contact with them in the coming period. Twelve people have been

held so far for their alleged involvement in the murder. Yunus' press wing in a statement on Tuesday said "allegations, rumours or differences of belief can never excuse violence, and no individual has the right to take the law into their own hands."

"The government reaffirmed its unwavering commitment to the rule of law, noting that the authority to investigate alleged offences and ensure justice through due process rests solely with the state," it said.

Das' killing sparked widespread protests by factory workers, students and rights groups in Dhaka and elsewhere in Bangladesh, while India expressed its concerns as well. The mob attack coincided with the death of a radical right-wing cultural group Inqilab Mancha leader Sharif Osman Hadi at a Singapore hospital six days after he was shot by masked gunmen in Dhaka. Hadi was a prominent face in the anti-government protests last year that toppled Sheikh Hasina's government. Following his death, Bangladesh witnessed a fresh wave of unrest.

Voluminous new Epstein files release includes multiple Trump mentions, but little revelatory news

WASHINGTON . (Agency)

The US Justice Department has released tens of thousands more documents related to Jeffrey Epstein, a tranche that included multiple mentions of President Donald Trump but added little new revelatory information to the long-anticipated public file on the late financier and convicted sex offender. The release is the most voluminous so far and comes after a massive public campaign for transparency into the US government's Epstein investigations. Many of the mentions of Trump in the file came from news clippings, though it includes an email from a prosecutor pointing out the flights that Trump took on Epstein's private jet during the 1990s. The two men were friends for years before a falling out. Trump has not been accused of wrongdoing in connection with Epstein. The Justice Department issued a statement

Tuesday that some documents contain "untrue and sensationalist claims" about Trump made shortly before the 2020 election — and said one document, purported to be a letter from Epstein to Larry Nassar, a sports doctor convicted of sexually abusing Olympic athletes, had been deemed fake. Prosecutor flagged Trump's travel on Epstein's jet. Among the mentions of Trump in the latest batch of the Epstein files is a note from a federal prosecutor from January 2020 that said Trump had flown on the financier's private plane more often than had been previously known. An assistant US attorney from the Southern District of New York said in an email that flight records the office received on Jan. 6, 2020, showed that Trump was on Epstein's jet "many more times than previously has been reported (or that we were aware)." The prosecutor who flagged the Trump

mentions in the flight logs said they did so because lawyers "didn't want any of this to be a surprise down the road." His travels on Epstein's plane spanned the time that would likely be covered in any criminal charges against Epstein's co-conspirator, Ghislaine Maxwell. Trump was listed as a passenger on at least eight flights between 1993 and 1996, and on at least four of those flights, Maxwell was also there, according to the email.

On one of those eight flights, in 1993, Trump and Epstein were the only two passengers listed in the flight logs. On another flight, the three passengers listed in records are Epstein, Trump, and a redacted individual, who was 20 years old at the time. Two other flights included two women — whose names were redacted in follow-up emails — identified as potential witnesses in a Maxwell case.

Libya's military chief and seven others killed in plane crash after takeoff from Turkey

Turkish officials said the wreckage of the Falcon 50-type business jet had been found near the village of Kesikkavak, in Haymana, a district some 70 km south of Ankara.

ANKARA .(Agency)

A private jet carrying Libya's military chief, four other officers and three crew members crashed on Tuesday after takeoff from Turkey's capital, Ankara, killing everyone on board.

Libyan officials said the cause of the crash was a technical malfunction on the plane. The Libyan delegation was in Ankara for high-level defense talks aimed at boosting military cooperation between the two countries, Turkish officials said. Libyan Prime Minister Abdul-Hamid Dbeibah confirmed the death of Gen. Muhammad Ali Ahmad



al-Haddad and the four officers, saying in a statement on Facebook that the "tragic accident" took place as the delegation was returning home. The prime minister called it a "great loss" for Libya. Al-Haddad was the top military commander in western Libya and played a crucial role in the ongoing, UN-brokered efforts to unify Libya's military, which has split, much like Libya's institutions. The four other officers who died in the crash were Gen. Al-Fitouri Ghraibil, the head of Libya's ground forces, Brig. Gen. Mahmoud Al-Qatawi, who led the military manufacturing authority, Mohammed Al-Asawi Diab, advisor to the chief of staff, and Mohammed

Omar Ahmed Mahjoub, a military photographer with the chief of staff's office. The identities of the three crew members were not immediately known. Turkish officials said the wreckage of the Falcon 50 type business jet had been found near the village of Kesikkavak, in Haymana, a district some 70 kilometers (about 43.5 miles) south of Ankara. Earlier on Tuesday evening, Turkey's air traffic controllers said they lost contact with the plane, which was en route back to Libya after takeoff from Ankara's Esenboga airport. Turkish Interior Minister Ali Yerlikaya, said in a social media post that the plane took off at 8:30 p.m. and that contact was lost 40 minutes later. The plane issued an emergency landing signal near Haymana before all communication ceased, Yerlikaya said.

Burhanettin Duran, the head of Turkish presidential communications office, said the plane notified air traffic control of an electrical fault and requested an emergency landing. The aircraft was redirected back to Esenboga where preparations for its landing began.

Venezuela seeks to criminalize oil tanker seizures as Trump puts pressure on Maduro

CARACAS. (Agency)

Venezuela's parliament on Tuesday approved a measure that criminalizes a broad range of activities that can hinder navigation and commerce in the South American country, such as the seizure of oil tankers. The bill — introduced, debated and approved within two days in the National Assembly — follows this month's seizures by US forces of two tankers carrying Venezuelan oil in international waters. The seizures are the latest strategy in US President Donald Trump's four-month pressure campaign on Venezuela's leader Nicolás Maduro. The tankers are part of what the Trump administration has said is a fleet Venezuela uses to evade US economic sanctions. The unicameral assembly, which is controlled by Venezuela's ruling party, did not publish drafts on Tuesday nor the final version of the measure. But as read on the floor, the bill calls for fines and prison sentences of up to 20 years for anyone who promotes, requests, supports, finances or participates in "acts of piracy, blockades or other international illegal acts" against commercial entities operating with the South American country.

Venezuela's political opposition, including Nobel Peace laureate María Corina Machado, has expressed support for Trump's Venezuela policy, including the seizure of tankers. Machado and Trump have both repeatedly said that Maduro's days in power are numbered.

The bill, which now awaits Maduro's signature, also instructs the executive branch to come up with "incentives and mechanisms for economic, commercial and other protections" for national or foreign entities doing business with Venezuela in the event of piracy activities, a maritime blockade or other unlawful acts. The US Coast Guard on Saturday seized a Panama-flagged vessel called Centuries that officials said was part of the fleet moving sanctioned cargo. With assistance from the US Navy, it seized a rogue tanker called Skipper on Dec. 10. That ship was registered in Panama.

Trump, after that first seizure, said the US would carry out a "blockade" of Venezuela. He later demanded that Venezuela return assets that it seized from US oil companies years ago, justifying a new his

announcement of the blockade against sanctioned oil tankers traveling to or from the South American country.

At an emergency meeting of the UN Security



Maduro of the resources he uses to fund Cartel de los Soles." Maduro was indicted in 2020 on narcotics charges in the US and accused of leading the Cartel de los Soles, which the Trump administration designated as a foreign terrorist organization last month. But the entity is not a cartel per se. Venezuelans began using the term Cartel de los Soles in the 1990s to refer to high-ranking military officers who had grown rich from drug-running. As corruption expanded nationwide, its use loosely expanded to police and government officials as well as activities like illegal mining and fuel trafficking. At Tuesday's meeting, Venezuela's UN Ambassador Samuel Moncada accused the US of acting "outside international law" and its own domestic laws, by demanding that Venezuelans vacate the country and hand it over to the Trump administration, including all its oil fields. "What right does the United States government have to appropriate, to date, almost 4 million barrels of Venezuelan oil?" Moncada asked, referring to the cargo of the two seized tankers.

NEWS BOX

Nagpur Police seize MD drugs worth over Rs 53 lakh**Nagpur. (Agency)**

Nagpur police have confiscated MD (ecstasy) drugs valued at more than Rs 53 lakh and arrested two individuals from Rajasthan in connection with the seizure, officials said on Wednesday.

Acting on specific intelligence, the MIDC police carried out the operation on Tuesday after receiving information that two persons were attempting to sell MD near Sangam Road in the Wanadongri area of the city.

The suspects were apprehended at the spot and identified as Ramswaroop Bhairaram Bishnoi (24) and Hariram Jagdish Paliwal (31), both residents of Kalyanpur tehsil in Balotra district of Rajasthan, police said.

During the search, police recovered 533 grams of MD from their possession, officials said, adding that the seized contraband is estimated to be worth over Rs 53 lakh in the illegal market.

A case has been registered against the accused under relevant sections of the Narcotic Drugs and Psychotropic Substances (NDPS) Act and further investigation is underway.

Mumbai HC rejects Adv Chandwani's anticipatory bail in suicide case Iron Lady of Ulhasnagar suicide case**Mumbai. (Agency)**

The Bombay High Court on Tuesday rejected the anticipatory bail plea of advocate Raj Chandwani in the suicide case of activist-lawyer Sarita Khanchandani, popularly known as the Iron Lady of Ulhasnagar in Maharashtra.

The HC also granted Advocate Chandwani two weeks' protection from arrest to enable him to file an appeal in the Supreme Court. While rejecting the plea, Justice N R Boarkar held that *prima facie* evidence of mental harassment and abetment are available.

The court noted that the FIR and suicide note disclosed sufficient grounds to infer abetment, and custodial protection couldn't be granted at this stage. Sarita Khanchandani was found dead on August 29 after she jumped from a building in Ulhasnagar.

Her suicide note named five individuals, including Raj Chandwani, as responsible for her death, alleging mental torture and false framing. The court granted interim protection from arrest for two weeks to allow Chandwani to approach the Supreme Court. The investigation is on, with the police examining the sequence of events and allegations of mental torture.

Renowned ecologist Dr. Gurudas Nulkar highlights women's role in water and resource management for a sustainable future**Pune. (Agency)**

The Empower HER Foundation held its annual lecture, aimed at educating young girls and women about the vital importance of water and the need for sustainable practices in daily life. Speaking at the event, renowned ecologist Dr. Gurudas Nulkar emphasised the critical role women have traditionally played in managing water and household resources. With the right information and exposure, women can continue to play a crucial role in water conservation, especially at a time when it is needed the most, he said.

He also highlighted the impact of individual actions on water usage. Out of the 150 litres of water required per person, 140 litres end up in rivers as wastewater. Even small changes in our daily routines can significantly reduce this waste and women can be the primary influencers of such initiatives, he added.

The event was also attended by the Foundation's Treasurer, Rushikesh Atre, Director of Mission Rupali Shinde-Agashe, and Deputy Director of Mission, Tanmayee Khire, among others.

The lecture focused not only on water management but also on empowering girls to recognise their potential as responsible citizens contributing to a sustainable future. The foundation's President Sandeep Nulkar echoed this vision, noting that the foundation does not merely strive to help underprivileged women achieve financial independence. "Our goal is to create long-term change, enable girls and families to break the cycle of poverty and become responsible citizens who are capable of building a sustainable future," he said.

Through initiatives like this session, the Empower HER Foundation continues to equip girls with the knowledge and tools to make conscious choices, fostering a generation aware of sustainability and capable of driving positive change.

Bengaluru City University launches PG centre in Baglur without permanent staff, own building

Anticipating higher enrolment, the Bengaluru City University VC has sought 20 acres from the state education and revenue ministers to establish an independent Bagalur campus.

BENGALURU. (Agency)

Dr Manmohan Singh Bengaluru City University on Tuesday inaugurated a postgraduate centre at Bagalur in Byatarayanpura constituency, aimed at catering to students from Doddaballapura and Chikkaballapura.

Dr M C Sudhakar, who inaugurated the centre, said, "Necessary attention should be paid to quality along with the expansion of higher education facilities. The government will take necessary steps for early filling of permanent posts, including the teaching and non-teaching staff in public universities across the state, along with providing the necessary infrastructure."

Speaking to the , Prof Ramesh B, Vice-Chancellor of Bangalore City University, said, "More than 40% of the colleges affiliated to our university are in Yelahanka and Byatarayanpura Constituencies. Therefore, we thought it was apt to offer PG courses for students so that they can pursue them soon after UG. Currently, we are offering MCA and M.Com courses for which the admissions have already begun. Around 23 students have



enrolled for MCA and 10 for M.Com."

When asked if the teaching staff are permanent in this campus, he said, "No, there is no permanent staff. We have appointed five guest lecturers teaching in the Bagalur campus."

VC requests Ministers for 20-acre land

Currently, the PG centre is functioning in a

Government Pre-University college campus in Bagalur. Ramesh added, "Since the number of admissions would increase in the coming days, we have requested the education minister and revenue minister of the state to allocate 20 acres of land so that we can have an independent campus in the Bagalur region."

KIOCL proposal to submerge 340 acres of forest land remains on Karnataka govt portal

In 2022, KIOCL applied for ex-post facto forest clearance for submerging 340 hectares of forest land in Laky dam waters in KNP.

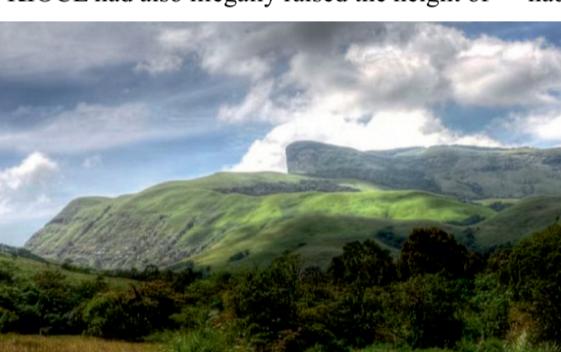
BENGALURU. (Agency)

While state forest department officials had orally turned down the proposal made by Kudremukh Iron Ore Company Limited (KIOCL) to submerge forest land of Kudremukh National Park (KNP) in the Laky dam waters, citing Supreme Court orders, the proposal continues to be listed on government portals, and is pending approval.

Taking note of this, conservationists on Tuesday submitted a memorandum to State and Central governments to reject KIOCL's proposal and remove it from the Parivesh portal of the Ministry of Environment, Forests and Climate Change, where applications seeking forest and wildlife clearance are uploaded.

In 2022, KIOCL applied for ex-post facto forest clearance for submerging 340 hectares of forest land in Laky dam waters in KNP. "The

company had sought to divert dam water to undertake civil work to ease transportation. KIOCL had also illegally raised the height of



Laky dam by 100 metres, which destroyed wildlife habitats. It is shocking that the proposal continues to be listed by successive governments," a forest official said.

Praveen Bhargav, trustee, Wildlife First, who is

also a signatory to the memorandum and a petitioner in courts, said the Supreme Court had issued orders to close all mining activities in 2002. Yet, in 2022, KIOCL has sought forest clearance.

"KIOCL has deviously uploaded the proposal for forest clearance under Section 2 of the Forest (Conservation) Act, 1980. Detailed examination of forms filled showed that the Mangaluru Conservator of Forests had observed that ex-post facto clearances, as per FCA guidelines, are not to be considered, and also cited the negative impacts. And yet, for reasons which can only be surmised, he recommended the proposal for approval under the FCA when it was clear the proposal falls within the ambit of Wildlife Clearance and the Wildlife (Protection) Act, 1972," Bhargav said.

Hate speech law: BJP netas to meet governor Thawarchand Gehlot

The Bill was passed in the Assembly and Council during the winter session of the state legislature earlier this month.

BENGALURU. (Agency)

BJP leaders staged protests over the new law proposed against hate speech and hate crime in Bengaluru and district headquarters on Tuesday.

BJP MLA and Bengaluru South BJP Unit president

Governor Thawarchand Gehlot and submit a memorandum requesting him not to give approval to the new law.

The Bill was passed in the Assembly and Council during the winter session of the state legislature

earlier this month. The BJP has accused the Congress government of bringing in the law to target political opponents and curtail freedom of speech and expression. The BJP would take up the legal battle against the Bill and also write to the Union Government as well as the President of India, the BJP leader told reporters after submitting a memorandum to the Deputy Commissioner in Bengaluru. BJP Bengaluru North Unit President S Harish said the Congress government is imposing an Emergency-like situation by bringing in the law that empowers police officers to send anyone to jail. The party MPs and Union Ministers are also planning to meet the President of India, he said.

The directive came during a meeting chaired by the Chief Minister with senior officers of the Health Department, officials of Indira Gandhi Medical College (IGMC), Shimla, and the Directorate of Medical Education.

The meeting reviewed various issues related to medical education in Himachal Pradesh, with a particular focus on the recent doctor-patient brawl reported at IGMC on December 22 that went viral tarnishing the premier health institution's image.

The Chief Minister sought a detailed account of all facts and circumstances surrounding the

Himachal CM directs for induction training for senior resident doctors**Shimla. (Agency)**

Amidst growing concerns over professional conduct in medical institutions, Himachal Pradesh Chief Minister Thakur Sukhvinder Singh Sukhu today directed the Directorate of Medical Education to introduce induction training for doctors joining medical colleges as senior residents, as part of a broader effort to strengthen discipline, communication and patient care standards across the state.

The directive came during a meeting chaired by the Chief Minister with senior officers of the Health Department, officials of Indira Gandhi Medical College (IGMC), Shimla, and the Directorate of Medical Education.

The meeting reviewed various issues related to medical education in Himachal Pradesh, with a particular focus on the recent doctor-patient brawl reported at IGMC on December 22 that went viral tarnishing the premier health institution's image.

He made it clear that indiscipline would not be tolerated in any government medical institution.

As a corrective and preventive measure, Sukhu reviewed the senior residency process in detail and issued necessary guidelines to ensure that doctors are adequately oriented before assuming their responsibilities.

Rs 8 crore investment scam: Patiala police lodge FIR based on former Punjab IG Amar Chahal's note; 25 bank accounts frozen

Former Punjab Police IG Amar Singh Chahal had mentioned in his note that Rs 1 crore of the amount invested was his own money, while the remaining Rs 7 crore was borrowed from friends and relatives.

Chandigarh. (Agency)

The cyber cell of the Patiala police registered a First Information Report (FIR) late on Tuesday against unknown individuals in connection with an online fraud of Rs 8.1 crore involving retired Punjab Police inspector general (IG) Amar Singh Chahal, 67, who attempted suicide on Monday and is currently under treatment at a hospital.

Chahal has undergone two surgeries and is currently said to be stable and recovering at Park Hospital in Patiala. Palwinder Singh Cheema, Superintendent of Police (SP), Patiala, said, "An FIR has been lodged by the cyber cell invoking sections related to cheating, forgery, IT Act and other relevant provisions of the Bharatiya Nyaya Sanhita (BNS), as per the contents of the note written by the retired officer. The case is being investigated from multiple angles." The FIR was filed based on a complaint filed by Chahal's wife.

Before attempting suicide at his Patiala residence, the retired officer had written a two-page letter addressed to Prime Minister Narendra Modi, Union Home Minister Amit Shah and Finance Minister Nirmala Sitharaman, seeking justice and action against the cyber fraudsters. He had also penned a detailed 12-page note to Punjab Director General of Police (DGP) Gaurav Yadav, alleging large-scale cheating by cyber criminals posing as wealth management advisors through a WhatsApp group titled 'F777 DBS Wealth Equity Research Group'. The cyber cell of the Patiala police registered First Information Report (FIR) late on Tuesday against unknown individuals for allegedly cheating retired Punjab Police inspector general (IG) Amar Singh Chahal, 67, of Rs 8.1 crore through an online investment

scam. Chahal, who attempted suicide on Monday, has undergone two surgeries and is currently said to be stable at Park Hospital in



Patiala.

Palwinder Singh Cheema, Superintendent of Police (SP), Patiala, said, "An FIR has been

lodged by the cyber cell invoking sections related to cheating, forgery, IT Act and other relevant provisions of the Bharatiya Nyaya Sanhita (BNS), as per the contents of the note written by the retired officer. The case is being investigated from multiple angles." The FIR was filed based on a complaint filed by Chahal's wife.

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Bhubaneswar. (Agency) After cancelling the main written exam for the posts of its assistant section officer (ASO) and conducting it afresh, the Orissa High Court has blacklisted a private agency debarring it from participating in examining the High Court or Courts in its jurisdiction.

Silicon Texlab Private Limited was authorised to conduct the main written examination as well as the computer application test for recruitment to the post of Assistant Section Officer, 2024. The company has now been blacklisted from participating in such activities of this Court and all courts within its jurisdiction for a period of five years.

During this period, the agency is debarred from participating in or bidding for any work undertaken by this Court and all courts within its jurisdiction, either directly in its own name or indirectly under any other name or title, according to a notice issued by the High Court Registrar (Judicial) on Tuesday.

The agency conducted the main written examination on July 13, 2025. However, after the evaluated answer sheets were submitted to the Court, it was observed that the examination had not been conducted fairly. The agency failed to maintain confidentiality, thereby compromising the sanctity of the entire recruitment process.

It may also be noted that Silicon Texlab Private Limited has come under scrutiny for allegedly engaging in malpractice in the recruitment process for police sub-inspector posts. The alleged irregularities in the police SI recruitment are currently under investigation by the Central Bureau of Investigation (CBI).

The government-run Odisha Police Recruitment Board (OPRB) had awarded the conduct of the examination to ITI Limited, a central public sector undertaking, which subcontracted the examination process to Bhubaneswar-based Silicon Techla

incident from the concerned officials. Terming the incident unacceptable, Sukhu directed that the inquiry into the matter be completed by December 24 and that appropriate action be taken without delay based on the findings.

He stressed that professional behaviour in medical institutions must always remain polite and calm, as it reflects not only on individuals but also on the reputation of the institution and the state.

Highlighting IGMC's legacy, the Chief Minister said that doctors trained at the premier institution have brought recognition to Himachal Pradesh at the national and international levels, and any form of indiscipline tarnishes that image.

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As a corrective and preventive measure, Sukhu reviewed the senior residency process in detail and issued necessary guidelines to ensure that doctors are adequately oriented before assuming their responsibilities.

Central banks, inflation and political control

The spat between the White House and Fed Reserve Chairperson Jerome Powell, an appointee of US President Donald Trump, is hardly unusual. Lyndon Johnson and Richard Nixon bullied the central bank into lowering interest rates.

Central banks function as the government's banker, issue currency, maintain the payment system, and manage the nation's currency reserves. They safeguard financial stability, acting as a lender of last resort to banks, although separate bodies sometimes regulate the financial system. The contentious part of their mandate is controlling the money supply and setting interest rates.

Central bank independence is recent. In 1990, New Zealand legislated inflation targeting, which other nations adopted. The concept was that an independent institution would determine monetary policy and maintain price stability, minimising opportunities for politicians to use interest rates to boost economic activity, especially around elections. The context was the high inflation era of the 1970s and 1980s. It was convenient to transfer painful choices to central bankers, allowing governments to blame others or claim credit depending on the outcomes.

The case for independence is unclear. The objectives, such as relative price stability, growth and employment, are frequently contradictory. It is unclear which of the multiple measures of price levels should be prioritised. The 2-3 per cent inflation objective is arbitrary. Empirical studies suggest that fear of deflation may be unwarranted. There are differences in what constitutes full employment. Data, rarely timely, has methodological problems. The representativeness of items used to measure inflation is contested. Unpaid work, zero-hour agreements, and contracting complicate labour statistics. Resource scarcity or sustainability is ignored. Central banks have limited tools—interest rates, regulating the money supply through open-market operations, quantitative easing (buying government debt) and forward guidance (open-mouth operations or jawboning). Budgets, the currency, international capital flows, and geopolitics (sanctions, trade restrictions) are outside its control.

The underlying economic models focus on NAIRU (non-accelerating inflation rate of unemployment) or the Phillips Curve, a simplistic trade-off between unemployment and inflation. In practice, these relationships are unreliable. Cause and effect are difficult to differentiate. There is no agreement on a neutral (not contractionary or expansionary) interest rate. Central bankers constantly validate Laurence J Peter's judgment: "An economist is an expert who will know tomorrow why the things he predicted yesterday didn't happen today."

The problems are compounded by training and backgrounds that foster groupthink. Central bankers are economists, usually trained at the same universities, who spend their working lives within institutions, government, or academe, with limited commercial experience. Central banks are run by economists providing employment for their tribe. Independent members rarely second-guess staff recommendations, even if they have the expertise and information. Originally reticent, central banks, following the lead of former Fed Chairperson Alan 'Maestro' Greenspan, have embraced celebrity. Inscrutable invisibility has given way to volatility, X handles, and Delphic oratory. They play to financial markets with an excessive focus

on asset prices, which do not uniformly benefit all citizens. Politicians, never happy to share the limelight, increasingly resent the power and public profile of these unelected technocrats. They begrudge having to seek approbation for their policies. American presidents found themselves forced to kowtow to the all-powerful Greenspan. They are wary of the threat that central banks may pose to their position and re-election.

SHANTI's vision: Transforming energy into strength

To understand why this moment matters, we must begin with the context.

When the monsoon first touches the Deccan, a million tiny rivulets knit themselves into rivers. It is not a thunderclap that turns water into force; it is patient joining—stream to stream, village to village—until the flow is confident enough to light a city. India's journey with the atom has felt like that: quiet channels of science converging over decades, now gathering into a river strong enough to power a data centre at midnight, sterilise a meal in the afternoon, and help a clinician save a child by the evening. With the introduction of the SHANTI Bill—Sustainable Harnessing and Advancement of Nuclear Energy for Transforming India Bill, 2025—we are shaping the riverbed so that this flow reaches every home, industry and institution that needs dependable and clean energy.

To understand why this moment matters, we must begin with the context.

Before 2014, India's nuclear framework was anchored in two separate statutes: the Atomic Energy Act, 1962, which guided development and control, and the Civil Liability for Nuclear Damage Act, 2010, which provided a no-fault compensation regime. Each served its time; each also reflected an era when nuclear capability was primarily a sovereign effort, with very limited pathways for the broader ecosystem—manufacturing, finance, insurance, startups, and advanced research—to participate. SHANTI draws them together, repealing and replacing them with a single, modern architecture—in one stroke conferring statutory status the Atomic Energy Regulatory Board (AERB), defining roles and responsibilities with clarity, and opening responsible avenues for public-private participation while reserving sensitive functions to the government.

In the past decade, India has achieved self-reliance across the nuclear fuel cycle and carried the programme responsibly. Now we are ready to scale towards a national goal of 100 gigawatt of nuclear capacity by 2047, adding reliable baseload power to support AI, quantum computing, indigenous semiconductor fabrication, and large-scale data research. The Bill codifies this readiness: it creates a unified licensing and safety authorisation regime. It sets graded liability for operators—3,000 crore for the largest reactors, down to 100 crore for smaller ones and fuel-cycle facilities—so

that innovation such as small and modular reactors (SMRs) can proceed with proportionate safeguards. It also establishes a Nuclear Liability Fund for situations where compensation exceeds the operator's cap and provides recourse to the international Convention on Supplementary Compensation—because compassion must be as scalable as technology.

Change, in the most meaningful sense, is what the ordinary citizen can feel. In healthcare, nuclear medicine has moved from promise to practice: targeted therapies for childhood blood cancers and prostate malignancies now



flow from centres such as Tata Memorial, turning isotopes into healing. In agriculture, radiation technologies already help preserve produce, extend shelf life, and ensure safety.

Safety is not a slogan; it is a discipline with numbers and routines. India's operating plants are inspected every three months during construction and every six months in operation; licences are renewed every five years; the International Atomic Energy Agency benchmarks our parameters, and the AERB's statutory status now gives it sharper teeth. What changes, then, in the citizen's daily life? First, power you can trust—24x7 and low-carbon, not hostage to the weather. When a textile cluster adds an SMR to its energy mix, it stabilises looms and livelihoods; when a district hospital relies on uninterrupted power for imaging, radiotherapy, and

digital records, a patient's anxiety is reduced to the one thing no law can cure—waiting time. SHANTI's graded liability regime reduces barriers for smaller investors to build such plants while maintaining strict responsibility, and its unified rules simplify the journey from design to operation. Second, better redress when things go wrong. The Bill creates an Atomic Energy Redressal Advisory Council—comprised of the AEC chairperson, BARC director, AERB chairperson and CEA chairperson—to hear review applications and facilitate conciliation with technical depth. It designates claims commissioners within 30 days of a notified incident to adjudicate compensation swiftly, and empowers the government to constitute a Nuclear Damage Claims Commission for severe cases with quasi-judicial powers modelled on civil courts. This is justice engineered for emergencies.

Third, a transparent ecosystem. Restricted information provisions protect sensitive data without choking legitimate public outreach on safety. The government retains exclusive control of enrichment, reprocessing of spent fuel, heavy-water production, and isotopic separations—so long-term stewardship remains a sovereign function. Research, design and innovation are exempted from licensing (with safety and national-security caveats), so startups and universities can explore prototypes, sensors, AI-enabled monitoring, and advanced materials. Jitendra Singh Alongside SHANTI, we have announced missions for SMRs with 20,000 crore earmarked, and a 1 lakh crore research, development and innovation fund to catalyse private sector across domains. Nuclear energy will not be a solitary silo; it will be a node in India's wider innovation surge.

Some worry about liability and courts—SHANTI is explicit on this. The operator carries the liability with caps graded by installation, backed by mandatory insurance or financial security; beyond the cap, the Nuclear Liability Fund and, if needed, international supplementary compensation pool can be tapped. Civil courts will not be clogged with technical claims; a specialised redress commission will adjudicate, with appeals routed to the Appellate Tribunal for Electricity (augmented with nuclear technical members) and, ultimately, to the Supreme Court. Rivers do not argue their way to the sea; they find it. With SHANTI, India's nuclear river has found its course—safe, sovereign and generous enough to carry every citizen with it.

Pharma boost: Tougher Chinese import norms helpful in long run

The Tribune Editorial: The targeted raw materials in the new import regime are part of the Union government's product-linked incentive scheme

THE Centre's move to impose a minimum import price on key drug ingredients is a fresh strategy to combat the dumping of cheap Chinese imports and support domestic manufacturing. Having a floor price below which these pharmaceutical inputs cannot be imported may result in cost increase defeating the affordable drug pricing campaign, but the larger goal is noteworthy. A level-playing field for local producers can boost self-reliance, end the dependency on Chinese imports and secure supply chains for antibiotics and cholesterol drugs. In the long run, such safeguards against predatory price cuts by suppliers and a possible breakdown in supplies can pay dividends, provided the domestic industry gets its act together. Its track record on maintaining the prescribed quality standards fails to infuse confidence. The targeted raw materials in the new import regime are part of the Union government's product-linked incentive scheme. The onus is now on the pharma sector on how to make the best use of the policy. The industry



associations must ensure that the small and medium units don't lose out, and in the process resort to short-cuts that have already spawned a culture of neglect and indifference—leading to fatal consequences in several instances. In an industry that demands utmost responsibility at every stage of production, the performance of several units continues to test the efficacy of the regulatory framework.

Systemic resilience is already under strain as many of the registered small and medium units face a shutdown for failing to comply with guidelines on the revised Schedule M of good manufacturing practices by December 31. The demand to extend the deadline underscores the crisis India's pharma sector faces—how to ensure quality despite the numerous odds. Here's where the government's tough stance and simultaneous handholding are most needed.

Christmas carols across faiths

As a Hindu, Biblical verses reinforced my own attachment to Sanatana Dharma. I used the Bible to light my path to my own home as a Hindu, realising that Hindus didn't have one holy book; they have a library. This, excitingly, also made Christmas carols and hymns a part of my unforgotten personal storehouse of songs

Happy Christmas in advance, dear readers. For someone trapped in the English language as I was in my formative years, the Bible contained wonderful calls to faith, such as, 'For God is not a God of confusion but of peace', Corinthians 14:33. I also loved what Jesus said in Matthew 11:30, 'For my yoke is easy and my burden is light', which is the concluding part of a passage where Jesus invited those who were weary and burdened to come to him for rest. I felt such verses applied to me, too, as a Hindu, and they reinforced my own, then mute, attachment to Sanatana Dharma. At that stage, I used the Bible to light my path to my own home as a Hindu, realising that Hindus didn't have one holy book; they had a library. Except that our books were somehow inaccessible when I was growing up, whereas the Bible came so easily to me in English, satisfying my inchoate inner yearning for a God-connection. While I knew I would stay loyal to my Hindu identity, I also felt, 'What's not to love about Jesus?' As a little girl, I wept reading about the Stations of the Cross, and fiercely wished that I could have given Jesus a drink of water on his last, sorrowful journey. It still affects me deeply. When I grew older, I became greatly attached to four books in the Old Testament. They were Ecclesiastes, Psalms, Proverbs and The Song of Solomon. Ecclesiastes seemed like an Upanishad to me in its wisdom. Psalms were raw emotion and deep faith. Proverbs gave me social and emotional direction while The Song of Solomon seemed like Jayadeva's lyrical Gita Govindam in its intense bhakti bhava. However, I was uncomfortable with conversion agendas. I realised, reading about the mediaeval Church's violent history, that Christ and Christianity were not always the same. And it seemed

rude in modern India to be told, "My faith is better than yours, leave yours, join mine." My quiet response was, "I find meaning and beauty in my faith. May I not peacefully continue being 'myself' while respecting and appreciating your faith as a parallel path to God?" Ecclesiastes 1:7 says, 'All the rivers run into the sea'.

Because I celebrate Christmas every year and I regularly

went to Midnight Mass with Christian friends until they themselves stopped,

to sing the carols and hymns I learned as a child. Regarding this, let me tell

you a little story about a Christmas party in Chennai. It was at the home of the Hindu friends with whom I usually stay when in town. He is from North India, and she is from the South. They are a sweet, open-minded couple who celebrate both Diwali and Christmas, as many Hindus do across India. As I said, what's not to love about Jesus, who preached 'God is Love'? For one, it resonates with 'Anbe Sivam', which means 'Love is God' in Tamil.

Anyhow, not only do my friends

unfailingly put up a Christmas tree at home, but they also invite a close

circle of friends to a Christmas party, with all the

traditional treats that mark the festival, especially plum

cake. That year, their friends included several Christians, some nice, open-minded Muslims and me. The host

couple and I chanced to be the only Hindus. One of the

Christian guests had brought printouts of carols so that everyone could sing together. We all had liberal, urban upbringings, and those who were unfamiliar with carols could at least look at the words. Then, we came to the great old carol 'We three kings of Orient are'. But a verse was missing from the printout. Guess which two people knew that verse by heart and sang it while the others,



even the Christians, fell silent because they didn't know? My Hindu hostess and I, that's who. In fact, we were the only two singing every carol from memory without glancing even once at the printouts. This is not to imply that we were extra clever. It's just that for both of us,

carols and hymns were part of our unforgotten personal storehouse of songs.

I should probably also share what my father did in New York in the nineties while visiting my sister. My mother's sraadha date occurred then. My father, though a naastik for the most part, observed her death anniversary with the traditional puja. But he didn't like to trouble my deracinated sister to find a pujari in a foreign land.

Instead, he went to St Patrick's Church, knelt in a back pew, and murmured from the beautiful Twenty-third Psalm, which begins, 'The Lord is my Shepherd'. When he told me about it, I thought he'd done well, for a personal prayer is a genuine thing. I loved St Patrick's myself, and made a beeline for the shrine of St Jude, the patron saint of lost or desperate causes. He symbolised hope and perseverance through difficult times, and I liked what he stood for. My prayer as I lit a candle and knelt to him was the universal wish, "Sarve jana sukhino bhavantu, ma kaschid duhk bhag bhavet", meaning, "May everyone be well, may no one suffer." In that spirit, I would like to share these encouraging thoughts from the Bible.

From Hebrews 11:1, "Now faith is the assurance of things hoped for, the conviction of things not seen." And from Philippians 4:13, "I can do all things through Him who strengthens me", meaning faith can steady us through every storm.

Crematorium Construction near school HC seeks fact-finding report

Shimla. (Agency)

The issue surrounding the alleged construction of a crematorium ground close to a school campus in Chamba district has reached the High Court, which has ordered a detailed fact-finding exercise rather than issuing immediate directions on the merits of the case.

The matter was heard by Justice Ajay Mohan Goel on a writ petition filed by Dayanand Math and another petitioner.

The petition challenges the legality of the ongoing construction of a crematorium, alleging that it is being built barely 50 metres from a school and without obtaining the mandatory statutory permissions, allegedly on government land.

Adopting a cautious judicial approach, the High Court on Tuesday directed the Secretary of the District Legal Services Authority (DLSA) to carry out a comprehensive site inspection and submit a factual report to the Court.

Justice Goel instructed the DLSA to verify whether the proposed crematorium ground is indeed located in close proximity to a school and, if so, to assess the potential repercussions of such construction. The report must also specify the exact distance from residential areas, water sources, and other sensitive locations.

The Court further directed the DLSA to examine whether the crematorium is being constructed after obtaining all necessary statutory approvals and permissions as required under law. Additionally, the report should state whether any other crematorium ground already exists in the area and, if so, its location.

Both the petitioners and the concerned respondents have been directed to be associated with the site inspection. The DLSA Secretary has been asked to submit the report on or before January 8, 2026.

The matter has been listed for further hearing on February 25, 2026.

Jagad Guru Brahmanand Saraswati guide of entire humanity: Saini

Dhund (Kaithal). (Agency)

Haryana Chief Minister Nayab Singh Saini today described Jagad Guru Brahmanand Saraswati ji as the 'guide of entire humanity', saying that his entire life was dedicated to human service, religion, sacrifice and nation building.

Addressing as the chief guest the state-level function organized by the Haryana government on the occasion of Jagat Guru Brahmanand Ji Jayanti at village Chuhad Majra in Kaithal district, he further said that Guru Brahmanand was such a lighthouse, whose rays of knowledge are still providing direction to our thoughts, culture and society.

Respecting the sentiments of the local people, the Chief Minister made the official announcement of changing the name of village Chuhad Majra to Brahmanand Majra. He also announced many big development projects.

The programme was presided over by Haryana Legislative Assembly Speaker Harvinder Kalyan. Deputy Speaker Dr Krishna Midha, Cabinet ministers Ranbir Gangwa, Mahipal Dhanda, Rao Narbir Singh, MP Naveen Jindal, Pundri MLA Satpal Jamba, Ashok Gujar, Ram Kumar Kashyap, Yogendra Rana, Bhagwandas Kabirpanthi other MLAs and former ministers and former MLAs along with dignitaries of the society were present. On reaching village Chuhad Majra, Chief Minister Saini first went to the Guru Brahmanand temple in the village and offered prayers. After this, he visited an exhibition based on the life of Guru Brahmanand organized by the Information, Public Relations and Language Department.

ITGOA urges union Finance Minister to expedite DPC for ACIT promotions

Lucknow. (Agency)

The Income Tax Gazetted Officers' Association (ITGOA) has written to the union Finance Minister seeking urgent intervention to ensure the timely convening of the Departmental Promotion Committee (DPC) for regular promotions to the post of Assistant Commissioner of Income Tax (ACIT) for the Vacancy Year 2024.

In its representation, the Association stated that the proposal for the DPC was forwarded to the union Public Service Commission (UPSC) on September 12, 2025 and that all observations raised by the Commission were duly complied with. Despite the proposal being complete in all respects for a considerable period, the DPC has yet to be scheduled, raising concerns that promotions may not be finalized within the current calendar year.

The ITGOA highlighted that due to prolonged seniority-related litigation, ad-hoc promotions to the ACIT grade have continued since 2014, leading to stagnation and uncertainty in career progression for promote officers. The delay, it noted, is now also affecting Direct Recruit IRS officers from the 2014 batch onwards, with potential implications for their future promotions.

Emphasising the critical role played by officers at the Assistant, Deputy, and Joint Commissioner levels, the Association warned that continued delays could demoralise the cadre at a time when the Department faces major challenges, including the implementation of a new Income Tax Act.

IndiGo glitch an example of duopoly or market Monopoly issue: Gujarat Principal secy, Consumer Affairs

"One very important thing is the Indigo (flights) glitch that we all experienced. We have seen its span... it was a sheer duopoly or market monopoly related issue and the passengers or consumers of their service, the way they were put to hardship, we all have seen..."

Ahmedabad. (Agency)

The Gujarat government is working on a way to bring the service providers and service receivers on one platform through intervention of agencies such as Consumer Education and Research Centre (CERC), Principal Secretary (Food, Civil Supplies and Consumer Affairs) Mona Khandhar said on Tuesday, citing the example of the IndiGo flight disruptions. She was speaking at an event hosted by the CERC to mark National Consumer day that falls on December 24.

"One very important thing is the Indigo (flights) glitch that we all experienced. We have seen its span... it was a sheer duopoly or market monopoly related issue and the passengers or consumers of their service, the way they were put to hardship, we all have seen..." Khandhar said that it was necessary to identify areas where the consumer or receiver of service was "vulnerable" like in

cases of monopolies, or duopolies or an upcoming sector where regulation was still in process. She urged consumer fora to step in to



fill the gaps to protect the receivers and consumers of services and emphasised on the 'pre-litigation services' provided by such bodies. "The push from the government side is that these consumer fora should select

important areas such as education, health services, pharmaceuticals, medical devices... and we have to look for wherever there is monopoly or duopoly or where the regulatory framework is in the process of being formulated and there we need to be in support of consumers and service receivers and ensure there is a balance," Khandhar said. She listed packaged and processed food products, pharmaceuticals or medical equipment, education and medical services as some of the important areas where such intervention was required as it would "affect a large community of students and health service seekers".

Among its achievements CERC listed was the Jagruti Grahak Gram Project it took up in Rajpar village of Wadhwan taluka in Surendranagar. The CERC "adopted" this village to make it aware of its rights as consumers and the mentoring helped them ward off fraud calls, it said.

Pedestrian among 2 injured in firing during group clash in Gujarat's Dahod town



Vadodara. (Agency)

At least two persons were injured in firing during a clash between two groups of a community in the Kasba area of Dahod town in Gujarat on Tuesday, police said.

Five rounds were fired during the clash, they added. An FIR was registered at Dahod A Division police station and police launched a

manhunt to nab the accused persons.

Deputy Superintendent of Police, Dahod, Jagdish Bhandari said that the incident took place on Tuesday afternoon when two accused brothers — Ejaz Khan Pathan and Irshad Khan Pathan — allegedly opened fire at a man named Faizan Maulvi. Maulvi and a pedestrian, Saqeen Malek, were injured in the firing.

Dahod police officers, including those from Bhandari, Local Crime Branch, Special Operations Group as well as units of Dahod A and Dahod B Division police station reached the spot and cordoned off the area.

The injured were rushed to a hospital. Bhandari said, "Both Ejaz and Irshad Pathan indulged in a verbal altercation with some persons. The injured man whom they opened fire at was allegedly trying to calm the situation. Primary investigation revealed that a mauser pistol was used for firing. We have lodged an FIR at Dahod A division police station for attempt to murder, Arms Act and other relevant sections... The probe is underway."

According to police, the area witnessed tense moments as people scurried for cover when Irshad allegedly opened fire.

Maulvi is said to have sustained bullet injuries in his stomach and is currently under treatment. The Pathan brothers have been involved in altercations and physical fights with a group of persons in the locality and Maulvi was seen as a part of the rival group of the Pathan brothers, police said. Both Pathan brothers are yet to be apprehended.

Indian-origin woman found dead at home, manhunt on for partner

Chandigarh. (Agency)

Toronto Police have launched a homicide investigation after a 30-year-old woman was found dead inside a residence in the city's west end, officials said, prompting a response from the Indian High Commission in Canada. The victim has been identified as Himanshi Khurana, 30, a resident of

located the missing woman deceased inside a residence. The death was subsequently classified as a homicide. The suspect has been identified as Abdul Ghafoori, 32, also of Toronto. He is wanted on a Canada-wide warrant on a charge of first-degree murder. Toronto Police have released an image of the suspect and appealed to the public for assistance in locating him.

"This is Toronto's 40th homicide of 2025," police said, adding that the investigation is being led by the Toronto Police Service Homicide and Missing Persons Unit. Reacting to the incident, the High Commission of India in Ottawa said it was in touch with Canadian authorities and offering assistance to the victim's family. "We are deeply saddened by the tragic death of an Indian-origin woman in Toronto. The High Commission is closely coordinating with local authorities and providing all possible support to the bereaved family," the High Commission said in a statement.

Under Canadian law, first-degree murder is the most serious criminal offence. If convicted, the punishment carries a mandatory sentence of life imprisonment, with no possibility of parole for at least 25 years. Courts have no discretion to impose a lesser sentence for first-degree murder, which typically involves planning and deliberation or the killing of an intimate partner.

Police have urged anyone with information related to the case to come forward. Members of the public can contact Toronto Police at 416-808-7400. Anonymous tips can also be provided through Crime Stoppers at 416-222-8477.

Toronto Police said the victim and the suspect were known to each other, a detail investigators are treating as significant. An image of Khurana has been released by police as part of the investigation.

Police said they received a call reporting a missing person at around 10:41 pm on December 19, in the Strachan Avenue and Wellington Street West area.

Officers began an investigation into the disappearance of a woman from the neighbourhood. On Saturday, December 20, at about 6:30 am, police

assumed the missing woman deceased inside a residence. The death was subsequently classified as a homicide. The suspect has been identified as Abdul Ghafoori, 32, also of Toronto. He is wanted on a Canada-wide warrant on a charge of first-degree murder. Toronto Police have released an image of the suspect and appealed to the public for assistance in locating him.

Reacting to the incident, the High Commission of India in Ottawa said it was in touch with Canadian authorities and offering assistance to the victim's family. "We are deeply saddened by the tragic death of an Indian-origin woman in Toronto. The High Commission is closely coordinating with local authorities and providing all possible support to the bereaved family," the High Commission said in a statement.

Under Canadian law, first-degree murder is the most serious criminal offence. If convicted, the punishment carries a mandatory sentence of life imprisonment, with no possibility of parole for at least 25 years. Courts have no discretion to impose a lesser sentence for first-degree murder, which typically involves planning and deliberation or the killing of an intimate partner.

Police have urged anyone with information related to the case to come forward. Members of the public can contact Toronto Police at 416-808-7400. Anonymous tips can also be provided through Crime Stoppers at 416-222-8477.

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DU Standing Committee sends Economics, History courses back for revision as members raise objections

The members allegedly argued that these themes were not correlated with Economics, were not aligned with the course titled Economics and Gender, and were “ideologically loaded”.

New Delhi. The University of Delhi's Standing Committee on Tuesday allegedly sent back proposed courses and revised syllabi tabled by the departments of Economics and History after objections were raised in a meeting on Monday.

According to the committee members, additional elective courses for the second semester of the two-year postgraduate programme in Economics were tabled, including Course 4, titled Economics and Gender.

The members allegedly argued that these themes were not correlated with Economics, were not aligned with the course titled Economics and Gender, and were “ideologically loaded”.

Monami Sinha, a member of the Standing Committee, argued that “women's workforce participation in India is among the lowest globally”, and that “social norms, domestic violence, and concerns around safety are key factors which determine workforce participation of women”.

Despite these clarifications, the members allegedly remained adamant, following which the course was allegedly sent back for



revision. Meanwhile, as the Department of History tabled its Discipline-Specific Core (DSC) and Discipline-Specific Elective (DSE) courses for the second semester, members of the National Democratic Teachers' Front (NDTF) allegedly objected, stating that the syllabus was biased and skewed towards

global history. In the case of DSC 4, titled Themes in Ancient Indian Economy and Society, it is learnt that objections were allegedly raised to the inclusion of the term “society” in the title. Members argued that since the three DSCs address the economic history of India across

the ancient, medieval and modern periods, the term “society” was a misfit and that readings relating to social aspects should be removed. Sinha countered this by stating that “economy and society are analytically inseparable, particularly in historical analysis,” and that “each has enduring and mutually constitutive effects on the other”.

Despite this, it is learnt that several readings were allegedly asked to be dropped, including Shireen Moosvi's ‘Work and Gender in Mughal India’ from People, Taxation, and Trade in Mughal India — which was allegedly removed from DSC 5. Indrani Chatterjee and Richard M Eaton's ‘Slavery in South Asian History’ was also allegedly dropped from DSC 4. Denying allegations of ideological interference, Standing Committee member Harender Tiwari said, “This syllabus was prepared in haste and there was mismatch of readings with the intended contents and therefore the house requested the head to revisit the syllabus to frame it properly with appropriate readings.” reached out to Dean of Academics, K Ratnabali, but received no response.

'Inspired' by Tamil film, how Delhi youth ran QR code fraud to divert digital payments

New Delhi.(Agency)

A 19-year-old, allegedly inspired by a Tamil film, ran a cyber fraud by tampering with QR codes to divert digital payments made by unsuspecting customers at retail stores to his personal bank account. The accused, identified as Manish Verma, was arrested on Monday.

The arrest followed a complaint registered by a customer who had visited a boutique in Chandni Chowk on December 13 to purchase a lehenga worth Rs 2.5 lakh. According to the FIR, the complainant made two UPI payments of Rs 90,000 and Rs 50,000 by scanning QR codes put up at the shop. The shop management later informed the customer that the amount had not been credited to their official bank account, even as the customer produced screenshots which showed the transactions were successful.

During the investigation, police carried out a spot inspection of the shop, examined their billing system and the digital payment process, and recorded statements of the complainant, shop



owner and sales staff. A technical analysis of the UPI transaction trail revealed that the payment had been diverted to an unrelated bank account.

Further financial and digital analysis traced the amount to a bank account, which was being operated from Rajasthan. Based on mobile data, bank records and other digital footprints, police identified the accused and conducted an inter-state operation, apprehending him from Chaksu in Jaipur. “During questioning, the accused admitted to his involvement in the offence and disclosed his modus operandi of manipulating genuine merchant QR codes to divert customer payments into his own bank account. Examination of the accused's account confirmed receipt of the money too,” said DCP (North) Raja Banthia.

“The accused further disclosed that the idea of manipulating QR codes was inspired by a movie titled Vettaiyan. He admitted adapting the concept for real-world execution using image-editing applications and digital payment platforms,” the DCP said. Police said mobile phones seized from the accused contained extensive digital evidence, including over 100 edited and original QR codes, chats, screenshots and financial records. Further investigation is underway, police said.

Instamart moves from virtual space, opens first offline store in Gurgaon

New Delhi.(Agency)

In the inner blocks of M3M's 65th Avenue in Gurgaon, a familiar name on a blue board caught the eye of shoppers earlier this week — Instamart.

Swiggy's 10-minute delivery vertical, Instamart's first offline space opened on December 11 — a swanky retail store where one can physically go and buy products. It is attached to a dark store that doubles up as inventory for tgurgaonhe small outlet in R3 block.

On sale are perishables, groceries, snacks and beverages. “We just came here to check it out, and see if the prices are like those (discounted) on Instamart. They were,” said a group of three young women, who live nearby. “Perishables and snacks are the most popular things ordered. Most of the crowd comes in the evenings,” said a staffer, who did not wish to be named. checked if the products were being sold at MRP or being discounted like

on the Instamart app. An Uncle Chips packet worth Rs 50, marked as Rs 38 on the app, was retailing for Rs 37 here. A 250 gm Parle G biscuit pack of Rs 30 MRP was selling for Rs 26 on the Instamart app and the store.



There are no delivery charges or platform fees.

Manning the shop is a cashier, with a security guard stationed outside; the dark store operates separately.

An in-charge at the store pointed to a board, which bore the name of PYD Retail Private Limited, a retail solutions and supply chain logistics

company. It supports several Instamarts across the National Capital Region. “But this is the first offline store. It is sponsored by Swiggy. After a picture of the store went viral on Monday, we have been asked to keep a low profile and not allow videography etc,” the staffer claimed. Jaideep Narwal (29), an entrepreneur who owns a restaurant named KON (Kitchen of Narwal) at the 65th Avenue said the store has been a boon in terms of being the supply source. “Most restaurants here get their supplies from here now. They are reliable,” he said, currently in the store to buy milk for seasonal celebratory sweets. Asked for more details about the store and the arrangement with Swiggy, the staff refused to respond.

They smiled as Narwal asked for an order he placed through the app to be cancelled so he can just buy it physically.

Delhi BJP councillor ‘threatens’ African coach for not knowing Hindi; apologises after party summons

New Delhi.(Agency)

Amid backlash over a viral video showing BJP's Patparganj MCD councillor Renu Chaudhary threatening a football coach from Africa for not “knowing Hindi”, the Councillor was summoned by the party's Delhi unit on Tuesday and asked to explain her conduct, said sources. Following the meeting, Chaudhary issued a public apology even as she shared videos of her supporters defending her actions on social media.

Speaking to, party sources said Chaudhary was asked to appear before Delhi BJP president Virendra Sachdeva at 2 pm after the video drew the attention of the party's high command.

The clip shows Chaudhary confronting the football coach at Mayur Vihar's Lovely Park, which falls under the

MCD's jurisdiction. In the clip, Chaudhary is seen warning that action would be taken against the man if he failed to learn Hindi within the next one



month. The coach trains underprivileged children at a local park. Chaudhary had also shared the clip on her Instagram account.

“The councillor's way of speaking was

not correct. Sports is something that connects children and the nation, and it has no language,” Sachdeva said after the meeting, “We conveyed this to her, following which she expressed regret and apologised. Our focus now is on improving facilities at the park.”

Chaudhary herself posted a video apology on Instagram, saying that she did not intend to hurt anyone. “MCD parks are for children to play and receive coaching. We will provide all necessary facilities. I apologise for my behaviour and tone,” she said.

However, even as the party attempted damage control, many of Chaudhary's supporters posted clips on Instagram defending that those who live in India must learn Hindi — many of these were reposted by the councillor.

How expired food products of brands imported from UK, US & Dubai were sold to high-end Indian stores

New Delhi.(Agency)

A total of 43,762 kg of food items and 14,665 litres of beverages, 6,047 kgs of candies, biscuits and wafers, along with 23,050 kg of various sauces, vinegars and other condiments — these were among the expired food items worth Rs 4.3 crore seized as the Delhi Police Crime Branch busted a highly organised racket, officers said on Tuesday. The accused illegally imported, repackaged and sold expired international branded food products — bought at throwaway prices — to high-end grocery stores, such as Modern Bazaar and Nature's Basket, and e-commerce platforms, police added.

Seven persons have been arrested so far. Police said the accused sold expired products of multiple brands, including Oreo, Lipton, Ritz, Kellogg's, Fanta, Starbucks, Nescafe, Heinz, Hellmanns, Kikkoman, Kewpie, Lindt, Nutella, Cadbury, Pringles, and Lays. The racket posed a serious threat to public health, as several of the seized items included baby food and other consumables, officers underlined. The operation was

carried out by the Cyber Cell of the Crime Branch following tip-offs about a network that was bringing in expired food items or items nearing expiry date from abroad at throwaway prices and fraudulently selling

consignments were seized, said police.

According to the police, the mastermind was identified as Atal Jaiswal (54). “Investigation revealed that the mastermind was importing international food products, which were expired or about to get expired, at extremely low prices through Mumbai-based wholesale agents, who sourced consignments from the United Kingdom, United States, Dubai, and other countries. By the time these consignments reached India, most of the products had already expired or become unfit for human consumption. Instead of destroying them as mandated by law, the accused illegally ‘re-manufactured’ the products,” said DCP Crime Branch Aditya Gautam.

Police said manufacturing and expiry dates were altered, labels and product information were changed, fake barcodes, batch numbers and MRPs were affixed, and the items were repackaged to make them appear like they had been freshly imported.

“These tampered products were then supplied in bulk to Modern Bazaar, Food Story, Nature Basket, major retail chains, and adulterated food products.



them as fresh, imported products across India. Raids were conducted in the Pahari Dheeraj and Faiz Ganj areas of Sadar Bazar, a hub of wholesale markets in Delhi.

During the raid, officials from the Food Safety department of the Delhi government were called to the spot, samples were collected as per protocol, and the

prominent malls, and various e-commerce platforms across India, generating huge illegal profits while endangering public health. The recovery of complete printing, sealing, and date-altering machinery confirms the existence of a full-fledged illegal adulteration and repackaging factory,” said DCP Gautam.

Among those arrested are Shiv Kumar (40) from Jharkhand; Bishwajit Dhara (25) from Malviya Nagar in Delhi; Vinod (43) and Arun Kumar (30) from Darbhanga in Bihar; Vijay Kant (50) from Jaunpur in Uttar Pradesh; and Shamim (30) from Etah in Uttar Pradesh.

A large quantity of specialised equipment used for forgery and repackaging — such as hand-held inkjet printers, cartridges, sealing machines, chemicals, glue guns and fake barcode stickers — was also recovered.

A case has been registered under multiple sections of the Bharatiya Nyaya Sanhita at the Crime Branch police station. Police said further investigation is underway to trace the supply chain, identify retail and online buyers, and dismantle the entire network involved in the illegal trade of expired and adulterated food products.

According to the police, a PCR call regarding the incident was received at Vasant Kunj South police station. At the accident site, a member of the NHAI patrolling team informed them that a truck had collided with another.

New Delhi.(Agency)

Two men sustained injuries in an accident on the Rajokri flyover along NH-48 involving two trucks on Tuesday afternoon, police said.

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Two injured as two trucks collide on Rajkot flyover along NH-48

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NEWS BOX

Manchester City closing in on Antoine Semenyo deal after United snub: Reports**NEW DELHI. (Agency)**

Manchester City are moving steadily towards a January deal for Antoine Semenyo, with talks over a potential move for the Bournemouth forward said to be at an advanced stage. The Premier League champions have made encouraging progress in recent days and believe they are well-placed to win the race for one of the division's most in-form attackers as the winter window approaches. According to multiple reports, Semenyo's preference is a move to Manchester City rather than Manchester United, despite interest from Old Trafford earlier in the process. United are understood to have cooled their pursuit after indications that the 25-year-old favours working under Pep Guardiola, while Chelsea have also stepped back from negotiations.



Semenyo's contract situation has made him one of January's most talked-about names. The Bournemouth winger has a sixty-five million pounds release clause, made up of a sixty million pounds fixed fee and five million pounds in add-ons, which is active only for the first ten days of January. The clause was included when he signed a new contract in July, allowing Bournemouth to retain him last summer while acknowledging strong future interest. That valuation is expected to drop slightly if a move is delayed until the summer window. City are not alone in tracking the Ghana international. Liverpool, Tottenham and Chelsea have all made enquiries to varying degrees, with Liverpool assessing the conditions of a deal amid uncertainty surrounding their forward options. Tottenham are believed to be outsiders, while Chelsea chose not to push ahead despite initial interest. Bournemouth are realistic about their position and accept they could lose a key player mid-season. However, the Cherries are open to negotiating terms that would allow Semenyo to remain at the club until the end of the campaign, should a buying club agree. He joined Bournemouth from Bristol City in 2023 and has since developed into a central figure under Andoni Iraola.

Semenyo's appeal is clear. His ability to operate across the front line, combined with his physicality and end product, has made him one of the league's standout performers this season.

Mohammad Kaif slams BCCI for Shubman Gill blunder: Indian cricket has gone behind**NEW DELHI. (Agency)**

Former India cricketer-turned-commentator Mohammad Kaif has slammed the selectors for selecting Shubman Gill in the T20I side, saying that it was a move in the backward direction. Gill was brought back into the Indian team ahead of the Asia Cup 2025 and was reappointed as the vice-captain of the side. The move also pushed Sanju Samson down the batting order, despite him having established himself as an opener after hitting three centuries over the past 12 months, as he made way for Gill. However, Gill failed to justify his selection, as he could not score a single half-century in 15 innings. As Gill failed to justify his selection, Kaif slammed the selectors for not investing in better players namely Yashasvi Jaiswal, Sanju Samson and Jitesh Sharma. They knew there were better players, I am talking about the T20 format, just this one. There were better players than Gill. So it was a mistake by the selectors. They have made a mistake and



Indian cricket has gone backwards. For two to three months, you could have invested in Jaiswal, Samson and Jitesh," Kaif said on his YouTube channel.

In the 15 innings played since his comeback, Gill managed to score only 291 runs at an average of 24.25 and a strike rate of 137.26, with a highest score of 47. As a result, he was eventually dropped from the team for the T20 World Cup 2026, with Ishan Kishan making his return to the side. As Gill was dropped, Kaif welcomed the decision but strongly criticised the selectors for having zero planning, calling the entire phase a "waste of time" for the Indian team.

"You carried Gill till the very end and then dropped him. I feel it is the right call. It came late, but it was right. The planning is zero. There is no planning. It has been a waste of time in the name of planning. You backed a player who is not ready right now. It was your mistake as selectors. There was no option left as he did not score in 17-18 innings, and how many more chances would you give him? The pressure was increasing. No one wanted to drop him, but I feel it has been a waste of time for Indian cricket and for those players who should have been given the opportunity," he added.

Brendon McCullum's Lasso-way with England has turned into one harsh reality check

Brendon McCullum's Ted Lasso-style belief reshaped England's Test cricket. Australia's Ashes summer showed that optimism alone fades quickly without preparation and adaptability.

NEW DELHI. (Agency)

Ted Lasso stuck a yellow Believe sign on the wall and turned optimism into a superpower; Brendon McCullum tried something similar and ran straight into an Australian Ashes reality check. When McCullum took charge of England in 2022, the comparisons felt unavoidable. Like the fictional AFC Richmond coach, he was a friendly foreigner arriving with warmth, humour and a philosophy that prioritised people over pressure. McCullum talked about enjoyment, trust and freeing players from fear. Winning, he suggested, would take care of itself if the environment was right. It was Ted Lasso in cricket whites. For a while, the

feel-good script worked. Bazball injected life into English Test cricket. Runs flowed at record pace, players were backed regardless of failure, and crowds reconnected with a team that finally looked like it was having fun. Harry Brook's rise felt like a direct adaptation of Jamie Tart. Zak Crawley, constantly defended, began to flourish. Mistakes were brushed aside with a *metaphorical "be a goldfish"*. England's Ashes campaign in Australia collapsed inside 11 days, the fastest series decision in a century. The opening Test in Perth was over inside two days as Australia's pace attack blew England away. Brisbane followed with an eight-wicket defeat that exposed England's inability to control sessions. Adelaide, under lights, was meant to be a reset but instead became the final blow, with Australia sealing an 82-run win to retain the Ashes and go 3-0 up. Preparation quickly became the loudest talking point. England played just one warm-up match, skipped meaningful pink-ball practice and followed a relaxed schedule that

included golf and beach breaks. Reports of off-field indulgence, including drinking allegations, only added fuel to the debate, even if nothing was formally proven.



McCullum admitted he may have got it wrong.

After the third Test defeat, he accepted responsibility for preparation, conceding that England perhaps did too much at one stage and too little at another. In Ted Lasso's world, mistakes are learning moments. In Australia, they are punished relentlessly. The issue wasn't Bazball's intent, but its

rigidity. When conditions demanded patience, England attacked.

When adaptation was required, they doubled down on identity. Ted once introduced "Total Football" in a dream and, when his assistant asked, "We're playing a man down. What do we do differently?", the entire team replied in unison, "Absolutely nothing." England, under McCullum and Ben Stokes, effectively tried the same, with far less forgiving consequences. Bazball did revive English cricket. It restored belief, excitement and a clear identity. But the Ashes showed the darker side of relentless positivity. Losing, when repeated, tightens minds and strips confidence. McCullum himself admitted high expectations "constrained" his players, the very opposite of the freedom he promised.

Ted Lasso got a perfect ending. McCullum doesn't have that luxury. The Ashes have forced England to confront a simple truth: belief is powerful, but preparation and adaptability still decide outcomes. In real sport, vibes don't beat Australia. Planning does.

Virat Kohli's captaincy had high expectations but ended in disappointment: Tom Moody

NEW DELHI. (Agency)

Former Australia cricketer Tom Moody has delivered a blunt verdict on Virat Kohli's captaincy tenure, calling it a disappointing era in Indian cricket. Kohli assumed India's captaincy in all three formats in 2017 and stepped down from leadership in January 2022. An era which was expected to propel India towards unprecedented heights unfortunately ended on a disappointing note, as Kohli, the captain, could not lead India to an ICC Trophy triumph. Under Kohli, India played in two finals and one semi-final, but the team was never able to claim the elusive silverware. Reflecting on Kohli's captaincy in white-ball cricket, Moody said it was full of

**Vijay Hazare Trophy: Asia Cup flop in past, Vaibhav Suryavanshi smashes 36-ball 100****NEW DELHI. (Agency)**

Days after a painful Asia Cup final setback, Vaibhav Suryavanshi announced his comeback in emphatic fashion by blasting the second-fastest List A century by an Indian in the Vijay Hazare Trophy. The 14-year-old smashed a breathtaking 36-ball hundred for Bihar against Arunachal Pradesh in Ranchi, stealing the spotlight on a day dominated by the return of Virat Kohli and Rohit Sharma. While much of the pre-match buzz revolved around India's senior stars, Suryavanshi ensured the narrative shifted swiftly once play began. Batting first after winning the toss, Bihar raced out of the blocks with the teenager at his explosive best, dismantling the Arunachal attack with fearless strokeplay before eventually being dismissed for a stunning 190 by Techi Neri. Fastest List A centuries by an Indian:

35 balls: Anmolpreet Singh (Punjab)

36 balls: Vaibhav Suryavanshi (Bihar)

40 balls: Yusuf Pathan (Baroda)

41 balls: Urvil Patel (Gujarat)

42 balls: Abhishek Sharma (Punjab)

Only Anmolpreet Singh's 35-ball hundred for Punjab in 2024 stands ahead of



Suryavanshi in the list of fastest List A centuries by an Indian. His marathon knock was as destructive as it was historic, comprising an outrageous 16 boundaries and 15 sixes. In the process, Suryavanshi equalled the record for the second-most sixes in a Vijay Hazare Trophy innings, drawing level with Narayan Jagadeesan, who had struck 15 sixes against the same opponent, Arunachal Pradesh, in 2022. The knock carried added significance given

what had unfolded just days earlier. In the U19 Asia Cup final against Pakistan, Suryavanshi endured an off day, falling for a quick 26 off 10 balls while chasing a steep target. His dismissal coincided with India's collapse, and a heated exchange with Pakistan fast bowler Ali Raza, followed by visible gestures of frustration, drew criticism and sparked debate over his maturity. Despite that disappointment, Suryavanshi still finished the tournament with 261 runs, highlighting his overall impact across the competition. The Vijay Hazare performance in Ranchi served as a timely response, shifting the focus back to his batting rather than the noise around it.

Ben Stokes stands by England players amid drinking allegations: I'll protect them**NEW DELHI. (Agency)**

England's Ashes campaign has lunched from on-field frustration to off-field scrutiny, but Ben Stokes has made it clear where his priorities lie. With England already 3-0 down and the urn out of reach, the captain has come out strongly in defence of his players amid allegations of excessive drinking during a mid-series break in Noosa. The claims, which surfaced ahead of the Boxing Day Test, have added another layer of pressure to an already bruising tour. While the England and Wales Cricket Board has confirmed it will look into the matter, Stokes chose to shift the focus away from speculation, stressing that player welfare and unity remain paramount as England attempt to salvage pride in the final two Tests. Speaking ahead of the Melbourne Test, Stokes repeatedly underlined his responsibility to protect his squad during a



turbulent period. "How I handle this moment right now is the most important thing to me... The welfare of everyone in there and probably some certain individuals as well is the most important thing to me right now as England captain," Stokes said in the pre-match press conference. "I know how this kind of stuff can affect people, and my role as England captain is to protect my players as much as I

possibly can," he added.

Stokes also emphasised that, despite the Ashes already being lost, England still have targets to chase on the remainder of the tour.

"Looking after my players is one of the main things that I need to get out of this because we need to go out there and win two games of cricket," he said. "Right here, right now, my main job is to ensure they know they have my backing so I can get them into the best possible state to perform for this country." The controversy centres on reports that England players drank heavily during their four-day break in Noosa, a decision that had already been criticised by several former Australian players. An unverified video circulating on social media, allegedly showing Ben Duckett intoxicated, has further fuelled debate, though its authenticity and timing remain unclear.

Rohit Sharma fever in Jaipur: Over 10,000 turn up, stadium echoes with chants

Vijay Hazare Trophy 2025: Over 10,000 fans turned up to watch Rohit Sharma's return to the premier domestic 50-over tournament at the Sawai Mansingh Stadium on Wednesday, December 24. Rohit took the field for Mumbai against Sikkim while Virat Kohli played for Delhi against Andhra in Bengaluru.

MANCHESTER.. (Agency)

The setting was Jaipur, but chants of 'Mumbai Cha Raja' rang out across the Sawai Mansingh Stadium. The north Indian city was draped in blue as thousands of fans turned up to watch Rohit Sharma in action. The former India captain returned to the Vijay Hazare Trophy, India's premier domestic 50-over competition, after a gap of seven years. He turned out for Mumbai, who were taking on Sikkim in a first-round fixture

of the tournament in Jaipur.

With the state association announcing free entry, thousands of fans queued up outside the stadium well before the scheduled start of play on Wednesday. Even before the Mumbai team bus arrived at the venue, a few thousand supporters had already taken their seats, eager to cheer one of the most successful ODI batters the country has produced. Chants of Rohit Sharma's name rang out the moment he walked out for warm-ups alongside the rest of the batting group. The India star was seen posing for photographs with Sarfaraz Khan and his younger brother Musheer, both of whom featured in the playing XI led by all-rounder Shardul Thakur.

It was a rare opportunity for fans to watch Rohit from close quarters. With no live television or streaming coverage for the Mumbai-Sikkim contest, cricket lovers in the city were keen not to miss the

moment. Rohit acknowledged the affection of the crowd, taking time to wave whenever he found himself fielding near the boundary



ropes. He was stationed in the slip cordon early on as the atmosphere at the Sawai Mansingh Stadium took on the feel of an international fixture. Sikkim won the toss and elected to bat against Mumbai, but most of the spectators stayed put, waiting patiently for Rohit's turn to bat in the second

innings. Security arrangements were swiftly beefed up by local authorities as the number of fans continued to swell by the hour in

Jaipur. It marked a significant day for Indian domestic cricket, with Rohit Sharma and Virat Kohli returning to the domestic 50-over competition after several years. While Rohit last featured in the knockout stage of the 2018 season for Mumbai, Kohli last appeared in the tournament for Delhi back in 2009. Kohli was part of the BCCI Centre of Excellence in Bengaluru, where Andhra were also batting first in a closed-door encounter. The Vijay Hazare Trophy fixture featuring Kohli had initially been scheduled for the M Chinnaswamy Stadium, but the Karnataka government denied permission for the match to be held there. Royal Challengers Bengaluru's home venue has not staged a major competitive match since a stampede outside the stadium in June claimed 11 lives and left more than 50 injured during the franchise's IPL victory parade.

Facing pension delays? EPFO sets new rules to fix EPS contribution mistakes

New Delhi.(Agency)

Gold and silver prices jumped to a record high on the Employees' Provident Fund Organisation (EPFO) has issued fresh guidelines to help correct errors in pension contributions under the Employees' Pension Scheme (EPS). The move aims to bring uniformity across offices and protect the pension rights of employees. Through a December 19, 2025 circular, the EPFO laid down a standard method to correct EPS contribution errors, which usually come to light only when employees apply for their pension.

WHY EPFO ISSUED THE NEW CIRCULAR

EPFO said it had received several complaints about pension contribution errors being handled differently by regional offices. In many cases, employees faced problems at the time of pension settlement because of incorrect entries or missing contributions. To avoid confusion and legal issues, the EPFO decided to lay down a clear and uniform procedure for correcting such mistakes.

WHAT HAPPENS IF PENSION WAS WRONGLY CREDITED

The circular explains that if EPS contributions were wrongly paid to employees who were not eligible for the pension scheme, the excess amount must be returned. This includes the wrongly credited pension amount along with the applicable interest. The money will be transferred back from the EPS account to the provident fund account or to an exempted trust, as applicable. Any pensionable service wrongly added to the employee's records will also be removed.

FIXING CASES WHERE PENSION CONTRIBUTION WAS MISSED

In some cases, employers failed to deposit EPS contributions for eligible employees and instead credited the entire amount to the provident fund account. For such cases, EPFO has instructed offices to calculate the correct pension dues. The required amount will then be physically transferred to the pension account. Pensionable service details and non-contributory periods, wherever needed, will also be updated to reflect the correct history.

Gold, silver heading for best yearly show since 1979; sniffing at 1.4 lakh, Rs 2.3 lakh

MUMBAI.(Agency)

Precious metals are on a song again and are heading for their best annual performance since 1979, scaling new peaks globally and also in the domestic markets on safe haven demand and expectations of more rate cuts by the US Fed as inflation remains under control on one hand and on the other, the world's largest economy is on a solid footing with the Q3 data at 4.3% surprising on the upsides by a wide margin coupled with the rising tension between the US and Venezuela. So far gold has soared over 80% in dollar terms to \$4,550 per ounce and silver cross \$72 (up 150%), fueled by anticipation of further Fed easing and fresh geopolitical tension arising between the US and Venezuela, where the US has blockaded oil tankers, adding to the metals' haven appeal as they head for its best annual performance since 1979. The global rally where gold has crossed the sensitive \$4,500 mark with wide margin scaling past \$4,550 per ounce (28.35 grams), and silver crossing \$72 an ounce has the gold futures with February expiry on the Multi Commodity Exchange hitting a fresh lifetime high of Rs 1,38,676/10 grams on Wednesday. The futures with April and June expiries are also at a fresh all-time highs of Rs 1,42,125/10 grams and Rs 1,45,579/10 grams earlier today. Similarly, silver has crossed the Rs 2,20,000 mark and was trading at Rs 2,23,304 per kg today. Meanwhile, the sudden spurt in the prices-- after the third week of October these metals have cooled off till the ongoing spurt-- has had the share prices of leading gold loan focused non-banks soaring over 6% Wednesday reaching their 52-week highs.

While Manappuram Finance jumped 6% to hit a fresh 52-week high of Rs 313.8, IIFL Finance rose 4% to a 52-week high of Rs 597.70 and the industry leader Muthoot Finance rose over 2% to hit a fresh 52-week high of Rs 3,890. Rising gold prices are good for gold financiers as higher prices increase the value of the collateral, reducing the risk of defaults, as the collateral becomes more valuable relative to the loan amount (which is capped at 75% of the price of the metal) issued against it.

Swiggy executed 3.25 biryani orders per second in 2025

New Delhi.(Agency)

Continuing its decade-long dominance, Biryani claimed the top spot in Swiggy's 2025 orders with 93 million units, equating to 194 orders per minute or 3.25 every second. According to the 10th edition of "How India Swiggy'd", Chicken biryani led at 57.7 million orders, driving the highest repeat purchases among variants. Burgers ranked second with 44.2 million orders, followed by pizzas at 40.1 million and veg dosa at 26.2 million.

When it comes to desserts, white chocolate cake topped with 6.9 million orders, ahead of chocolate cake (5.4 million) and gulab jamun (4.5 million). Indian sweets like kaju barfi (2 million) and besan ladoo (1.9 million) rounded out popular picks. Global cuisines entered the carts with Mexican (16 million orders), Tibetan (12 million+ orders), Korean (4.7 million orders) cuisines becoming consumer favourites. Matcha was the most searched global cuisine in 2025. A foodie in Mumbai redefined "dining all day" and placed 3,196 food orders on Swiggy in 2025. This was almost 9 food orders per day and was the highest in the country. Single highest billing for dining out was done by two customers in Bengaluru and two customers in Mumbai of Rs 3 lakhs each. In Pune, a customer made a single highest payment of Rs 173,885. Rohit Kapoor, CEO, Swiggy Food Marketplace said, "It isn't just about the mind-blowing 93 million biryani ordered, the growing appetite for global cuisines.

Still waiting for your income tax refund Simple ways to check your ITR status

Waiting for an income tax refund can be frustrating, especially after filing your return on time. While delays are common, tracking your ITR status online is easy and can give you clarity on where things stand.

New Delhi.(Agency)

If you have filed your income tax return and keep refreshing your bank balance, you are not alone. For many taxpayers, the wait for a refund can feel uncertain and stressful. The good news is that checking your income tax refund status online is simple, and understanding the reasons for delays can help ease the worry. WHY YOUR INCOME TAX REFUND MAY STILL BE PENDING

Refund delays usually happen when the

Income Tax Department needs extra time to verify details shared by taxpayers. The Central Board of Direct Taxes has clarified that returns showing possible incorrect deduction claims are being reviewed carefully.

In cases where information is missing or unclear, taxpayers are being asked to file revised returns. The department has also said that smaller refund amounts are being cleared first, while the remaining refunds are likely to be processed by December 2025. CA (Dr) Suresh Surana explains that delays beyond 90 days are fairly common. He says, "Refunds are often delayed beyond 90 days due to a combination of procedural, verification, and compliance-related factors. The most common reason is mismatch or inconsistency in data, such as discrepancies between the income, tax deducted at source, or advance tax reported in the return and those reflected in Form 26AS, AIS, or TIS." He adds that refunds may also be delayed if a return is

picked up for detailed scrutiny or verification by the Centralised Processing Centre or the assessing officer. "Incomplete or incorrect bank account details, non-validation of bank accounts

system-related issues during peak filing periods may slow things down.

HOW TO CHECK ITR REFUND STATUS ON THE E-FILING PORTAL

The most direct way to track your refund is through the income tax e-filing website. Visit incometax.gov.in and log in using your user ID and password.

After logging in, go to the e-File section, select Income Tax Returns and then click on View Filed Returns. Choose the relevant assessment year to see your refund status. By clicking on View Details, you can see the full progress of your return, from submission to processing. CHECKING INCOME TAX REFUND STATUS USING PAN

If you want a quicker check, you can track your refund using your PAN on the TIN website. After entering your PAN number and selecting the assessment year, the refund status appears on the screen.



8th Pay Commission: How the fitment factor will shape salary and pension increases

New Delhi.(Agency)

The 8th Central Pay Commission has raised fresh expectations among central government employees and pensioners who are waiting for a meaningful rise in their salaries and pensions. While the commission is expected to revise pay for over 50 lakh employees and nearly 69 lakh pensioners, key details such as the final recommendations, funding and rollout timeline are still awaited. At the heart of the discussion is the fitment factor, a single number that will largely decide how much extra money employees and pensioners take home.

WHY THE FITMENT FACTOR MATTERS THE MOST

The fitment factor is used to revise basic pay and pensions across all pay levels. Simply put, it acts as a multiplier applied to the existing basic salary or pension to arrive at the new amount. A higher fitment factor leads to a bigger jump in earnings, while a lower one results in more modest increases. This makes the fitment factor the most closely watched element of the 8th Pay Commission. Even a small change in this number can significantly alter

HOW THE FITMENT FACTOR WILL AFFECT SALARIES AND PENSIONS

According to CA Manish Mishra, The monthly pay and long-term benefits. WHAT RANGE IS BEING DISCUSSED

The final fitment factor will determine how much basic salaries and pensions rise across the board. If the commission opts for a higher multiplier, employees and pensioners can expect a sharper increase in their payouts. On the other hand, a more conservative figure would mean moderate gains, even though it would still improve the existing pay structure. This is why employees, unions and pensioner groups are closely tracking every update related to the fitment factor.

WHEN CAN EMPLOYEES EXPECT HIGHER PAY IN HAND

Although the 8th Pay Commission is expected to be effective from January 1, 2026 on paper, actual payments may take longer. It is true that the 8th Pay Commission is said to be effective from January 1, 2026, but in practical terms the higher salaries will probably not reach employees' bank accounts till late 2026 or during the financial year 2026-27, Mishra said.



Founder of GenZCFO, the fitment factor could fall within a wide range. "The fitment factor, which gives the range of uniform increase across pay levels, is likely to be between 1.9 and about 2.8 to 3.0, according to expert assessments," he said. For comparison, the 7th Pay Commission had set the fitment factor at 2.57. Mishra noted that where the 8th Pay Commission finally fixes this number will be a major factor in deciding take-home pay and overall salary restructuring.

Saleem Ahmad takes charge as RVNL CMD, replacing Sukhmal Chand Jain

Saleem Ahmad is a civil engineering graduate from Jamia Millia Islamia University and brings more than 35 years of experience across large-scale construction and infrastructure projects.

NEW DELHI.(Agency)

Rail Vikas Nigam Limited (RVNL) on Tuesday announced a top-level leadership change, with Saleem Ahmad taking over as Chairman and Managing Director (CMD) of the state-owned infrastructure company. His appointment comes as Sukhmal Chand Jain steps down from the role with effect from December 23. In a filing to



infrastructure projects. His professional career spans bridge and tunnel construction, port and metro projects, and major residential and commercial developments. Before joining NBCC, he served as Executive Director (Civil) at Delhi Metro Rail Corporation Ltd and also worked with Mumbai Port Trust.

RVNL noted that Ahmad has contributed extensively to sustainable infrastructure development and has presented technical papers at national and international platforms. During his tenure at DMRC, he played a key role in developing last-mile connectivity solutions for metro passengers.

The leadership shift marks a significant organisational update for RVNL, which continues to play a crucial role in India's railway infrastructure expansion.



rally has also been supported by the company's fundamentals. Coal India's healthy dividend history, strong earnings profile and dominant position in the domestic coal market continue to make it a preferred pick in the PSU basket.

The stock is trading above key moving averages, indicating sustained buying interest. Analysts also point out that robust coal demand in India, coupled with record production levels, has strengthened the company's operational outlook.

The broader market mood has helped as well. Energy and PSU stocks have been among the stronger performers in recent sessions, and Coal India has featured prominently in this rotation toward value-heavy sectors. Analysts believe the ongoing rally reflects a combination of structural reforms.

Pakistan sells national carrier PIA for Rs 135 billion following bidding process

The privatisation ceremony was held in Islamabad and was attended by all three pre-qualified bidders. These included Lucky Cement, private airline Airblue and investment firm Arif Habib.

New Delhi.(Agency)

Islamabad, Dec 23 (PTI) Pakistan on Tuesday completed the privatisation of its national airline, Pakistan International Airlines, selling it for Rs 135 billion after a competitive bidding process held in the capital.

The sale marks a major step by the government to exit the loss-making airline after years of financial trouble and failed

revival plans. The privatisation ceremony was held in Islamabad and was attended by all three pre-qualified bidders. These included Lucky Cement, private airline Airblue and investment firm Arif Habib.

Each of the bidders deposited their sealed bids into a transparent box, as part of the formal process. "Alhamdulillah, the successful privatisation of PIA marks a historic milestone. Congratulations to the Arif Habib Group on this achievement. This milestone reflects the vision of Prime Minister Shehbaz Sharif for reforming state enterprises, restoring PIA's glory, and making air travel accessible and reliable for all Pakistanis and international travellers," said Ishaq Dar, Deputy Prime Minister & Foreign Minister of Pakistan.

"I had the privilege of supporting this process through chairing the Cabinet Committee on Privatisation. I commend the Privatisation Commission for conducting a professional, transparent, and highly competitive process, and thank the Federal Government and Field

Marshal Syed Asim Munir, for their full support in successfully concluding the transition," he added.



PROCESS AND FINAL PRICE When the bids were opened in the second phase of the ceremony, Arif Habib emerged as the highest bidder with an initial offer of Rs 115 billion. Lucky Cement followed with a bid of Rs 105.5 billion, while Airblue placed a much lower bid of Rs 26.5 billion. After the bids were revealed, the government announced a reference price of Rs 100 billion. As per the rules of the auction, the two highest bidders, Arif Habib and Lucky Cement, were invited to take part in an open auction.

Both groups then raised their bids in stages. The competition continued until the Arif Habib group offered Rs 135 billion. This bid was not matched by Lucky Cement, which decided to step back from the process. "We congratulate Arif Habib group," a member of the Lucky Cement team said while withdrawing from the bidding after the final offer.

SALE STRUCTURE AND SHARE DETAILS

The government had initially offered a 75% stake in Pakistani International Airlines. Under the terms of the deal, the successful bidder will have 90 days to purchase the remaining 25% shares of the airline. According to the rules, 92.5% of the money raised from the sale of the initial 75% stake will go directly to the airline for reinvestment. The remaining 7.5% of the proceeds will be transferred to the government. In addition to the purchase price, the investor will be required to commit Rs 80 billion in fresh investment over the next five years. This investment is expected to be used to improve operations, fleet quality and overall services.

Ashnoor Kaur

Returns To Her School As Chief Guest At Annual Festival, Calls It 'Full Circle'

Actor Ashnoor Kaur recently returned to familiar grounds, attending the annual festival of her alma mater, Ryan International School in Chembur, Mumbai, in a special role. This time, she was not among the students but was invited as the chief guest, marking a significant milestone in her journey. Ashnoor was felicitated by her former teachers in recognition of her work in the entertainment industry. She interacted with students, addressed them from the stage and spent time reliving memories from her school days. The actor was also seen signing autographs and engaging warmly with the young audience at the event.

Sharing glimpses from the festival on Instagram, Ashnoor reflected on the moment in an emotional caption. She wrote, "Truly an honour to be invited as a chief guest in my own school's festival. Life is a full circle... It felt surreal to be felicitated at the same stage I'd once represented my school, as a participant!!! #Grateful #Blessed."

In the images and videos posted online, Ashnoor is seen delivering a speech and thanking her teachers. She also spoke about how she once stood on the same stage as a student participant during school festivals, making the occasion especially meaningful.

The post quickly gained traction on social media, with fans praising her journey. One user commented, "The more you notice her, the more beautiful she becomes." Another wrote, "Once a student, now an inspiration—@ashnoorkaur representing her school as chief guest is a moment of gratitude, growth, and glory."

Ashnoor Kaur was recently seen on Bigg Boss 19, where her journey drew attention. She exited the show a week before the finale following an altercation during a task.

Born on May 3, 2004, Ashnoor began her acting career in 2009 with Jhansi Ki Rani. She later became known for roles in popular television shows including Saath Nibhaana Saathiya, Na Bole Tum Na Maine Kuch Kaha, Yeh Rishtaa Kya Kehlata Hai, Patiala Babes and Suman Indori. She has won an Indian Telly Award and received multiple nominations over the years.



Shruti Arjun

On Shifting From Films To Reality Shows: 'Wouldn't Call Them Easy Either'

Shruti Arjun, known for her lively personality and infectious energy, has opened up about shifting from films to television reality shows. Recently, the actress talked about the contrast between scripted acting and being herself on camera round the clock in reality shows. She explained that while reality shows aren't 'emotionally hard', they are not even easy.

"For me, reality shows never felt

emotionally hard because being myself comes naturally. However, I wouldn't call them easy either. The working hours are intense, we're on the floor continuously, sometimes shooting for 15-16 hours a day without proper breaks, and at times even filming two episodes in a single day," she said.

"Unlike film sets, where you get breaks when it's not your shot, reality shows demand constant presence and energy. That said, I genuinely enjoy it. Films

require switching into a character, following a script, and aligning with a director's vision, which is a different kind of challenge and honestly, I'm still exploring that space. But despite the hard work involved here, I'm enjoying the process because I'm a bit of a workaholic, and being busy keeps me motivated," Shruti added.

Reality shows often magnify every action, turning even small mistakes into defining moments. Shruti's approach to this has been refreshingly honest and fearless. Opening up about how this difference affected her personally, she shares, "It honestly didn't bother me. Everyone has flaws and everyone also has positives I have mine too. So if something becomes a moment on a reality show, it's okay. That's real life. I've never felt the need to hide anything. Accepting myself the way I am has kept me very grounded, and I think the audience appreciates that honesty."

From making a mark at a very young age in South Indian cinema to winning hearts with her entertaining and authentic presence on Bigg Boss 18, Shruti's journey has been anything but ordinary. She began her acting career early, featuring in notable films like Sri, Nala Damayanthi, Thithikudhe, and Swapnam Kondu Thulabhamram, showcasing her talent and screen presence long before reality television entered her life.



Year Ender 2025: Vicky Kaushal-Katrina Kaif To Kiara Advani-Sidharth Malhotra, Celebs Who Became Parents



Year 2025 comes to an end, and this year some of Bollywood couples' welcome biggest happiness of their life. The year turned extra special as new beginnings took center stage in their life. From Katrina Kaif-Vicky Kaushal to Kiara Advani and Sidharth Malhotra, celebrities became parents.

Here's a look at the couples:

Katrina Kaif and Vicky Kaushal are one of the most loved couples in Bollywood. And this year they have entered into most exciting phase of their life. The couple welcomed a baby boy on November 7, 2025. They shared a joint statement on social media, announcing the arrival of their baby boy. "Our bundle of joy has arrived. With immense love and gratitude, we welcome our baby boy. 7th November 2025, Katrina & Vicky," the statement read.

Reportedly, Katrina gave birth in Sir H.N. Reliance Foundation Hospital in Mumbai. Soon after the announcement was made, fans and friends rushed to the comments section to send wishes to the new parents.

In September this year, Bollywood's favourite couple, Katrina Kaif and Vicky Kaushal, officially announced that they are expecting their first child together. The couple shared a black and white polaroid picture of themselves grinning from ear to ear. The actress was seen cradling her baby bump while Vicky lovingly caressed her belly. "On our way to start the best chapter of our lives with hearts full of joy and gratitude," the caption read.

Rajkummar Rao and Patralekhaa welcomed baby girl on November 15. The couple issued a joint statement and revealed that their little princess arrived this morning, i.e. on the occasion of their fourth wedding anniversary. "We are over the moon. God has blessed us with a baby girl," the couple wrote and then added, "The greatest blessing God has given us on our 4th wedding anniversary." Previously, Patralekhaa talked about being pregnant when she told Hindustan Times, "We are super excited. Firstly, the baby's coming, and also, professionally, our first production is going to come out in a couple of months. We are also editing our second film. So there's a lot happening, and it's an exciting phase." "Me being pregnant has been the source of light for me this year. It's actually a very strange journey that you take."

Ravie Dubey Turns 43: Wife Sargun Mehta, BFF Nia Sharma Shower Him With Love



Television actor Ravie Dubey is celebrating his 43rd birthday today, December 29. On the special occasion, wishes have been pouring in from all quarters. But the most special message came from his BFF, Rithvik Dhanjani. The duo have appeared on the stunt-based reality show Khatron Ke Khiladi 8, hosted by film director Rohit Shetty.

Now, Rithvik Dhanjani posted a series of pictures on Instagram, offering fans a glimpse into Ravie Dubey's midnight birthday celebration. The first couple of snaps captured the two striking goofy poses at the camera. While Rithvik exhibited a playful expression, the birthday boy displayed a victory gesture.

Rithvik Dhanjani And Ravie Dubey's Goofy Moment

For his big day, Ravie Dubey was dressed in an oversized black shirt and a pair of matching pants. Black-tinted sunglasses sealed his dapper avatar. Rithvik Dhanjani, on the other hand, picked out a yellow-ochre sweatshirt and black trousers. In one photo, Rithvik was seen pulling his friend's cheek playfully. Ravie's wife-actress Sargun Mehta, alongside actor Karan Wahi, also made it to another frame. All of them flashed beaming smiles at the lens.

Rithvik Dhanjani's side note read, "Happy birthday meri jaanaaa (my love)!!!! Tujhe bappa duniya ki saari khushiya tohfe mein dein!! (May Lord Ganesha give you every happiness in the world. May you forever and ever be the king that you are.)"

Nia Sharma And Sargun Mehta Wish Ravi Dubey

Actress Nia Sharma, who was also present at the party, extended her heartfelt birthday greetings to her "fav bestie". She also shares sneak peeks from the bash on Instagram. It was the opening photograph featuring Nia and Ravie Dubey's warm camaraderie that left fans gushing.

"Happy Birthday, fav. bestie. 14 yearsssss onnnn.. From Annoying to Awesome, you have hit it out of the park with your hard work and perseverance. Proud of you, friend," she captioned the post.



7 ways to keep your kid Stress-free During exams

Your child is appearing for boards, but you're the one popping a stress vessel? 7 ways to keep it together for your kid.

Cuffe Parade resident Poonam Chawla vividly remembers the March of 2013. Her son Rohan was appearing for his 12th standard examination. Rohan aspired to study abroad and much of his hopes were pinned on the exams and the impending results. He dreamt of nothing less than a 90 per cent. Poonam found herself completely engulfed with the idea and took on the mantle to fulfil his desire. It wasn't just the examination that caused her anxiety - the thought of her son's dream of studying abroad crumbling, should his percent not be up to the mark, made her go off the deep end.

Poonam found her solace in Buddhist chanting. Each time she felt her anxiety levels soaring, she would gather with her friends and chant. "I realised I was passing on my anxiety to my son, which would frustrate him," she recalls. "So

much so, each time he would find me getting anxious, he would tell me, 'mama, please go chant'". While examination patterns have evolved, experts claim, parents - when confronted, literally, with testing situations like the pressing board exams - haven't. Nearly fortnight ahead of the HSC board exam (the first among the many important examinations that will follow), our panel of experts suggest seven ways you can avoid being the nagging monster and be a support system, instead.

Just stay calm

Displaying your nervousness to the child is quite common with parents. But it doesn't help. In a case like this, either the child turns into a complete rebel and deliberately does not study, or gets so nervous because of their parents' mounting pressure, that he/she will simply not be able to perform. Clinical psychologist, Salma Prabhu shares, "Children often get exasperated, if parents continuously

tell them what to do and how to do it. This not only disturbs them, but also leaves a feeling of anxiety and insecurity regarding the upcoming exams. They may lose their confidence." Your best bet? Keep calm and let your child carry on. If you're unable to, seek counselling.

Leave your old-school ideas behind

"When I was preparing for my boards more than a decade ago, everyone was concerned about marks," says Azmin Mistry, an English teacher with a south Mumbai school. "But we now realise that these marks don't matter. If we are kinder towards exams, exams will be kinder to us." Enjoy the process. Tell your child to study to expand his/her knowledge. If you only focus on the grades, it puts undue pressure on them. "Besides, those who do well in school may not necessarily do well in life, and the reverse is also true. So, don't base your child's self-worth based on these exams," says former president of the

Bombay Psychiatrist Society, Dr Kersi Chavda. "One is 15 or 16 when appearing for these exams, and parents must understand they have a whole life ahead of them. Doing poorly in an exam is not a sign that they are a failure in life."



Be a support system
You don't have to put your life on hold for your child's exams. Continue with your job and social activities through the year. It's only around the time of the examinations that you may choose to be home to make things comfortable and easy for them. Be around to keep the house calm and peaceful, keep the fragrance pleasant and speak of only positive outcomes. Ensure that they are sleeping well, eating adequately and exercising daily, as these three factors help alleviate stress levels. Don't simply nag them to study. Learning is about absorbing, and that can only happen if the child is sufficiently relaxed and rested. Trying to memorise and learn new concepts till the end may result in memory loss or tiredness during the time of actual performance. "And know that exams are a bit about luck," points out Dr Chavda. "If your child has studied diligently and is still unable to perform for some reason, spare the rod."

Know the child's capacity

Many parents feel anxious when their children don't seem to juggle their time well or are a tad tired towards the end of the examination. "This is bound to happen in some cases as children

have been running to different classes and have been solving umpteen number of papers and have been practising a lot," says Prabhu. Parents need not panic and immediately start talking of the worst case scenarios and how this will lead to low scores. "Know that your child has a limit and will only be able to perform to the best of his/her ability. Accept their limitations. As a thumb rule don't compare, not even if their sibling is a class topper." Besides, suggests Prabhu, "avoid talking to too many people on your WhatsApp groups about what to serve your children, where to seek last minute help, ask how much children must sleep. Trust the children and observe what is best for them as every child is different."

Ranjana Guha, a retired junior college professor, explains, "One must instil the idea of self-study, rather than depend on tuitions." Sometimes, coaching classes add pressure and make hogwash promises. This leads to building unreasonable expectations in the parents' minds.

No talking shop

Focus on the here and now. This is not the time to discuss what stream or career path they shall be taking, or, worse still, speak about a profession you would like them to take up. "In such situations, talking about it leads to low self-esteem and feeling of letting their parents down," says Prabhu. "So do not pressurise your children. If they don't do well, they shall

have to opt for Commerce and Arts and not Science isn't helpful at this time."

Be sure, conversations during this time are pleasant and different, rather than the board exam results and its consequences.

Steer clear of outside pressure

For your child's sake, and yours, avoid those friends, neighbours and relatives who give unsolicited advice and keep asking your kid what they want to be in life. This will create expectations in your mind and your child will only be bogged down by it. This is not the time to let others also come and create a cloud of anxiety and tension. "Playing Mozart and santoor stimulates the right nerves of the brain leading to good concentration and memory," advises Prabhu. "This will not only calm you as a parent but also help the children perform well." Dr Chavda adds, if it's the school which is the defaulter putting pressure, go up to the principal or teacher and have a frank chat. "Just because he/she maybe topping his class doesn't mean that he/she will become board ranker," he says.

Don't compare

As parents your level of confidence in your children is what boosts their self-esteem and self-confidence. Do not compare them or give examples of relatives and friends who have scored well and have got great admissions, or alternatively who have scored low and have had to settle for mediocre institutes or pay donations. "Parents feel by comparing children to others, they are creating a competitive spirit. However, no one likes to be compared," says Prabhu. "Instead of feeling competitive, many children just give up thinking, my parents are never satisfied and nothing can make them happy, so why bother." Keep reassuring them that you trust them and you love them no matter what they score.

How to survive a family trip



Getting ready for a trip with your family? Managing kids on the go and also ensuring you stick to your itinerary at the same time is a humongous task.

Here are some ways to help you avoid meltdowns, so that you can take in the sights and sounds without feeling overwhelmed.

Packing hacks

Getting your suitcase ready is not just about throwing in clothes and essentials according to the duration of your trip. Keep in mind the following to save your sanity.

- Fold the clothes in pairs and put them in a pouch. Once you've worn them, stash them away in the same bag.

- Choose apparels that are wrinkle-resistant. This way, you'll save time trying to iron the creases out.

- Layer clothes with a laundry bag or sheets. Place rolled clothes at the bottom of the suitcase and folded ones next. You will find that removing what you need from the bag is easier this way.

- Stuff socks in your shoes. You can also use your footwear to store neatly folded chargers and cables.

Alternatively, you can use socks to store perfumes and other breakable items.

- Use pill bottles and lens cases to group your jewellery and earrings.

- Place a plastic sheet between the bottles of your make-up lotions and foundations and its lids to avoid spilling the content all over your

other belongings and ruining them.

- Buy travel-sized utilities, like toothpaste, body wash and shampoos, which can be thrown into dustbins later.

On-the-move hacks

From screaming toddlers to elders who want to take a loo break, you need to know how to handle them all.

- When on the move, dress your kids in layers. If they spill on themselves, you can simply remove the dress that's on the top instead of hunting for a whole new set in your bag. This also comes in handy when you don't know how the temperature outside will be as you can adjust the layers accordingly.

- When you check in at the counter, make sure seat arrangements are in tandem and the meals are according to your taste.

- Cover the seats with towels. In case your little ones decide to play holi in the car, you will only have to wash the towels and not spend your energy scrubbing the seat covers clean.

- Have board games and books handy. If you want to entertain your children, play simple games like I Spy or narrate a story based on things you spot outside

the window. You can also keep them occupied by narrating anecdotes about your family.

- Keep a stock of snacks (the more colourful, the better); it not only keeps hunger pangs at bay, but also doubles up as a toy with which kids can play 'organising games'.

- If the young ones are getting impatient and want to know exactly how long will it be before they reach the destination, ask them to figure it out themselves with a map! Keep tablets and adult munchies in a separate bag so that they're easily accessible when elders ask for them.

- If you are flying, give chewing gums or lol lipos to the children and elders during take off and landing.

- If you have to make a pit-stop, research beforehand to find out if there are interesting locations like an adventure park or places of historical importance enroute. This way, you can check out newer places and also relax for a while.

- Have a well-stocked first aid kit. You never know when you might need it!

Hotel room hacks

If you thought you've survived the trip the minute you plonk on those comfortable beds in your hotel room, sorry to burst the bubble you're just half way into the battle.

- The golden rule is to book in advance.

- However, keep your agent or the

management informed that you are open to upgrading your tickets. Many airlines and hospitality services offer business class facilities at nominal hikes just before the date of travel. So, don't miss out on the luxury.

- If you have a baby who's just few months old, then use the hotel room's sink to bathe him/her. Don't risk using the bathroom if you are not sure you can handle it.

- Tape unused sockets and sharp corners with duct tape to child-proof the room.

- If your child is restless and unwilling to go to sleep, build a makeshift fort or tent using pillows and blankets.

- If your stomach grumbles at odd hours, then make instant noodles or eggs in the kettle. You can also use shower caps to cover leftovers and have them later.

Family members insisting on wearing ironed shirt, but can't find an iron in the room? Simply use a hair dryer.

- Invest in wi-fi base stations or download hotspot apps. If internet is not available free of charge, use these gadgets so that entire family can utilise the net by paying just for one connection.

- If you have an early wake up call, then put your phone in a glass; the alarm will sound much sharper.

- You can use a USB cable to charge your phone by just connecting it to the TV's port.

- If you are leaving behind expensive items in your room, then keep the 'do not disturb' sign on. This will ward away people with mischievous intentions.

- In most hotels, power is connected to the room cards. So, if you want to charge your phone or camera while you are enjoying a relaxed breakfast, place a membership card or old bank cards in lieu of your room card in this slot.

Encourage your child to pick the Right foods

Ask any parent how difficult it is to get their child to finish their meals sans the tantrums, and you will probably get an exasperated look. Children are notorious for their fussy eating habits. And if they have a sweet tooth, it gets even more difficult to veer them towards eating something healthy. The good news, however, is that it isn't difficult to get your child to actually relish healthy items — you simply need to know how to make food more interesting and fun. Here are some simple yet effective tips...

- Don't be sceptical to try new recipes. There are several ways in which you can make food tasty without worrying about it being unhealthy. Make a dip if your kids balk at the sight of vegetables.

- Introduce new dishes slowly so that your child gets used to the taste. Don't overwhelm them by piling their plate with health food all at once.

- Encourage your child to participate in the kitchen. Let them help you while you prepare meals so that they are aware about how much effort and time goes into cooking. Ask them to suggest foods that they enjoy eating and prepare them in different ways every time so that they can enjoy the variety.

- Lead by example. This means that if you're asking your child to resist junk food, you should do the same. Children look up to adults and if they see that you're being careless about your eating habits, they'll end up doing the same.

- Don't cut out all junk food completely. This will lead to cravings and tantrums. Instead, allow them to eat out once a week. This will balance out the equation without them feeling deprived.

- Make a schedule for the week so that you don't struggle when it comes to cooking. Once the menu is planned beforehand, you have time to be innovative and plan in advance.

Healthy food alternatives
Instead of frying, bake those fries in some coconut oil. If plain dahi is boring, add some fresh fruits to it.

Paneer bread rolls, oatmeal pancakes and puffed rice upma are tasty and healthy snacks.

Add a dash of salad dressing to a boring vegetable salad to amp up the flavour.

Encourage your child to eat a handful of nuts and fruits in-between meals.

