

Delhi demolition
drive: AIMIM chief
claims mosque land
razed, flags
amended Waqf Act

New Delhi.(Agency)
AIMIM chief Asaduddin Owaisi alleged that a portion of a Waqf-owned mosque property in Delhi was demolished during an anti-encroachment drive and blamed the Waqf (Amendment) Act, which he termed a "black law".

The incident occurred near the Faiz-e-Elahi mosque in Delhi's Ramila Maidan area on the intervening night of Tuesday and Wednesday.

Violence broke out after a social media post claimed that the mosque opposite Turkman Gate was being demolished. Police said several people hurled stones at personnel, injuring five policemen, following which tear gas shells were fired to disperse the crowd.

Addressing a rally for the Chhatrapati Sambhajinagar civic polls, Owaisi said the property demolished at around 1.30 am was Waqf land as per a gazette notification issued in 1970. He claimed the demolition drive was "just the beginning" after the passage of the Waqf Act in Parliament and urged people to respond through their votes. Owaisi alleged that the Delhi High Court had passed an incorrect order despite the gazette notification declaring the land as Waqf property.

**CPM leader says
Jamaat-e-Islami will
handle Home
Department if UDF
wins, sparks row**

New Delhi.(Agency)
A political slugfest broke out in Kerala after senior Communist Party of India (Marxist) leader AK Balan claimed that if the Congress-led United Democratic Front (UDF) came to power, the Home Department would be "handled by Jamaat-e-Islami," triggering sharp reactions from the Congress, Jamaat-e-Islami, and the BJP.

Speaking in Palakkad, Balan said, "If the UDF comes to power under any circumstances, the BJP will destroy it in two days. That should be seen seriously by Malayalis. Not just that, Jamaat-e-Islami will be handling the Home Department if they come to power." He also referred to communal violence, saying that such a situation would lead to "not just one or two Maradu riots," and alleged that the Indian Union Muslim League (IUML) and the Rashtriya Swayamsevak Sangh (RSS) were taking positions that would aid this outcome.

CONGRESS HITS BACK
Opposition Leader VD Sathesan came down heavily on the CPI(M), calling Balan's statement a divisive campaign.

**Raj Thackeray warns
BJP rule in civic
bodies will leave
'Marathi manoos'
powerless**

Mumbai.(Agency)
MNS chief Raj Thackeray has launched a scathing attack on the BJP, alleging that those seeking to separate Mumbai from Maharashtra are in power at the Centre and in the state, and warned that if they control the municipal corporations, "Marathi manoos" will be rendered powerless. In the first part of a joint interview of Raj and Shiv Sena (UBT) president Uddhav Thackeray, published in the latter's party mouthpiece Saamana on Thursday, the Maharashtra Nanirman Sena (MNS) chief said he and his cousin have come together not for their existence but for that of "Marathi manoos" in the state. The Thackeray cousins were interviewed by Sena (UBT) Rajya Sabha member and Saamana's Executive Editor Sanjay Raut and noted director Mahesh Manjrekar.

Last month, the cousins announced the alliance of their parties for the January 15 Brihanmumbai Municipal Corporation (BMC) elections. In the Saamana interview, Raj Thackeray said those from outside the state are not just coming for livelihood, but they are forming their own constituencies.

Attacks couldn't break eternal faith: PM Modi ahead of Somnath Temple visit

New Delhi.(Agency)

Prime Minister Narendra Modi has emphasised the significance of the Somnath Swabhiman Parv, which began on Thursday, as a tribute to the unbroken spirit and faith of millions associated with the Somnath Temple in Gujarat. The event marks the 1,000th anniversary of the temple's first recorded attack in January 1026, with the Prime Minister highlighting the resilience that has enabled the historic shrine to be rebuilt multiple times throughout history. The annual Somnath Swabhiman Parv will culminate in a special programme on January 11, which the Prime Minister is scheduled to attend. The celebration is intended to honour the strength shown by those who have preserved and restored the temple through repeated adversities. In a post on X, PM Modi

said, "Somnath Swabhiman Parv begins today. A thousand years ago, in January 1026, Somnath faced its first ever attack. The attack of 1026 and the subsequent attacks couldn't diminish the eternal faith of millions, nor break the civilisational spirit that rebuilt Somnath time and again. I'm sharing some pictures from my previous visits to Somnath." He also used the occasion to urge people to participate by sharing photographs from their own visits to the temple, using the hashtag #SomnathSwabhimanParv. This initiative aims to connect individuals across the nation with the ongoing commemoration, underscoring the shared heritage and historical importance of the temple. Reflecting on the broader message of the event, PM Modi added, "Somnath Swabhiman Parv



is about remembering the countless children of Bharat Mata, who never compromised with their principles and ethos. However daunting the times were, their resolve remained unshaken and their commitment to our ethos unwavering." The Prime Minister also highlighted previous commemorations, such as the event held at

Somnath on October 31, 2001, which marked fifty years since the reconstructed temple reopened in 1951. At that event, former President Rajendra Prasad was present to celebrate the restoration of the historic site. He acknowledged the contributions of several leaders to the reconstruction efforts. "The efforts of Sardar Patel, KM Munshi and several others in the reconstruction of the Somnath temple were noteworthy. The programme of 2001 was attended by then Prime Minister Atal Ji, Home Minister Advani Ji and several other dignitaries." Looking ahead, the Prime Minister noted the approaching milestone for the temple, saying, "In 2026, we will mark 75 years since the grand ceremony of 1951," adding further significance to the current year-long celebration.

ED raids Mamata Banerjee's poll strategist, she cries document 'chori'

The ED raided I-PAC offices and Pratik Jain's residence and office in Kolkata as part of a money laundering probe. Mamata Banerjee condemned the action, accusing the BJP of seizing Trinamool documents and strategy files.

Kolkata.(Agency)

High drama unfolded in Kolkata on Wednesday as the Enforcement Directorate (ED) carried out raids linked to political consultancy firm I-PAC as a part of a money laundering probe, prompting a sharp confrontation with West Bengal Chief Minister Mamata Banerjee, who accused the central agency of stealing Trinamool Congress (TMC) party documents.

The ED conducted searches at two locations: the residence of Pratik Jain, a senior I-PAC functionary, in central Kolkata, and the firm's office at the Godrej Waterside building in Sector V, Salt Lake. Jain is widely described as a key member of Mamata Banerjee's poll strategy team. As news of the raids spread, TMC leaders began assembling outside the Salt Lake office. Bidhannagar Police Commissioner also reached the spot amid rising tension. Banerjee, who was initially at one of the locations, later moved towards the Sector V office. Speaking to reporters, Banerjee alleged that the ED raid was aimed at accessing her party's internal political material. "It is most unfortunate that the ED came to our office to collect candidate lists, party strategy, plans and confidential documents," the Chief Minister alleged. Banerjee directly targeted Union Home Minister



Amit Shah, accusing him of orchestrating the action. "The nasty and naughty Home Minister who cannot keep the country safe is behind this. Amit Shah wants to collect our party's candidate list," she said, adding that names were being deleted in one case while documents were being taken in another.

She claimed that documents were taken without adequate safeguards. "They are taking my party documents. There were no guards. On one side there is the SIR case where names are being deleted, and on the other, they are collecting documents," she said.

Questioning the legality of the move, Banerjee asked whether it was the ED's mandate to seize political material. "Is it the duty of the ED and the home minister to collect

candidate lists, party strategy and party plans?" she said. Drawing a comparison, Banerjee added, "If I get BJP party documents, what will be the result?"

She said she personally intervened after learning about the raid. "I rang up Pratik because he is in charge of my party's work. ED has raided my IT office in Sector V, so I am moving there as well," Banerjee said, as she proceeded to the Salt Lake location. The Chief Minister has also called for a statewide protest at 4 pm today.

Spoke about Tamil Nadu, no alliance talks: Edappadi Palaniswami on Amit Shah meet

AIADMK general secretary Edappadi K Palaniswami said he met Union Home Minister Amit Shah in Delhi but did not discuss alliances. He alleged rising debt, worsening law and order, and ruled out Sasikala and OPS.

Tamil Nadu.(Agency)

AIADMK general secretary Edappadi K Palaniswami said he met Union Home Minister Amit Shah to discuss the political situation in Tamil Nadu, but clarified that alliance-related matters were not taken up during the meeting. Palaniswami left for Delhi soon after announcing that the Pattali Makkal Katchi (PMK) would join the NDA for the 2026 Tamil Nadu assembly elections.

Speaking at Tamil Nadu House in Delhi, Palaniswami said he could not meet Shah earlier when the Union Minister was in Pudukkottai due to prior commitments. He added that Shah had already made it clear that he would not interfere in the AIADMK's

internal affairs. The AIADMK leader said certain parties were in talks with his party and that details would be disclosed once they formally joined, adding that secrecy would be maintained until then.

Reiterating his stand on party affairs, Palaniswami said there was no question of VK Sasikala returning to the AIADMK and ruled out any possibility of O Panneerselvam rejoining the party. He said the AIADMK remained strong and pointed out that its alliance had won 72 constituencies in the 2021 Assembly elections.

Responding to Chief Minister MK Stalin's



remarks on "outsiders" ruling Tamil Nadu, Palaniswami said the AIADMK was leading its alliance.

He said the DMK was allied with the Congress and referred to the Emergency, MISA, and the anti-Hindi agitations. He also recalled that the DMK had allied with the BJP in 1999, adding that political alliances changed with circumstances and that the people were bigger than any party or leader. Palaniswami alleged that law and order in Tamil Nadu had deteriorated and said the state's debt stood at Rs 5.5 lakh crore. He also said documents related to an alleged scam had been submitted to the Governor, adding that the Enforcement Directorate had flagged the issue and sought the registration of an FIR, which he said happened after court intervention.

Arvind Kejriwal & CM Bhagwant Singh Mann meet Punjab's traders & shopkeepers

The Sikh Times

Punjab: During the maiden meeting of the Punjab State Traders Commission held in SAS Nagar, Aam Aadmi Party (AAP) National Convenor Arvind Kejriwal and Punjab Chief Minister Bhagwant Singh Mann marked the commission as a decisive step to end years of neglect and bureaucratic harassment faced by traders. The AAP Chief said shopkeepers would no longer be forced to run from office to office, as the AAP government has taken governance directly to markets. Declaring the initiative as the beginning of a new era of business reform in Punjab, Arvind Kejriwal said the commission would simplify the tax system, end an era of tax terrorism, and remove needless procedural hurdles. CM Bhagwant Singh Mann, echoing the sentiment, underlined that shopkeepers were the true patriots who drive the economy and expressed confidence that the commission would decisively safeguard the welfare and dignity of traders across the state. Addressing the gathering, AAP National Convenor Arvind Kejriwal stated, "Today, a

new beginning is taking place for small shopkeepers, traders and markets, towards whom no one ever paid attention until now. All those who have been made members of these commissions at different levels and have been given this responsibility, I congratulate all wholeheartedly. Our government has completed four years, and a very beautiful scene caught my attention just now. All of you sitting in this hall are not our party workers. You are independent people. Some of you are presidents of market associations, some represent sector wise trade associations like textiles and tiles, and you come from different backgrounds. You are all independent individuals."

Reflecting on public sentiment after four years of governance, he continued, "It is often said that after four years, strong anti incumbency sets in and people become angry for one reason or another. Before us, there was the Congress government, and before that, the

Shiromani Akali Dal government. After four years, they would face such abuse that I do not think the Congress government would have



returned, so much abuse would have followed. I listened very carefully just now and heard people praising the work, that it has worked well over four years." Speaking about perceptions of traders, Arvind Kejriwal said, "Till now in our country, traders and businessmen have been viewed with a very negative mindset. No matter which governments came or which parties ruled, everyone treated traders as thieves. Every government thinks they are thieves and should be looted. The government extracts money through taxes. The entire Goods and Services Tax (GST) regime exists, and we cannot change it right now. I pray that one day our government is formed at the Centre and we free you from GST. There is a kind of tax terrorism going on. On one side, the government squeezes you through taxes, and on the other side, political parties squeeze you as well. They remember you only during elections, to extract money in the name of donations, and throughout the five years to take bribes. All governments consider traders to be thieves."

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News box

Manager found hanging at PG in Gurgaon's Sector 38

Gurgaon.(Agency)

Two men were found dead by hanging in separate incidents reported from different parts of the city on Tuesday, police said. In the first case, a 29-year-old manager working with a private logistics company was found hanging inside his paying guest accommodation in Sector 38 on Tuesday morning. The deceased was identified as Pratik Pandey, a native of Kolkata, West Bengal, who was employed with Delhivery and lived alone in the rented premises.

Police said the incident came to light after a friend raised an alarm when Pandey did not respond to repeated phone calls. The caretaker of the PG facility also noticed that Pandey had not stepped out of his room in the morning, which was unusual. A call was made to police around 6.45 am, following which a team reached the spot.

Upon arrival, police broke open the locked room and found Pandey hanging inside. The room was inspected and no immediate signs of a struggle were noticed during the initial examination. No suicide note was recovered during the preliminary search. An officer said the circumstances surrounding the death are being examined from all angles, and statements of the caretaker and other residents of the PG facility are being recorded to establish the sequence of events. Police are also trying to ascertain whether Pandey faced any personal or professional stress. His family members have been informed. Inquest proceedings were initiated under Section 194 of the Bharatiya Nagarik Suraksha Sanhita (BNSS), after which the body was sent for post-mortem examination. Following the post-mortem, the body was handed over to the family for last rites.

Meanwhile, Pandey's brother submitted a complaint alleging abetment to suicide against a woman. Police did not disclose the identity of the person named in the complaint. A senior officer said the matter is under investigation and the alleged accused will be questioned. As of now, no role has been established. Sources said police later found a note in which the deceased stated that he took the step of his own volition.

SC serves notice to Centre & CPCB, seeks reply on plea against NGT order in Gurgaon's Ambience Lagoon case

Ghaziabad.(Agency)

Supreme Court on Tuesday issued notices to the Centre and Central Pollution Control Board (CPCB) on a civil appeal challenging a National Green Tribunal (NGT) order that dismissed allegations that a luxury apartment complex in DLF 3 was built by illegally diverting a notified protected forest land. The appeal was filed by retired IFS officer RK Sharma and journalist and social worker Pawan Kumar Bansal. The duo challenged the NGT's July 11, 2024 order, in which the tribunal dismissed their plea pertaining to the area near the Delhi-Gurgaon border. Bansal told TOI they went to court to challenge what they believe is "commercial construction" on protected forest land. "We pleaded before NGT against illegal encroachment and construction of Ambience Island Lagoon Apartments on the Sikandarpur-Nathupur bundh and Nathupur drain," Bansal said. The matter was heard by a division bench of Chief Justice Surya Kant and Justice Joymalya Bagchi, which issued notices returnable on March 23.

The bench also permitted the petitioners to appear and argue the matter in person. The petitioners pointed out that a case filed earlier by the Haryana govt against the developer before the environment court in Faridabad was later withdrawn by the state.

CAQM wants rechecks on roads in Noida after TOI report on dust pollution

Noida.(Agency)

The Commission for Air Quality Management (CAQM) has directed the UP Pollution Control Board (UPPCB) to conduct a fresh inspection of dust-prone stretches across the city and submit its report by Jan 12.

The order comes after a TOI report, 'City choked, but CAQM team can't see dust on roads', on Wednesday flagged that Noida, one of the most polluted NCR cities, had only four dust bowls. A CAQM survey on Monday of 142 roads, including the MP-1 stretch from Rajnigandha Chowk to Sectors 12 and 22, MP-2 from Film City to Sector 60, MP-3 from Kalindi Kunj to City Centre, and several internal roads across 7 sectors and along the Noida Expressway, found low or no visible dust at most of these spots. The report stated that only four roads recorded high-level visible dust and 24 moderate dust. Sixty-six stretches were categorised under low-dust intensity, and 48 in dust-free categories. Sources told TOI most of these inspected stretches were those that saw regular mechanical sweeping. The findings drew strong reactions from residents, who alleged that the inspection teams failed to visit actual dust hotspots. "I am amazed that the team could not find dust on Sector 142 road, whereas residents daily see dust mainly spread by trucks carrying construction material. The teams should also visit roads in Sector 45 near Amrapali Sapphire and Sector 94 near Noida Authority's office to see the dust," said a Sector 45 resident. Amit Gupta, a resident of Prateek Wisteria in Sector 77, said he wrote to CAQM stating that the findings appeared disconnected from ground reality. "I also mentioned some spots which have a high intensity of dust pollution. The Commission, in its reply, said that it directed the UPPCB Noida to inspect these locations and submit a report by Jan 12," he said. Gupta listed nearly 20 locations, including Kendriya Vihar service road in Sector 51, opposite Cloudnine Hospital Sector 51, near Homes 121, near Metro Station Sector 61, near Fortis Hospital cut in Sector 62, and Jalvayu Vihar Sector 25, among others. The inspection drive, conducted under 'Operation Clean Air', had flagged higher dust levels in parts of Sector 122, largely due to ongoing construction activity in surrounding areas. Excess dust was also observed under the newly opened Bhangal elevated road. Another stretch highlighted as a dust hotspot was the Yamuna Pushta road, which officials said is in poor condition and damaged at several points.

Avian guests giving Dhanauri a miss, waterbird census flags 50% dip in sightings over 5 years

Noida.(Agency)

The Asian Waterbird Census (AWC) has indicated a sharp decline in sightings of indigenous and migratory birds at Dhanauri, a prime pit stop for migratory birds in the Central Asian Flyway, where the state proposes to develop a biodiversity park. Heavily encroached, the wetland's bird population and species have been dwindling over the last few years. A total of 1,179 birds spanning 32 species—only 14 of them migratory—were spotted at the wetland during the census this weekend. This is nearly half the number of birds sighted barely five years ago. In 2022, the AWC recorded 2,459 in the wetland spanning 40 bird species, including 20 migratory.

TK Roy, AWC Delhi-NCR state coordinator under Wetlands International South Asia, told TOI that anthropogenic activities, like farming and construction, in and around the wetland, disturbed the natural habitat of the waterbirds, and a time may come when these birds completely abandon Dhanauri. Over the



years, environmental activists have repeatedly flagged that as peripheral wetlands dried up, farming rapidly encroached on the bird habitat, even as human settlements moved closer, bringing stray dogs that preyed on birds. "It is already too late for conservation measures—significant damage has been done," Roy said, stressing the urgent need

to clearly demarcate and protect the wetland from human activity. Known to be a home to Sarus cranes, UP's state bird, Dhanauri has long awaited a Ramsar designation, which would give it international recognition and strict protective status. In Dec last year, UP govt said it would not seek the tag for the wetland because of its proximity to

residential sectors and the Noida International Airport. Instead, the Yamuna Expressway Industrial Development Authority (YEIDA) has proposed to develop the area as a biodiversity park spanning 112 hectares. According to the AWC data, 32 species have visited the wetland this year, higher than the 29 spotted last year, but the overall number of birds declined from 1,352 last year to 1,179 this year. "We cannot take comfort in the rise in species count, as only one Wood Sandpiper and one Citrine Wagtail were recorded, apart from an indigenous species, and even those sightings were in single digits," Roy said.

"This year, just six Sarus cranes were spotted at the wetland, compared with five documented last year." Roy said that once the Noida airport becomes operational, frequent aircraft movement along the Central Asian Flyway was likely to further deter migratory birds from using Dhanauri as a preferred stopover.

Noida breathes easy as air quality improves, but braces for cold day

Noida.(Agency)

The region's air quality shifted back to 'poor' on Wednesday after having deteriorated to 'very poor' the day before. Morning fog reduced visibility to below 500 metres, before easing later in the day. Noida logged an AQI of 288, against 341 the day before, while Greater Noida's AQI shifted to 298 from 320. In Ghaziabad, the AQI was recorded at 276, compared to 322 on Tuesday. In Delhi, the AQI was also in the 'poor' category at 289.

According to data from the Central Pollution Control Board (CPCB) portal, the Sector 116 air monitoring station recorded the worst air quality in the city with an AQI of 312 (very poor), followed by Sector 62 (AQI 295), Sector 1 (AQI 293) and Sector 125 (AQI 293)—all three in the 'poor' range. In Greater Noida, Knowledge Park V (AQI 316) recorded 'very poor' air, while Knowledge Park III (AQI 280) was in the 'poor' range. In Ghaziabad, Vasundhara (AQI 337) 'very poor' air, while Sanjay Nagar (AQI 259) and Indirapuram (AQI 233) were both in the 'poor' category. Data from the Loni station was not available on Wednesday. Minimum temperature on Wednesday was 8.6 degrees Celsius, while maximum temperature was 16.7 degrees. India Meteorological Department forecast cold day conditions in the area on Thursday.

According to Indian Institute of Tropical Meteorology, predominant surface winds blew from the north-west direction, with wind speeds up to 16 kmph during the afternoon hours. The wind speed decreased to less than 10 kmph from the west direction during the evening and night. On Thursday, the city will record mainly clear skies, with moderate fog in many places and dense fog in isolated places during the morning hours. Predominant surface wind is likely to be from west direction, with wind speeds reaching up to 10 kmph during morning hours. Wind speed will increase to 16 kmph in the afternoon and then decrease to less than 5 kmph during the evening and night.

Design Gurgaon-Faridabad Road as leopard corridor with underpasses, fencing & speed curbs, NHAI told

Gurgaon.(Agency)

Haryana's wildlife department asked National Highways Authority of India (NHAI) last week to redesign Gurgaon-Faridabad Road as a wildlife corridor.

The push for a corridor—with underpasses, fencing and stricter speed control—comes in the wake of a series of leopard deaths in road accidents on the stretch of the Aravalis. Flagging the road as "a high-risk stretch for wildlife and motorists", principal chief conservator of forests and chief wildlife warden Vivek Saxena wrote to NHAI chairperson Santosh Kumar Yadav to conduct a feasibility study with wildlife experts and local authorities to map movement zones and plan interventions in line with the environment ministry's guidelines for eco-friendly linear infrastructure. The proposals for Gurgaon-Faridabad Road include wildlife underpasses and overpasses at identified crossing points, fencing along vulnerable sections, enforcement of lower speed limits with detectors, clearer warning

signage and red table-top markings to alert drivers in sensitive patches. The communication also refers to discussions on installing concrete barriers along the most dangerous stretches to prevent animals from straying onto the road.



The department cited examples such as NH44, where speed limits were reduced in tiger corridors, and NH45 in Madhya Pradesh, where wildlife-safe crossings, fencing and visual alerts were introduced. Conservator of wildlife (South Haryana) Subhash Yadav told TOI, "We made a plan to prevent more accidents. We will clean

the existing culverts to ensure smooth cross-over by wildlife." At least seven leopards were killed in vehicle collisions on this road and adjoining highways since 2015, according to official records and field reports. The latest incident was reported in Aug 2025, when a two-and-a-half-year-old female leopard was found dead on the Gurgaon-Faridabad stretch with injuries consistent with a high-speed impact, likely from a heavy vehicle.

This means the highway now cuts through active leopard movement zones without safeguards that other wildlife corridors in the country already have. The Aravali hills in south Haryana support a small resident leopard population alongside jackals, hyenas, nilgai and other wildlife. Conservation groups warned that fast-paced urbanisation and traffic volumes on the Gurgaon-Faridabad corridor narrowed safe passageways for animals, increasing the risk of fatal collisions.

Housing for workers, IMT expansion: Haryana announces major urban push

Gurgaon.(Agency)

Improved living conditions near workplaces, IMT expansion, a convention centre and RRTS. These form part of a sweeping development push aimed at strengthening Haryana's industrial ecosystem and urban infrastructure. Land was earmarked to build dormitories and single-room accommodation for workers, with 5 acres set aside in IMT Bawal, 2.76 acres in IMT Faridabad and 5.47 acres in IMT Sohna.

On Wednesday, CM Nayab Singh Saini outlined the initiatives while continuing the series of meetings as part of pre-budget consultations with different stakeholders. He interacted with industry leaders and

professional groups to receive their feedback and suggestions for the upcoming state budget. The Haryana CM said that several suggestions were received during the pre-budget consultation meeting. "There will be a special focus on budgetary provisions for Haryana's industrial development. The more concrete and implementable the suggestions, the more effective the budget will be," said the CM.

He emphasised that every suggestion served as a guiding input and personally assured that all proposals would be considered seriously. The govt also identified nearly 5,800 acres for expanding IMT Kharkhoda, to be acquired under

Industrial Policy-2022 at Rs 3 crore per acre, signalling rapid industrial scaling. In Sonipat's Kharkhoda, a 10,000-acre satellite city is planned to support future population and economic growth. A wholesale market is proposed in Rai, drawing early interest from traders.

The state also reaffirmed its commitment to an EV Park, while a Rs 70,000 crore RRTS DPR is ready, with tenders expected soon. A convention centre is planned in Manesar. Assuring that he would fulfil the promises to be made in the budget, the CM said the govt was seriously working to implement the announcements made in the last budget, and many of the announcements became

Gurgaon to slap FIRs against those driving wrong side

Noida.(Agency)

City police have decided to get tougher on wrong-side driving, deciding to file FIRs against motorists found moving against the traffic, particularly on highways and major arterial roads. Police officials said criminal cases in such matters were earlier registered only in rare and exceptional circumstances. But with wrongside driving emerging as one of the leading causes of accidents in the city, FIRs will now be lodged in a more "rigid and consistent manner" under BNS sections involving rash driving, causing death by negligence and as the situation may warrant. As per police data, as many as 2 lakh vehicles were challaned for wrong-side driving in the city through 2025. Traffic police officials admitted that merely issuing challans was not enough to deter habitual offenders. "Despite regular enforcement drives, barricading and awareness campaigns, the high number of violations on roads suggests that the problem is widespread. This prompted the stricter enforcement strategy of getting FIRs registered against

offenders," a police official said. According to police sources, the FIRs will be registered mostly in cases of repeat offenders. "But in case anyone is found driving on the wrong side on highways, expressways or key arterial roads, an FIR can be registered against a first-time offender too," the official said. The wider traffic violation data for 2025 underlined the scale of indiscipline on the city's roads. During the year, 1.1 lakh cases of speeding were recorded, while 1.9 lakh motorists were fined for wrong-side parking. Sudden lane changing led to 79,615 challans. Police also issued 3.9 lakh challans for riding without a helmet and 4.5 lakh cases of triple riding or pillion violations. In addition, 5,812 drivers were challaned for using mobile phones while driving, which, police said, was another emerging reason for accidents. Police said these were not isolated lapses, but repeated, everyday violations that created conflict points on fastmoving roads, raised the risk of accidents and left little room for error for other motorists and pedestrians. A comparison with

2024 figures showed a sharp rise in several categories. In 2024, the city police fined 1.8 lakh drivers for wrong-side driving, 18,444 for speeding, 1.6 lakh for wrong-side parking, and 61,780 for unsafe lane changing. That year also saw 2.3 lakh cases of riding without a helmet, 2.6 lakh pillion riding violations, and 4,297 cases of mobile phone use while driving. Police said the jump in violations, especially wrongside driving and helmetless riding, reinforced the view that stronger deterrents were required. "The objective is to send a clear message that traffic violations threatening public safety will no longer be tolerated. Violators on high-speed corridors will face criminal action under relevant legal provisions. The enforcement will be closely monitored by the traffic department, with special focus on repeat offenders and cases where lives were clearly put at risk," the official said.

Asked about sections such FIRs would involve, the official said,

"It will obviously depend on the circumstances. By and large, they may include sections 281 (rash or negligent driving endangering life) 121 (voluntarily causing hurt to a public servant or deterring them from duty and so on.)" Apart from enforcement, cops have been carrying out traffic awareness programmes across the city, holding workshops and interactions with truck and bus drivers, school transport operators, auto-rickshaw and corporate drivers to stress on the dangers of wrong-side driving and the importance of lane discipline. On Friday, DCP (traffic) Rajesh Mohan inspected key traffic points, including the Manesar-Bilaspur-Rathiwas stretch, and issued directions for immediate pothole repairs, improved barricading, better deployment of traffic marshals, upgraded service lanes and clearer signage, along with safe pedestrian crossings.

Police said such inspections would continue regularly and appealed to residents to cooperate by following traffic rules responsibly. Wrong-side driving is potentially a life-threatening traffic violation. In the past, challans have been issued by cops to little effect. Gurgaon Police's decision to

file FIRs against such errant drivers will certainly raise the deterrence level. Cops in other parts of NCR should follow suit. However, a long-term solution lies only in putting

THE SIKH TIMES

Edited, Printed, Published
Owned by Simmi Babbar
N-31, Dr. Mukherjee Nagar
Delhi-110009

Printed at Qaumi Patrika Printing
Press, A4/A144, Tronica City
(Loni), Ghaziabad (Uttar Pradesh)

Corporate Office:
5, Bahadur Shah Zafar Marg,
Press Area, ITO, New Delhi

Editor-in-Chief
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RNI No. DELENG/2008/25465

Crime Review Meeting Held in Muzaffarnagar

The Sikh Times

Manoj Pal

Muzaffarnagar: District-level crime review meeting was held on Thursday at the auditorium of the Reserve Police Lines, where senior police officials reviewed the law and order situation and issued strict instructions to strengthen crime control across the district. The meeting was chaired by SSP Sanjay Verma, who directed police officers to maintain constant surveillance on top-10 criminals and history-sheets and to take firm legal action against anti-social elements. He stressed the need for close coordination.

NAME CHANGE

I IDRISON KHAN W/O MUNNE KHAN R/O 28 B LIG FLAT POCKET-12 JASOLA VIHAR NEW FRIENDS COLONY DELHI-110025 HAVE CHANGED MY NAME TO IDRISAN KHAN

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It is for general information that Atul S/o Chote Lal R/o C-348 RPF Line Jhuggi, Daya Basti, Oknagar S.O. North West Delhi, Delhi-110035 declare that name of my father has been wrongly written as Choteyal in my 10th and 12th Class Educational Documents. The actual name of my father is Chote Lal.

NAME CHANGE

I, hitherto known as SUSHILA DEVI W/O RAM KISHOR TIWARI R/O House No.139, Gali No.1, Village Gopal Pur, Dr. Mukherjee Nagar, North West Delhi, Delhi-110009 have changed my name and shall hereafter be known as CHOTI TIWARI.

NAME CHANGE

I hitherto known as SARITA DUBAY alias SARITA D/O RAJESH R/O House No-211, Singh, North West Delhi, Delhi-110040 Have changed my name and shall hereafter be known as SARITA DUBAY.

NAME CHANGE

I hitherto known as BELA D/ANNU SHARMA, R/o 28/1/2-C, Gali No.1, East Azad Nagar, Krishna Nagar, East Delhi-110051, have changed my name and shall hereafter be known as ZOYA. I have changed only my name not my religion.

NAME CHANGE

I Nisha Gaur W/O Piyush Gaur Add.C -4/5 Second Floor Krishna Nagar Delhi 110051 Changed my name Nisha Sharma

NAME CHANGE

I, Vickey Kumar S/o Vinod Kumar R/o H.No.E-107-C, Gali No.3, Behind Nala, Bhagirathi Vihar, Gopal Pur, Delhi-110094 have changed my name to Vickey Kumar Sharma.

NAME CHANGE

I, Sudarshan Kumar S/O Hari Chand Gupta R/O 84/4 block-40, singh sahab road Shakti nager malka ganj north delhi 110007 changed my name to Sudarshan Kumar Gupta.

NAME CHANGE

I, Md Khurshed Alam S/O Ali Syed R/O plot no -82-D block gall no 13, khasra no 43/4, baprola vihar Najafgarh South West Delhi 110043 changed my name to Khurshed Alam.

NAME CHANGE

I, hitherto known as MOHAMMAD ALIM KHAN S/O MANSOOR ALI, R/O 501, 4TH FLOOR, G-79, JUMEIRAH APARTMENT, ABUL FAZAL-I, JAMIA NAGAR, OKHLA, South East Delhi-110025, have changed my name and shall hereafter be known as MOHD ALIM KHAN for all purposes.

NAME CHANGE

I, SHAFALI MAHESHBHAI KHURANA W/O PANKAJ WADHWARO H.NO. 2962 GALI NO. 7 NEAR GANESH MANDIR JAWAHAR COLONY FARIDABAD HARYANA 121001, I have changed my name to KHURANA SHAIFALI Permanently for all Future purpose

NAME CHANGE

I GHAN SHYAM S/O SUKHIBIR SINGH R/O PLOT NO 350 AND 351, 1ST FLOOR BACK SIDE FLAT NO 04 BLOCK P PARSHURAM CHOWK MOHAN GARDEN DELHI-110059, I have changed my name to GHANSHYAM KUMAR Permanently for all Future purpose

tion with village heads, public representatives, and respectable citizens to maintain peace at the grassroots level. The meeting was attended by SP City Satyanarayan Prajapati, SP Rural Aditya Bansal, SP Crime Indu Siddharth, SP Traffic Atul Kumar Choubey, ASP Siddharth K Mishra along with all circle officers, station house officers, LIU officials and SOG in charges. The meeting began with the national anthem, after which the SSP reviewed measures related to crime prevention, law and order, and women's safety. Special emphasis was laid on taking strict action against illegal liquor trade, illegal mining, cattle smuggling, arms smuggling and drug trafficking. Officers were also instructed to initiate

PUBLIC NOTICE

This is to inform the General public at large that my clients Sh. Indrajit Singh Sandhu and Mrs. Rupinderpal Kaur R/o 1018 Sec. 8 Chandigarh have disowned their son namely Ajitinder Singh Sandhu from their moveable and immovable properties as well as severed all social relations with the above-mentioned person with immediate effect due to his aggressive, disrespectful, insulting & quarrelsome behavior. His unsocial, miscreant and vicious conduct towards my clients is unbearable. Anyone dealing with him in any manner shall be doing so at their own risk and responsibility and my clients shall not liable/responsible for any of his act in any manner.

PUBLIC NOTICE

Notice is hereby given by Smt. Archana Arand and Sh. Karan Malik who are the owners of Commercial Unit bearing no-05-008, Office Space, Situated on Fifth Floor, measuring 1001.16 Sq. Ft. in Metropolis, situated in revenue estate of Sirhul, on Mehrauli – Gurugram Road, Tehsil and Distt. Gurugram, Haryana vide Relinquishment Deed dated 30.05.2022 which is Registered as Doc no. 2551 vol no.68/1942 pages 71/75/98-99 dated 30.05.2022 in SRO Gurgaon & Transfer Deed dated 01/06/2023 which is registered as Doc no. 2751 & Sale Deed dated 15.05.2023 which was registered as Doc no.2286 vol no. 87/2311 pages 11/5/60-61 dated 23.05.2023 in SRO Gurgaon and will be taking financial assistance from Aditya Birla Capital Ltd. That Original Relinquishment Deed dated 30.05.2022 is lost/Misplaced. Public is being warned not to deal with the said document. Any person dealing with the said document would do so at their own risk & responsibility. Owner shall not be liable in any manner whatever for any loss incurred by such person. If anybody found these document or notice any misuse of the above mentioned document, Concern person is required to communicate in writing to the undersigned at below address.

PUBLIC NOTICE

This is to inform the general public that Muthoot Homefin (India) Ltd., having its branch office at Gurgaon, Haryana intends to extend a financial facility to Mr. Santosh Kumar against the Security of Ground Floor, First Floor, & Second Floor with Roof Rights, Built on Portion of Property Bearing No. 112, now known as G-112, Area measuring 35 sq. yds., i.e. 229.26 Sq. Mts., Out of Rec. No. 16, Killa No. 32, 22 to 25, Situated in the Abadi of Jagat Puri, in the area of Village Khurki Khas Illoqa Shahdara, Delhi. Initially, Portion of Plot No. 112, Land area measuring 60 Sq. Yds., Out of Rec. No. 16, Killa No. 32, 22 to 25 owned by Mrs. Shanti Devi W/o Mr. Jai Narain Singh, by virtue of Notarized General Power of Attorney & Agreement to Sell dated 21.09.1979, executed by Mr. Sita Ram S/o Mr. Pishori Lal. Any person(s) having any claim, right, title, interest, lien, charge, or objection of whatsoever nature in respect of the said property or against the proposed mortgage in favour of Muthoot Homefin (India) Ltd. are hereby called upon to submit their objections in writing, along with documentary proof, within seven (7) days from the date of publication of this notice to Adv. Rishi Maheshwari (Mobile: +91-934018309). Failing which, it shall be presumed that no claims or encumbrances exist, and the transaction shall proceed accordingly.

Rishi Maheshwari (Advocate) Office At: RZ-29, Upper Ground Floor, Bhagwan Garden Jain Road, Near Dwarika More New Delhi 110059. Contact No: +91-934018309

PUBLIC NOTICE

I, Munisa Begum W/O Mohd. Amin Khan R/O House Number -59B D/59, Block A-4, Pockey 4 Sector G7, Narela, PO: Narela, DIST: North West Delhi, Delhi - 110040, have changed my name and shall hereafter be known as Rita Devi

PUBLIC NOTICE

I, Geeta Dev W/O Ram Chander R/O 659/1 No. 3, Ghazi Road, Punjabi Basti, Anand Parbat, Central Delhi, Delhi - 110005, have changed my name and shall hereafter be known as Rita Devi

PUBLIC NOTICE

I, Kunal Begum S/o Md. Amin Khan R/O 294/29, Krishna Park Devi Road Khanpur Deoli South Delhi Deoli Delhi - 110061, have changed the name of my minor Son Prahan Tiwari ages 04 years and shall hereafter be known as Prakhyat Tiwari

PUBLIC NOTICE

I, Komal S/o Rajesh R/O Flat No 55, Block A-4, Pockey 4 Sector G7, Narela, PO: Narela, DIST: North West Delhi, Delhi - 110040, have changed my name and shall hereafter be known as Kauramma.

PUBLIC NOTICE

I, Kavita Rani S/o Rajesh R/O 294/29, Krishna Park Devi Road Khanpur Deoli South Delhi Deoli Delhi - 110061, have changed my name and shall hereafter be known as Kauramma.

PUBLIC NOTICE

I, Pukti Tiwari S/o Bipin Kumar Tiwari R/O 294/29, Krishna Park Devi Road Khanpur Deoli South Delhi Deoli Delhi - 110061, have changed the name of my minor Son Prahan Tiwari ages 04 years and shall hereafter be known as Prakhyat Tiwari

PUBLIC NOTICE

I, Rida Rehman, D/o Nadeem Ur Rehman R/O 17/2, Joga Bai Extn, Jamia Nagar, Okhla, South East Delhi - 110025. Declare that RIDA is my given name and my surname is REHMAN.

PUBLIC NOTICE

I, REENA DEVI wife of No. 17011316X Rank-NK Name-KISHOR KUMAR YADAV Presently residing at VILL-KANIMUNDWAR, PO-SITAGARH, PMS-MUFFASIL, TEHSIL-SADAR, DIST-HAZARIBAGH, JHARKHAND-825301, have changed my name and shall hereafter be known as Rupamati.

PUBLIC NOTICE

I, Rida Rehman, D/o Nadeem Ur Rehman R/O 17/2, Joga Bai Extn, Jamia Nagar, Okhla, South East Delhi - 110025. Declare that RIDA is my given name and my surname is REHMAN.

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PUBLIC NOTICE

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PUBLIC NOTICE

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PUBLIC NOTICE

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NEWS BOX

100 Died In US Attack That Ousted Maduro, Says Venezuela's Minister

WORLD. (Agency)

Venezuela's interior minister Diosdado Cabello said late on Wednesday that 100 people died in the US attack which removed President Nicolas Maduro from power on Saturday.

Caracas have not previously given a number for those killed, but the army posted a list of 23 names of its dead. Venezuelan officials have said a large part of Maduro's security contingent was killed "in cold blood," and Cuba has said 32 members of its military and intelligence services in Venezuela were killed.

Maduro's wife Cilia Flores, detained alongside him, suffered a head injury during the US raid, Cabello said, and Maduro an injury to his leg.

Venezuela's interim President Delcy Rodriguez, who Cabello praised during his weekly show on state television as "courageous", on Tuesday declared a week of mourning for members of the military killed in the raid.

Twin Mountain Gorillas Born In Congo's Virunga Park In Rare Conservation Milestone



World. (Agency)

In a rare conservation milestone, a set of mountain gorilla twins has been born in Virunga National Park, Africa's oldest national park, located in the Democratic Republic of Congo (DRC). The twin males were born to a 22-year-old gorilla named Mafuko and were discovered on January 3 by community trackers, who found the mother cuddling the newborns, BBC reported. All three appeared to be healthy and doing well at the time.

Photos shared by the park show Mafuko holding her newborns amid thick foliage. Notably, twin births are extremely uncommon among mountain gorillas, accounting for just around 1% of all births. The last recorded instance of such a birth in Virunga was in 2020. Caring for twins poses a unique challenge, especially during the early months when infants are completely dependent on their mother for nourishment and transport. Park authorities have implemented additional monitoring and protection measures to support the survival of the infants during this critical early period, as the first months of life are very vulnerable. Virunga, Africa's oldest national park and a UNESCO World Heritage Site, spans over 3,000 square miles and shelters one of the world's largest populations of mountain gorillas. Despite its protected status, much of the park remains under threat from armed groups, deforestation, and poaching. Mafuko was born into the Kabirizi family but joined the Bagani family six years after her mother was killed by "armed individuals" in 2007, the park's statement said. In January 2013, during the split of the Kabirizi family, Mafuko joined the Bagani family. Three years later, her sister Tumaini joined her in the Bagani family after an interaction between the groups. At the age of 22, Mafuko has given birth to a total of seven newborns, including a set of twins in 2016. Unfortunately, those twins passed away a week after birth," the statement added.

Breaking American Laws Can Have "Serious Consequences": US Warns Students

Washington. (Agency)

The US Embassy in India on Wednesday said breaking American laws can have "serious consequences" for a student visa, as it termed a sojourn in the country a privilege, not a right. The embassy in a post on X cautioned that one could become ineligible for future US visas if they are "arrested or violate any laws." "Breaking U.S. laws can have serious consequences



for your student visa. If you are arrested or violate any laws, your visa may be revoked, you may be deported, and you could be ineligible for future U.S. visas. Follow the rules and don't jeopardize your travel," the embassy posted on X. "A US visa is a privilege, not a right," it said in an assertion it has made through many posts on X in the past several months. On June 19, it wrote, "A US visa is a privilege, not a right. US visa screening does not stop after a visa is issued – and we may revoke your visa if you break the law."

whoever helps the enemy against the Islamic Republic and the calm of the people," he added. Last week, US President Donald Trump threatened that Washington would step in if Tehran "violently kills peaceful protesters". He further said that the US is "locked and loaded and ready to go". Israeli Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu also backed the protesters on Sunday, saying that it is quite possible the Iranians "are taking their fate into their own hands". The statements by the US and Israel come seven months after Iran's nuclear sites were bombed during a 12-day war. Iran has been battling the biggest wave of protests in three years, which started in Tehran's centuries-old Grand Bazaar last month after shopkeepers shut down their businesses over the degradation of Iran's rial currency. Unrest has since spread across the country amid distress over economic woes driven by

Western sanctions, mismanagement and restrictions on political and social freedoms. Following Ejei's warning, Iranian Army chief, Major-General Amir



Hatami, threatened preemptive military action over the "rhetoric" targeting Iran. He said Tehran would "cut off the hand of any aggressor", asserting that the armed forces are "far greater than before the war". "If the enemy commits an error, it will face a more decisive response." Over 30 people have been killed in the protests so far and

thousands have been arrested. Iranian authorities have not shared the death toll for protesters, but said that at least two members of the security services have died and more than a dozen have been injured.

Videos of the protests have been flooding social media, with some showing people taking the Islamic Republic's flag down and shredding it everywhere.

EXILED CROWN PRINCE BACKS PROTESTERS

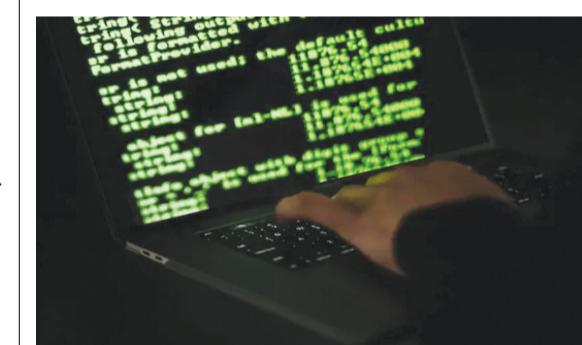
Reza Pahlavi, exiled son of Iran's late Shah Mohammad Reza Pahlavi – who was toppled in the 1979 Islamic Revolution, has praised the "unprecedented" turnout at the protests and called it a clear signal of people's readiness for the next phase of demonstrations.

"In these decisive moments, I expect you to return to the embrace of the nation and to use your weapons not to fire at people, but to protect them," he said in a video posted on X, urging Iranian security forces to be on the side of the citizens.

Chinese Hackers Breach Emails Of US House Of Representatives: Report

world. (Agency)

A Chinese hacking group has compromised emails used by staff members of powerful committees in the US House of Representatives, the Financial Times reported on Wednesday, citing people familiar with the matter. The group, nicknamed Salt Typhoon, accessed email systems used by some staffers on the House China committee as well as aides on panels covering foreign affairs, intelligence and the armed services, the report said. It did not identify which specific staffers were targeted. Reuters could not immediately verify the report. Chinese Embassy spokesman Liu Pengyu condemned what he called "unfounded speculation and accusations," while the Federal Bureau of Investigation declined to comment. The White House and the offices of the four committees reportedly targeted in the surveillance sweep did not immediately respond to requests for comment. The FT cited a person familiar with the campaign as saying it was unclear whether the



"Trump, Give Us Back Nico": Venezuela Protesters Demand Maduro's Return

JERUSALEM. (Agency)

Thousands of people marched in Venezuela Wednesday to demand the release of Nicolas Maduro, toppled and captured in the US assault, while an official video showed grieving relatives mourning those killed in the attack. Government loyalists have held daily demonstrations since January 3, when US forces nabbed Maduro and his wife, Cilia Flores, during a bombing raid on Caracas and took them to face trial on drug charges in New York. "Nico, hold on, the people are rising!" protesters chanted, in the sun and rain during their three-kilometer trek through downtown Caracas.

"Trump, give us back Nico!"

"Our president is innocent, our resident is a working man, a man of the

people," said Nancy Ramos, a 58-year-old community leader dressed in military fatigues and a red beret, her eyes brimming with tears as she spoke to AFP. "We do not agree with their taking him away like that and planning to try him in another country, because his country is Venezuela," she added, clutching two figurines of Maduro and Flores. Marchers mourned the dozens of people authorities say were killed in the raids and they voiced fears of further attacks.

"The imperialists showed up with bombs. They killed soldiers and civilians," said Tania Rodriguez, a 57-year-old retiree. She said she marched "with pain, even with fear, but we go on with honor. We go on with courage." The opposition has kept a low profile in Venezuela since Maduro's capture,

with an emergency decree outlawing public praise for the US action.

The Venezuelan military on Wednesday released videos of funerals for soldiers killed in the US operation, with dozens of grieving relatives and coffins draped in Venezuelan flags. Bouquets and wreaths, along with photographs of the dead, adorned the caskets, escorted by uniformed troops in formation. At least one civilian and 55 Venezuelan and Cuban soldiers were killed in the January 3 attack, according to official tolls from the two countries. Interim President Delcy Rodriguez on Tuesday declared seven days of mourning for the victims.

"The images of the bodies pierced my soul, but I know they were martyred for the good of this republic," Rodriguez said.

\$50,000 A Month: How Cash-Strapped Pak Lobbied Hard In US After Op Sindoor

World. (Agency)

Cash-strapped Pakistan, amid its severe economic crisis, spent millions of dollars to lobby its agenda in Washington, exposing the massive scale of diplomatic pressure Islamabad unleashed as it struggled to blunt India's military response during Operation Sindoor in May. Newly released US government filings reveal that Islamabad ran to Washington for help during Indian airstrikes on their airbases and terror camps. Filing under the Foreign Agents Registration Act (FARA) showed contracts and payments running into hundreds of thousands of dollars. They involve the Pakistan government and Pakistan-linked organisations. The outreach targets the US Congress, the executive branch, think tanks, and the media.

Post-Pahalgam Attack Lobbying

Filing shows that Javelin Advisors LLC was registered in April to represent Pakistan under a formal consulting agreement dated April 24, two days after Pakistan-based terrorists killed 26 civilians in Jammu and Kashmir's Pahalgam. Javelin disclosed a monthly

fee of \$50,000. The firm said its work included communicating Pakistan's positions on regional and global issues to the US executive branch, Congress, and the public. The issues listed include the Jammu and Kashmir

\$1 trillion. Another filing shows the Embassy of Pakistan hired Qorvis Holding Inc. in May for public relations services. The disclosure lists media outreach and narrative development among the activities. Under US law, foreign governments and related entities are required to publicly disclose lobbying and public relations arrangements. The filings provide records of contracts, activities, and payments made on their behalf.

More Diplomatic Effort

A separate filing revealed that the Islamabad Policy Research Institute spent \$900,000 on lobbying and public policy outreach in the United States. The institute is a Pakistan-based think tank affiliated with Pakistan's National Security Division.

According to the disclosure, Hyperfocal Communications LLC was registered in October 2024 as a subcontractor to Team Eagle Consulting LLC to perform the work. FARA filing states that the activity involved outreach to the US government aimed at improving US-Pakistan relations.



dispute and Pakistan-India relations. The filings also reference a framework document circulated in May outlining proposed cooperation between Pakistan and the United States on rare earth minerals and critical metals. The document submitted describes proposed cooperation covering exploration, mining, processing, and integration into global supply chains. It cites an indicative commercial value of up to

"Erosion Of Security Threatens Minorities": Sheikh Hasina On Hindus' Killing

world. (Agency)

Dipu Chandra Das, a 27-year-old Hindu man, was lynched by a Muslim mob following allegations of blasphemy in Bangladesh's Mymensingh city, where he worked in a factory. They didn't stop there. Dipu's body was hung in a public place and set on fire. The authorities later said there was no evidence that Dipu Das committed blasphemy. His family also claimed that Dipu was killed over workplace rivalry rather than any alleged "blasphemous" remark. Ousted Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina has now called it a "barbaric and shameful act" that reflects the "dangerous collapse of law, order and moral authority" under the interim government. Speaking exclusively to NDTV, Hasina said, "Violence in the name of religion has no place in Bangladesh, yet such acts have become disturbingly frequent. This was not an isolated incident, but part of a broader pattern of communal violence that has been allowed to flourish with impunity." The former Prime Minister, who is currently in

India, said that Bangladesh is becoming "increasingly unsafe for minorities because the state has failed in its most basic duty to protect all citizens equally."

"The perpetrators of these horrific acts of religious violence have never been prosecuted, and their victims have been denied justice, while Yunus himself continues to deny the clearly religious motivations behind these acts. This erosion of security threatens not only minorities, but the secular and democratic foundations of Bangladesh itself." Violence Against Hindus In Bangladesh Dipu Das is not alone. At least 51 incidents of communal violence were recorded in December alone, according to a statement issued today by the Bangladesh Hindu Buddhist Christian Unity Council. These include 10 murders, 23 cases of looting and arson, 10 incidents of robbery and theft, four cases of detention and torture on false blasphemy charges, one attempted rape, and three incidents of physical assault. Homes,

temples, and businesses belonging to minority communities have been systematically targeted.

Violence against Hindus in Bangladesh has



seen a spike ever since the death of student leader Sharif Osman Hadi on December 12. Sarat Mani Chakraborty, a 40-year-old grocery store owner, was attacked with sharp weapons on Monday night. He died of his injuries. Hours before he was killed, Rana Pratap, a 45-year-old factory owner, was shot dead in the Jashore district. Seven bullet casings were found beside Pratap's

body. On January 3, a Hindu woman in the Jhenaidah district was raped by two men, who also demanded money from her. When she screamed, they tied her to a tree, cut off her hair, recorded the act, and circulated videos on social media. Days before that, Khokon Chandra Das, 50, was brutally attacked and set on fire. He ran a medicine and mobile banking business in his village, 150 km from the national capital, Dhaka.

Other victims include Bajendra Biswas, 40, who was killed by a colleague at a garment factory in Bhaluka; Amrit Mondal, 29, who was lynched over alleged extortion in Rajbari; Dipu Chandra Das.

Is Bangladesh Drifting Toward Radical Islamic Extremism?

Speaking to, Hasina said that "radical Islamic extremism is no longer operating at the margins of society; it has been legitimised and emboldened by the interim government's actions and inaction."

NEWS BOX

J&K: Cop injured in Kathua gunfight, search Op resumes to track down hiding terrorists



Jammu. (Agency)

One security personnel suffered minor injuries in an ensuing counter insurgency operation in which three terrorists are believed to be trapped in Billawar tehsil of Kathua district of Jammu and Kashmir.

Officials here on Thursday said that a cordon has been laid while the search operation to track down the hiding terrorists is being carried out by the joint team of Special Operations Group (SOG) and other security forces in Kahog village of Billawar.

"Encounter triggered between security forces and terrorists on Wednesday evening in the Kamadh nullah area," they said.

They added that one security personnel also suffered injuries in the gunfight, adding, "the search operation to track down the hiding terrorists has resumed this morning." Meanwhile, Inspector General of Police (IGP) Jammu Zone, Bhim Sen Tuti in a post on X wrote, "despite darkness, thick vegetation and treacherous terrain, the SOG is relentlessly engaging the terrorists. Teams of the CRPF are also participating in the joint operation."

Former IPS officer Amitabh Thakur referred to Lucknow in critical condition

Lucknow. (Agency)

Former IPS officer Amitabh Thakur was referred from Gorakhpur Medical College to Lucknow late Wednesday night due to a serious deterioration in his health.

He is currently undergoing treatment at the Cardiology Department of Sanjay Gandhi Postgraduate Institute of Medical Sciences (SGPGI).

According to sources, Thakur's condition remains critical. A special team of four doctors is continuously monitoring his health and providing treatment. In view of a suspected heart attack, all routine medical tests are being conducted again.

Thakur's health reportedly worsened late Tuesday night while he was lodged in Deoria Jail. After he complained of severe chest pain and restlessness, he was first taken to Deoria Medical College and later shifted to Gorakhpur Medical College.

As his condition deteriorated further, doctors referred him to Lucknow for advanced treatment.

Meanwhile, an application filed on behalf of Amitabh Thakur seeking cancellation of his remand was rejected on Wednesday by Chief Judicial Magistrate (CJM) Manju Kumari. Following the court's order, he will remain in judicial custody until January 21.

Intense cold wave grips J&K, Ladakh; several places record season's lowest temperatures

Srinagar. (Agency)

An intense cold wave gripped Jammu and Kashmir and Ladakh, as several places across the two union territories recording lowest temperature of the season. In the Kashmir Valley, popular tourist destinations and higher reaches remained the coldest. Sonamarg registered the lowest temperature in Kashmir at -9.8°C , followed closely by Gulmarg at -9.2°C and Pahalgam at -8.6°C . Shopian also shivered at -7.8°C .

The summer capital Srinagar settled at -5.1°C , sharply down from -1.6°C the preceding night, marking a significant drop, the meteorological department said.

In the Jammu region, the plains also experienced a noticeable drop in temperatures, though most stations stayed above the freezing mark. The winter capital, Jammu, recorded a minimum of 7.1°C .

The cold was sharper in hilly districts, with Bhaderwah recording -3.4°C and Rajouri -1.0°C last night. The most extreme cold was reported from the union territory of Ladakh, where the mercury plunged to severe levels. Drass, one of the coldest inhabited places in the world, recorded -24.7°C . Hanle -16.9°C , Padum -17.2°C , Leh -14.6°C , Kargil -13.4°C and Nubra Valley also remained in a deep freeze.

There is no immediate respite from the ongoing cold wave across the region. According to the forecast, minimum temperatures are likely to fall further until January 10, which may result in more intense cold conditions during the night and early morning hours. After January 10, a gradual improvement is expected, with night temperatures likely to increase by about $1-2^{\circ}\text{C}$. Meanwhile, Kashmir is expected to witness largely dry weather conditions over the next two weeks, with only brief spells of light rain or snow at isolated places, according to the forecast.

BMC Election 2026: Full schedule, voting day and time, results date and other key details

Here is everything you need to know about the BMC Election 2026, including the schedule, voting dates, results timeline, and other important details.

Mumbai. (Agency)

The Brihanmumbai Municipal Corporation (BMC) Election 2026 is expected to be a major political event in Maharashtra, as voters in Mumbai will elect corporators to govern India's richest civic body. After three years without an elected civic body, the people of Mumbai will now choose their local representatives.

Here is everything you need to know about the BMC election 2026, including the schedule, voting dates, results timeline, and other important details.

BMC election 2026 voting date and poll timings

Voting for the BMC election 2026 will be held on January 15 from 7:30 am to 5:30 pm across all 227 wards of Mumbai, the State Election Commission



announced. The election will also cover 20 other municipal corporations in Maharashtra, making it one of the largest civic election exercises in the state.

BMC election 2026 results date

The counting of votes for the BMC

are female voters, and the number of Other voters stands at 1,099.

BMC election 2026 schedule

The State Election Commission has released the official schedule for the BMC election 2026. The election process will be conducted in multiple stages, starting with the issuance of the notification and concluding with the declaration of results.

Nomination filing begins:

December 23, 2025

Last date for nominations:

December 30, 2025

Scrutiny of nominations:

December 31, 2025

Last date for withdrawal:

January 2, 2026

BMC polling date 2026:

January 15, 2026

Vote counting date:

January 16, 2026

election 2026 will take place on January 16 from 10 am.

Total voters

A total of 1,03,44,315 citizens are eligible to vote in the BMC polls, according to PTI. Out of these, 55,16,707 are male, 48,26,509

Threat, assault, murders — local poll season turns violent in Maharashtra

Mumbai. (Agency)

Maharashtra Congress vice-president Hidayat Patel, who was stabbed in Akola district's Akot city, succumbed to his injuries while undergoing treatment Wednesday morning.

Police have arrested Ubed Patel, 25, who was seen on CCTV camera committing the crime. Police said the accused, who belongs to the same community as the senior Congress leader, blamed Hidayat Patel for the murder of a relative in 2019, and there was animosity between the two families. Since local body elections were held in December, incidents of threats to assault to murders has been increasing in Maharashtra, where municipal corporation elections are scheduled on January 15 — a shift from the traditional trend in the state where much violence is not reported during elections.

Incidents that happened within 48 hours till Wednesday evening include that of stabbing of Hidayat Patel in Akola on Tuesday, knife attack on a Shiv Sena candidate in Mumbai on Wednesday, mob attack on AIMIM leader



Imtiaz Jaleel's vehicle in Chhatrapati Sambhaji Nagar on Wednesday, an attempt to set on fire the office of an NCP candidate in Sambhaji Nagar on Wednesday and stabbing of Shiv Sena candidate Salim Qureshi in Bandra East, Mumbai.

Mumbai, on Wednesday.

In the Akola incident, Hidayat Patel was stabbed by Ubed Patel from his own community. As per police, *prima facie*, families of both the accused and deceased have been at odds for several years as Ubed's family felt Hidayat used his clout to ensure they did not get their work done or become locally powerful. Ubed also believed Hidayat was linked to the 2019 murder of his uncle Mateen Patel.

Akola Superintendent of Police Archit Chandok said Hidayat was attacked around 2 pm Tuesday after he came out of the mosque following afternoon prayers. Ubed, who was also in the mosque, stabbed Hidayat several with the knife he was carrying, before fleeing from the spot, the officer said.

"He fled to the jungle in the nearby area, following which nearly 40 policemen were sent to track him. He was found around 8.30 pm yesterday (Tuesday), following which he was arrested. He will be produced before the court for seeking his custody," Chandok said.

Karnataka's village in Gadag district celebrates CM Siddaramaiah's every feat

GADAG. (Agency)

Every achievement of Chief Minister Siddaramaiah calls for special celebrations in Timmapur village of Gadag district. It was no different on Tuesday when Siddaramaiah created a record of being the longest-serving chief minister of the state surpassing Devaraj Urs. The villagers organised pujas at all temples of the village and distributed sweets to all.

It is not for nothing that Timmapur is called the Siddaramaiah Grama, as almost all residents here are fans of the CM. When Siddaramaiah became CM in 2013 and 2023, the whole village celebrated and performed pujas at all temples. There is a reason for this exhilaration as there is a sense of gratitude among villagers for Siddaramaiah. He first visited the village in the 1990s when he contested parliamentary elections from the Koppal constituency.

He listened to their woes and worked hard to address them. It so happens that the majority of villagers here are from the Kuruba community, to which Siddaramaiah too belongs. The bonding was instant and it has sustained through the decades.

When the villagers were struggling without jobs in 2013 and migration to cities had become a common

phenomenon, Siddaramaiah provided them with jobs through various government-sponsored schemes. He also ensured electricity and piped water connections to all homes. In February last year, a group of villagers carried a photograph of Siddaramaiah to Prayagraj and performed an abhisheka, praying for his continuation as CM.

Yellappa Babari, a Timmapur resident, said, "There



are many reasons behind calling this village Siddaramaiah Gram. It started when those from neighbouring villages started making fun of us for being staunch supporters and fans of Siddaramaiah. The tag stuck, though it is not the official name of our village."

Kogilu mess: FIR filed against four for illegal house construction

BENGALURU.(Agency)

In the latest development related to the contentious land at Kogilu, a first information report (FIR) has been registered at the Yelahanka police station against four persons for allegedly collecting money and letting families build houses illegally at Kogilu village on Survey Number 99. Two of the accused are Muni Anjinappa, and Robin, while two others, Waseem Ulla Baig and Vijay, were arrested, said DCP Northeast GK Mithun Kumar.

The FIR was registered based on a complaint filed by Santosh Kaddi, a senior engineer with the Bengaluru Solid Waste Management Limited (BSWML) on January 4.

The complaint mentions that the government land was sold fraudulently and unauthorised construction of houses was facilitated at Fakir Layout in Kogilu, which is in the Bengaluru North City Corporation limits.

The complaint stated that the land, measuring 14.36 acre, was transferred to the erstwhile Bruhat Bengaluru Mahanagara Palike (BBMP) in 2015. The civic body

wanted to put up a bio-methanisation plant, animal rendering unit, sanitary waste unit and waste processing units.

Notice issued to one of the accused. The work order for an integrated waste processing plant was issued in 2023 and while conducting the site inspection, the officials found squatters. It was then revealed that Vijay, Waseem, Muni Anjinappa,



and Robin had allegedly taken money from people and helped them in constructing and maintaining the unauthorised houses. The complaint was based on statements by dwellers that they paid lakhs of rupees to the accused. BWSML said they had sent a notice to Waseem seeking his explanation for facilitating squatters.

Karnataka govt tells HC satellite images prove homes in Kogilu colonies were recently built

Denying eviction without due process, the AG said the apex court order does not apply as the land was not a slum but a former quarry and landfill.

BENGALURU.(Agency)

Rejecting the contention of some resident-petitioners that they had been residing for the past 28 years in Kogilu Layout in the city, the state government on Wednesday informed the Karnataka High Court that it has satellite images to show when each of the houses was built at the illegally formed Fakir and Wasim colonies on government land in Kogilu.

Advocate-General (AG) K Shashikaran Shetty made this submission before the division bench of Chief Justice Vibhu Bakhru and Justice CM Poonacha, when it pointed out that the petitioners claim they have been residing in the colonies for 28 years. The AG further said this claim is factually incorrect and the state government has satellite images to show when the houses, which were recently demolished, were constructed. The court was hearing a public interest litigation (PIL) filed by

Zaiba Tabassum, Rehana and Areefa Begum, who were among the residents evicted from Fakir and Wasim colonies.

Denying the petitioners' claim that they were evicted without following due process of law and guidelines of the apex court on eviction, the AG submitted that the apex court judgment does not apply to the present case, and the land on which the petitioners had built houses was not a slum, but was initially used for quarrying and later as a landfill for the city's garbage.

When the court asked about providing temporary shelter to the displaced families, the AG submitted that the families were accommodated in temporary rehabilitation centres in three different areas, till further orders are passed by court. Food is supplied to them through Indira Canteens, and other basic amenities will also be provided, he told court.

Before this, counsel for the petitioners told the court that around 300 displaced families, comprising about 3,000 persons, need food and blankets, after the demolition on

further hearing till January 22. The petitioners have prayed to court to issue directions to provide rehabilitation and alternate accommodation to all the affected in accordance with law, and conduct a survey to identify all affected persons and their eligibility for rehabilitation.

The petitioners also sought directions to the state to provide in-situ rehabilitation or within 5km radius of the present location to enable affected persons to continue their livelihood, and also provide compensation for loss of homes, belongings and livelihood built over 30 years. The petitioners stated that the demolition has impacted over 350 children, and they endure inhuman conditions in makeshift tents, deprived of essential food, water, sanitation, education, and a safe environment.

Boat rides in Bateshwar will now carry stories of faith and heritage

Lucknow. (Agency)

Boat rides along the Yamuna at the historic temple town of Bateshwar are set to offer visitors a richer and more engaging experience.

Local boatmen have now been trained not only in navigation but also in sharing the religious, cultural and historical narratives associated with Bateshwar, turning routine river crossings into meaningful cultural interactions.

As part of an initiative by the Uttar Pradesh Tourism Department, nearly 40 local boatmen completed a three-day training programme from January 5 to 7 at the Atal Sankul Centre, Bateshwar.

The programme was organised with support from the Manyawar Kanshiram Institute of Tourism Management (MKITM), Lucknow, and the State Disaster Response Force (SDRF).

UP Tourism and Culture Minister Jaiveer Singh said here on Wednesday that the initiative reflects the government's focus on inclusive tourism and community participation. He said that by training boatmen in storytelling, emergency response and digital payment systems, the department is strengthening local livelihoods while improving the overall visitor experience.

"The aim is to ensure that those who live and work at tourism sites become active partners in presenting the area's heritage and traditions to visitors," he said.

During the programme, MKITM storyteller Gaurav Srivastava familiarised participants with Bateshwar's religious and cultural background and explained how local stories can be shared naturally with tourists during boat rides.

SDRF personnel conducted practical sessions on disaster management, CPR and first aid, while additional training focused on courteous behaviour and the use of online payment platforms.

At the conclusion of the programme, all trained boatmen were provided T-shirts and jackets to give them a common identity. Deepak Kumar, one of the participants, thanked the Tourism Department for the initiative.

The human cost of 10-minute deliveries

About two years ago, a delivery 'partner' turned up at my doorstep with a big gash on his ankle, visible through his torn trousers. He had still made it within the promised time window. Apparently, a car had hit his scooter, and he had fallen off, injuring himself. Luckily, his vehicle was intact. It had been rented for the day, and any damage might have cost him a part of his earnings. Now, I am a kind-hearted person, so I gave him a couple of Band-Aids and a 200-rupee note and told him to visit a doctor. But it was clear that he wasn't going to a doctor. Instead, he was likely to pocket the money I had given him. He simply didn't have the time to deal with his wound. It is quite possible that the accident was his fault. I have seen delivery workers jumping lights and driving on the wrong side to get to their destination as quickly as possible. Quick-service companies will argue that there is no need for such haste. All their 'dark' stores are located within a short-delivery radius. A delivery worker could, theoretically, walk and still make it in time. Apparently, delivery partners drive at an average speed of just 15 km per hour. Yet, delivery workers constantly break traffic rules. Data from Bengaluru alone shows that delivery workers were involved in nearly 64,000 traffic violations in 2025. These figures have been updated only till November 15. So, why do these delivery partners drive so rashly on our city streets? The answer to this question holds the key to the economics of quick-service employment. Quick commerce companies say that a delivery worker makes an average of Rs 102 per hour. But unions say this does not take costs into account. After fuel and maintenance, the actual earning drops to Rs 81 per hour. If someone were to work 10 hours a day, 26 days a month, they would end up with a net earning of Rs 21,000.

To make that kind of money, a delivery worker will need to make 30-35 trips within 10 hours. They can only get another trip assigned once they have completed one delivery and marked it on the app. They don't always get a delivery immediately — there's a waiting period. So, the faster they deliver, the more likely they are to get their next assignment. In fact, delivery workers' unions say that riders get indirectly penalised if they are slow. If they are unable to deliver in time, they lose 'badges', which affects their chances of getting future orders. There are also incentives attached to completing volume targets. This makes them take chances with life and limb.

This is highly stressful work. Unions claim that 99 per cent of delivery workers report mental and physical health issues. This is why a large number of them quit the industry every year. Estimates of attrition range from 45 per cent to 65 per cent.

So why do thousands of young men join the delivery partner workforce every day? It is because there are no better jobs available for them. They take it up when they haven't found anything else to do or they haven't got permanent work. This is backed by surveys which show that nearly two-thirds of gig workers in India fall in the 24-38 age bracket. Other surveys suggest that most of these workers have middle- or high-school level education. That means, they have spent a few years looking for work before they tried their luck at quick-commerce deliveries. The work is hard and stressful. That is why most leave it within three months. This is happening at a time when quick-service platforms — mainly Blinkit, Swiggy Instamart and Zepto — are caught in an intense competition to expand their footprint. So, quick-commerce companies have increased their cash burn. Blinkit, for instance, made an adjusted EBITDA loss of nearly Rs 600 crore in the past four quarters. This excludes the cost of ESOPs given to employees, so the real loss is even higher. While Blinkit charges a small platform and delivery fee, Swiggy's Instamart has removed it altogether for order values that cross a threshold.

Educate, organise, agitate — Dr Ambedkar's slogan was not a call to violence. It was a democratic instruction manual. Learn enough to see injustice, organise enough to resist it, and agitate enough to force the State to listen. If those words were spoken today, in a charged political moment, one shudders to think how they would be read through the lens of the UAPA. "Organise" would be recast as conspiracy. "Agitate" would be described as mobilisation. And the speaker, if sufficiently persuasive, might well be labelled an ideological driver of unrest and told that bail must wait. That is why the Supreme Court's judgment on bail in the Delhi riots conspiracy case matters far beyond the fate of any Umar Khalid or Sharjeel Imam. It speaks to what kind of dissent Indian democracy is prepared to tolerate, and at what cost. We must acknowledge that the majority of the applicants have, at long last, been granted bail. Some liberty for some, after years of incarceration, is better than none. We should also note that for Umar and Sharjeel, the Court has permitted renewal of bail applications after a year. In a legal landscape where time often loses all meaning, even a calendar entry counts as hope.

And yet, the refusal of bail to Umar and Sharjeel casts a long and troubling shadow over the judgment as a whole. The Court begins by acknowledging what cannot seriously be denied: prolonged incarceration engages Article 21, and pre-trial detention cannot become punishment. Five years in prison without the commencement of trial is no trivial matter. But having acknowledged this, the Court steadily empties it of consequence. Delay, we are told, "does not operate as a trump card." It is merely a "trigger for heightened judicial scrutiny." In other words, five years without trial is not a constitutional failure; it is an administrative inconvenience that invites careful thought, not release.

This move sets the tone for everything that follows. Section 43D(5) of the UAPA looms large, as it always does. The Court reiterates that at the bail stage, it must only see whether the accusation is "prima facie true". This inquiry, we are reminded, is about statutory plausibility, not evidentiary sufficiency. Evidence is not weighed. Defences are not examined. The prosecution case must be taken at its highest. This framework, inherited from the Watali judgment (2019), ensures that the chargesheet becomes both the accusation and its own justification. Within this structure, the Court introduces what it considers a necessary distinction: the difference between peripheral participants and "prime conspirators." Umar and Sharjeel are placed firmly in the latter category. They are described as central figures,

ideological drivers, conceptualisers of protest strategy. This, according to the Court, warrants greater caution. Where an accused occupies a central role, constitutional intervention must be restrained.

This distinction is the judgment's most consequential and dangerous move. There is no allegation that either Umar or Sharjeel committed a violent act. There is no claim that they were present at any site of violence. The material against them consists largely of speeches, meetings, pamphlets and protest-related communication. Yet these are treated as markers of conspiratorial centrality. Speech becomes structure. Influence becomes intent. Visibility becomes culpability. Once this logic is accepted, bail becomes a reward for irrelevance. Those who are marginal may go free. Those who speak effectively, organise widely and

bound to give effect to that framework." This is the language of exception, calmly spoken. Liberty is no longer the baseline from which the State must justify departure. It is a conditional interest, always secondary to an asserted threat. This brings us to Cicero's bleak maxim that in times of war the law falls silent. The judgment does not say we are at war. It does something subtler. It assumes that when security is invoked, the law must speak in a different voice. Lord Atkin's warning, delivered during an actual war, that the law speaks the same language in war as in peace, finds no place here. His description of judges who are more executive-minded than the executive might find resonance amongst legal commentators. The consequences for democratic dissent are obvious. Dissent is not an ornamental feature of democracy. It is its safety valve. It allows anger and opposition to be expressed without violence. When dissent is reimagined as conspiracy, that valve is sealed shut. Protest becomes preparatory conduct. Organisation becomes unlawful association. Agitation becomes a threat to sovereignty. Seen in this light, Ambedkar's slogan acquires a tragic irony. "Educate, organise, agitate" describes precisely the kind of civic engagement that sustains constitutional democracy. Under the logic of this judgment, it also describes the pathway to being labelled a central conspirator, denied bail and told to wait patiently while years pass. The Court does attempt to soften the blow. It grants the majority of the appellants bail. It recognises, in theory, that prolonged incarceration is a matter of concern. It allows for renewal of bail applications after a year. One is grateful, genuinely, for these small mercies. But they do not answer the central problem. If five years in prison without trial is not enough to justify bail for those accused of being ideologically influential, what will be? Six years? Seven? A decade?

The Supreme Court often expresses concern about trial courts and high courts mechanically denying bail under special statutes. But it must confront its own role in shaping this culture. When it endorses distinctions that privilege prosecutorial storytelling over constitutional principle, it sends a clear message down the judicial hierarchy. Liberty is optional. Incarceration is safe. And so we return, at the end, to the beginning. Five years of imprisonment, no trial, and no directly attributable violent act made this a straightforward case for bail. Instead, the Court chose caution over courage. It chose to speak the language of permanent emergency. For those who have finally walked out of prison, there is relief. For those still inside, there is a calendar date pencilled in, and a hope that next year may bring better news.

articulate dissent coherently are told that their prominence counts against them. The more seriously the State takes your ideas, the less seriously the Court takes your liberty. The judgment insists that it is not conducting a mini-trial. But it uncritically adopts the prosecution's hierarchy of roles. Labels such as "mastermind" and "architect" are accepted as neutral descriptors rather than contested conclusions. No meaningful inquiry is made into whether ideological articulation or protest coordination, without a proximate link to violence, can satisfy the statutory ingredients of a terrorist offence.

This is where the judgment's philosophy becomes explicit. In a passage that will be cited often by lower courts, the SC observes: "The Constitution guarantees personal liberty, but it does not conceive liberty as an isolated or absolute entitlement, detached from the security of the society in which it operates... Where a special statutory framework has been enacted to address offences perceived to strike at these foundations, courts are duty

Jail, not bail: SC verdict raises disturbing questions



guaranteed under Article 21. The Court itself

acknowledged that extended incarceration invited greater judicial scrutiny, but it stopped short of finding the present detention constitutionally impermissible.

The BJP has hailed the decision as a vindication, while the Opposition has pointed out the repeated parole granted to rape-murder convict Gurmeet Ram Rahim Singh. This comparison might be legally flawed, but it has struck a chord with people who are increasingly doubtful about equal treatment under the law. Ultimately, the judgment places a heavy responsibility on the State. If bail is denied because the accusations are serious, then the trial must proceed with urgency. Pre-trial detention cannot become a substitute for punishment. The Supreme Court has left the door open for future reconsideration if delay becomes disproportionate. Whether that safeguard proves meaningful will determine if this case comes to be seen as a rightful assertion of the law or a disturbing normalisation of indefinite incarceration.

Rewriting the book of jobs

India's biggest worry for 2026 is finding jobs for fresh graduates. Given the slowness in hiring by both public and private sectors, should we rethink the definition of work?

As the new calendar year begins, let me get the rhetoric going with a question. What's the biggest challenge India faces today? Is the news that we see every day defining it? Or must we look beyond, into what we don't see? Is it the challenge from a fast-souring relationship with Bangladesh, an already-soured relationship with Pakistan, or is it the one that ferments slowly in a large pot with China and its geopolitical intent? Is it the fast depreciating relationship between the rupee and the dollar? Is it that long, unresolved and contentious issue of tariffs between the US and India that's been troubling us for a while now? Well, this is what we see.

And what is it that we don't see enough of? I believe there is a big one. We hear of it now and then, and we push it under the carpet of comfort. The big four-letter issue in our midst today is jobs. The lack of enough jobs for a whole nation of hungry and aspirational job seekers. An entire country of educated people, well nigh the size of one of our bigger cities, are on the daily active lookout for jobs that seem to be elusive, if not entirely missing. That's the volume dimension. Add to it the fact that all of them are looking for a full day's work. That's depth of work. And every one of them is looking for work that matches what they bring to the table as a competency. In the mismatch of these many dimensions lies the gory story of missing jobs. Current government numbers tell a different tale though. A really big number of 17 crore new jobs were created between 2017 and 2024, as per the Niti Ayog. These numbers can't be wrong, but seem woefully inadequate when compared to the current need for bigger numbers, and more importantly, the addition to this demand-number every passing year as graduates pass out from our very many educational institutions. At last count, those joining the job market every year exceeded 1.5 crore young people.

In the market for jobs, there is the existing job. The central

government and every state government have a standard set of jobs. Each is filled with typically small and incremental vacancies that arise every year. The number of applicants for every job announced is mind-boggling. The Railway Recruitment Board had 64,197 vacancies announced in 2025. Over 1.87 crore candidates applied. While a fair number of these jobs exist in the government sector, a very robust number of private sector jobs exist as well. Out here, water finds its own level. As corporate business grows, investment grows. Every new investment creates many new jobs. Well, that is the way it should go. If one does, however, peek into the investment mindset of Indian business today, one witnesses a rather lethargic wait-and-watch sentiment. This sentiment has been worsened within export-oriented businesses that have been delivered a sucker punch with the Trump tariff at hand. Add to it the role of artificial intelligence in bringing in non-human agents as colleagues into the work environment, and the cocktail of depression is complete. There are traditional jobs of the brick-and-mortar kind, and then there are the new-age jobs. There are jobs that demand expending physical energy as opposed to exercising the mind. And now there are the gigs. Gigs are not really jobs. They are defined more as entrepreneurship where the performer of the task is the owner.

There is a gig worker in each of our lives. You get your grocery delivered by a gig worker, your cab to the airport is driven by an owner-partner gig worker, and there are dozens of other gig categories in India. The gig economy was estimated to be as large as 77 lakh people in 2020-21 doing their own thing and writing their own salary cheques based on how many days they work and how

many hours they choose to work across those days. The gig and platform economy is the new work-buzz in India, one that has made livelihoods happen for a whole host of people looking to work and make their lives happen. This economy is slated to grow by a multiple of three by 2029-30. It's an arena of robust growth.

But even as I write this, there is tumult out here. Gig workers of Zomato and Swiggy, to name just two



platforms, have threatened to strike work on crucial big delivery days. The peak Christmas and New Year season was chosen to showcase their demands. A whole bunch of delivery-partners were stopped from doing their jobs and a fair bit of chaos ensued. The political classes of both the 'champagne' and 'toddy' socialite kind have jumped into the fray supporting the needs, desires and aspirations of grocery and food delivery workers.

As the fire rages on that count, let me quickly jump to a thought that is rather important to flag. The point is a simple one. Were we ever meant to work for others? Were we meant to sell our time to employers? Or is there an older model of work, possibly a pre-British-era format where everyone worked for himself or herself? Were we meant to be in regimented jobs? Or were we meant to work in our own fields to grow food that was important for our lives? Were we meant to sell the excess through a spirit of direct entrepreneurship, either through a retail outlet of our own, or through a process of 1:1 buyer-seller connect? Are we meant to be doing our own thing really?

The gig-economy today comes closest to this model of work. As India grapples with the issue of not enough jobs for all, must we abolish the thought of jobs itself? Must we go back to become the entrepreneurs each one of us is meant to be? Must we debunk the thought of industrial society that brings in factory workers that work for the collective good of the factory owner? Must we work for others at all? Or must we work for ourselves and maybe offer jobs to a small number in the ecosystem who we can touch with a benign job that trains for a short while and then unleashes

them into entrepreneurship? India today equally grapples with issues that relate to the volume of employment and the quality of employment on offer. Must we then look at a reverse movement in the jobs mindset of our people? Must we go back to an era of working for ourselves? Must that be something we teach in our schools, for a start?

Arvind Kejriwal & CM Bhagwant Singh Mann meet Punjab's traders & shopkeepers
Contd.....Front page

But, we do not think like that." Sharing his personal connection, he added, "I come from a trading family. I understand the pain and suffering of a trader. You may remember how, as children, we used to go to the village during summer holidays. My uncle there, had a grocery shop at the bus stand. During summer vacations, many times I would manage the entire shop alone for days. I understand the pain of a shopkeeper. He works day and night, takes huge risks, earns very little, pays taxes to the government from that income, provides jobs to people, supports his family, and all charitable and social activities in the village or city are funded by his earnings. Despite all this, governments trouble him. I understand your pain." Linking trader welfare to national progress, the AAP Chief asserted, "I also understand that no country can progress until it protects even its smallest shopkeeper and provides him facilities. Governments talk about big investments everywhere. In Punjab too, like other states, there are initiatives like Invest Punjab. That is not wrong and should happen. They talk about industries worth ₹3,000 crore, ₹4,000 crore or ₹10,000 crore coming in. That is good and should happen. But no one ever paid attention to the small shopkeeper running a grocery store, a clothing shop, a bread shop, a tile shop, or shops in small markets. For the first time, a government has come where the small shopkeeper does not need to wonder whether to approach someone through recommendation or pay a bribe to get his work done. This has to stop." Explaining the new commission structure, he elaborated, "We are creating a system through which you will become part of the government. There will be a commission at the state level, then at the district level, and most importantly, at the constituency level. At the constituency level commission, there will be traders along with local police and administration. They're responsible to approach every shopkeeper in markets and hold a meeting. The problems faced by shopkeepers will be discussed in these meetings. Individual shopkeepers may have personal problems, where someone says they have been running around for months and their work is not getting done. There may be market level problems such as broken roads, lack of toilets, drinking water issues, difficulties for traders and customers, and even law and order problems. Ninety percent of these problems will be solved at that level itself." Addressing policy level concerns, Arvind Kejriwal said, "Some issues will be at the policy level, which these committees will recommend to the state government and get fixed, including new policy suggestions. The OTS policy, for example, was made by previous governments, but they never intended to implement it. It was designed in such a way that it could never be implemented. If we make policies after talking to people, those policies will be implemented, and through these commissions, those policies will also reach you." Concluding, the AAP Supremo stated, "I am very happy that all these commissions are being launched by the AAP government. We hope that within the first three months, one round of meetings across all small and big markets in Punjab will be completed. Problems that can be solved on the spot will be resolved there, and those that need to go to the state level will be addressed at that level. After three months, the next round of meetings will be held." Addressing the gathering, Punjab CM Bhagwant Singh Mann said, "This is a unique programme taking place in Punjab, something that never happened under previous governments. The sky is the limit for the progress and prosperity of every individual, and this path-breaking initiative has been launched especially for the welfare of small shopkeepers. The AAP was constituted by Arvind Kejriwal not to indulge in politics, but to change politics itself and to teach the country the meaning of value-based politics." Highlighting the people-first approach of his government, the Chief Minister said that the sole objective behind assuming charge was to serve the people, a commitment clearly reflected on the ground.

HP: 297 Electric buses to be added to HRTC fleet

Una. (Agency)

The Himachal Pradesh government is taking decisive steps toward promoting e-mobility by adding 297 electric buses to the fleet of the Himachal Road Transport Corporation (HRTC). Deputy Chief Minister Mukesh Agnihotri said the first prototype electric bus has arrived in Solan from Hyderabad. Trial runs of the e-bus will be conducted on the Solan-Shimla route over the next two days.

Following this, trials will be carried out in a phased manner on other routes and at various HRTC depots across the state.

The Deputy Chief Minister said the government



is committed to developing a green and environmentally friendly transport system. The introduction of electric buses will significantly reduce air pollution, lower dependence on diesel, and cut operational costs, thereby strengthening HRTC's financial position.

He added that the initiative would provide passengers with safe, comfortable, modern, and reliable transport services. To support smooth operations, a charging infrastructure is also being developed across the state. "These electric buses will play a key role in establishing Himachal Pradesh as a leading state in clean, green, and sustainable transportation," Agnihotri said.

Road Safety March held in Muzaffarnagar, citizens urged to follow traffic rules

The Sikh Times
Manoj Pal

Muzaffarnagar: As part of National Road Safety Month-2026, a road safety awareness march was organised in Muzaffarnagar on Thursday. The programme was held following the orders of the Chief Minister of Uttar Pradesh and under the directions of District Magistrate Umesh Mishra. Various awareness activities are being organised in the district from January 1 to January 31. The road safety march started from the Municipal Council premises and passed through Rani Lakshimbai Sthal, Kachahri Road and Prakash Chowk before concluding at Mahavir Chowk. Officials, employees and citizens participating in the march carried banners and placards, appealing to the public to strictly follow traffic rules and adopt responsible behaviour on roads. The march was led by Municipal Council Chairperson Minakshi Swaroop, while it was chaired by Assistant Regional Transport Officer (Enforcement) Sushil Kumar Mishra. Officials and staff from the Transport Department, Municipal Council, Traffic Police, Muzaffarnagar Police and Uttar Pradesh State Road Transport Corporation took part in the programme. Addressing the gathering during the march, speakers highlighted that road safety is directly linked to saving lives and even minor negligence can lead to fatal acci-

dents. The Municipal Council Chairperson appealed to citizens to wear helmets while riding two-wheelers and to use seat belts while driving cars. She also urged people not to drive at high

strict compliance with safety norms. The march was attended by Executive Officer Pragya Singh, Municipal Health Officer Dr A.K. Shahi, Roadways Depot In-charge Ravi Chaudhary,



speed and to strictly follow traffic rules. Dr Rajiv Kumar appealed to parents not to allow children below 18 years of age to drive vehicles, stating that underage driving is both illegal and dangerous. A RTO E official said that India records a high number of road accidents mainly due to violation of traffic rules. He added that accidents can be reduced only through awareness and

Traffic Sub-Inspector Pushpendra Kumar, Kachahri outpost in-charge, Civil Lines police team and a large number of officials, employees and local residents. At the conclusion of the march, participants took a pledge to work towards making Muzaffarnagar free from road accidents and to promote road safety awareness across the district.

NFR Strengthens Maintenance of Coaches with Modern Technology

The Sikh Times

Maligaon, 08th January: Northeast Frontier Railway (NFR) has introduced advanced Fluke ii905 Acoustic Imager technology at the Sick Line and Pit Line, Guwahati Coaching Depot, to strengthen detection of air brake and pneumatic system leakages and enhance coach safety. The acoustic imager is being used for fast, visual detection of DV leakage, air bellow leakage and air brake pipe leakage. The technology enables precise pinpointing of compressed air and gas leaks through an acoustic sound map overlaid on visible images, ensuring accurate, safe and time-efficient diagnosis. This initiative significantly improves reliability of air brake leakage detection, reduces diagnostic time and supports timely rectification, thereby enhancing operational efficiency. To ensure effective utilization, training has been

provided to Pit Line staff on operation of computerized RTR machines and use of advanced diagnostic tools at Guwahati

under which one coach is taken up daily for comprehensive overhauling. Works include exterior painting, fitment of passenger

bins and side mirrors. So far, three coaches have been completed under this initiative. These measures reaffirm Northeast



Coaching Depot. In addition, Sick Line/Guwahati has undertaken the "One Day One Coach-INTENSIVE" initiative,

amenities, changing of berth rexyne, linen storage repairs, installation of new EPPF cylinders in lavatories, provision of new dust-

Frontier Railway's commitment to passenger safety, quality maintenance and continuous upgradation through modern technology.

2 arrested for cheating woman of Rs 22.7 lakh via fake stock trading app

New Delhi: The Delhi Police has busted a cyber fraud syndicate operating through a fraudulent stock trading application and apprehended two men from Haryana for allegedly cheating a woman of Rs 22.7 lakh, officials said on Tuesday. The probe began following a complaint lodged by Dr Amita Garg on November 13. The complainant alleged that she was added to a messaging app group 'Stan Chart Dialogue Forum L7', where administrators shared advice on D-mat share investments. DCP (Shahdara) Prashant Gautam said one of the group admins, identifying herself as Yalini Guna, persuaded the victim to invest via a mobile application and shared a download link. The complainant, initially, invested around Rs 2.7 lakh through

multiple transactions. While the application displayed apparent profits, the victim was pressured to invest further sums when she attempted to withdraw her money. In total, she transferred Rs 22.70 lakh before being blocked from the app, police said. An e-FIR was filed under Sections 318(4) (cheating) and 340 (forged document or electronic record and using it as genuine) of the Bharatiya Nyaya Sahita. During the investigation, police traced the money trail through the NCRP portal and identified a bank account belonging to Sameer, a resident of Hisar. Analysis of detail records further linked other suspect numbers to the crime, he said. On November 10, the police team conducted raids in Hisar and apprehended Sameer (22) and Dev Singh (22).

During interrogation, Sameer admitted to opening five to six bank accounts and handing them over to Dev Singh for a payment of Rs 4,000 per account, the officials said. Two mobile phones and three SIM cards were seized from them. Both men have been produced before a court and sent to judicial custody, they added. Police said the accused followed a standard modus operandi of contacting victims on social media with promises of high returns. Fraudsters build trust by showing fake profits before siphoning off larger investments. Further investigation is underway to identify other members of the syndicate and trace the remaining proceeds of crime, they said.

ED seizes assets worth Rs 10 crore from Delhi farmhouse in case against UAE-based criminal

New Delhi: The Enforcement Directorate seized Rs 1.22 crore in cash and jewellery worth Rs 8.5 crore from a Delhi farmhouse on Thursday after a fresh round of searches in connection with a money-laundering investigation against UAE-based absconding criminal Inderjit Yadav, officials said. The federal probe agency on Wednesday recovered Rs 5.12 crore in cash, a suitcase containing gold and diamond jewellery worth Rs 8.8 crore, and documents linked to assets worth Rs 35 crore during searches in this

case from the premises of a man named Aman Kumar in south Delhi's Sarvapriya Vihar. Fresh cash of Rs 1.22 crore and jewellery worth Rs 8.5 crore have been seized on Thursday from a farmhouse of a man named Sunil Gupta, according to the officials. Gupta had in the past given loans to Kumar, an alleged accomplice of Yadav, the officials said. An attempt was made by Kumar to "dissipate" the proceeds of crime by transferring funds to Gupta after the ED investigation was initiated, they said. The money-laundering case against

Yadav pertains to alleged illegal extortion, coercive loan settlement of private financiers and earning commission from such illegal activities. The ED case stems from 14 FIRs and chargesheets filed by the Haryana and Uttar Pradesh police against Yadav and his associates. The ED has said Yadav was "wanted in various cases of Haryana Police and is currently absconding and operating from the UAE". The agency had conducted the first round of searches in this case on December 26 and 27 at 10 locations in Delhi, Gurugram and Rohtak. Apart from locations linked to Yadav, it also raided premises related to a company named Apollo Green Energy Ltd. The ED claimed that Yadav, owner and "key controller" of a company named Gem Records Entertainment Pvt. Ltd. (operating as Gems Tunes), is a known "strong man" involved in criminal activities like murder, extortion, coercive settlements of loans, illegal land grabbing, cheating, and violent offences.

ARC OF 5W WALKIE-TALKIE & 25W VHF SET OF LUMDING DIVISION
E-Tender No.: SNT-36-LMG-2025-26;
Dated: 05-01-2026; E-Tender are invited by the undersigned for the following work; Name of work : ARC of 5W Walkie-Talkie & 25W VHF set of Lumding Division for Three years.
Tender Value: ₹17,82,374.50/-; Bid Security: ₹35,700/-; Date & time of closing of tender at 15:00 hours and opening at 15:30 hours on 28-01-2026. Complete information alongwith the tender document of above e-tender will be available in the website www.ireps.gov.in

DSTE, Lumding
NORTH EAST FRONTIER RAILWAY
Serving Customers With A Smile

OUTDOOR MEDIA CAMPAIGN THROUGH TRAIN VINYL WRAP

E-Tender Notice No.: C-LMG-01-2026; Dated: 02-01-2026; E-Tender are invited by the undersigned for the following work; Name of work : Outdoor Media Campaign through Train Vinyl Wrap on Train No. 15667/15668 (Kamakhya - Gandhidham Exp.). Advertised Value: ₹56,01,696/-; Earnest Money: ₹12,100/-; Date & time of closing of tender at 11:00 hrs on 17-01-2026. For details please visit in website www.ireps.gov.in

Mr. DCM, Lumding
NORTH EAST FRONTIER RAILWAY
Serving Customers With A Smile

Midnight mock drill at Banke Bihari Temple triggers brief panic in Vrindavan

Mathura. (Agency)

The calm and devotional atmosphere of Vrindavan was briefly disrupted late Wednesday night when a large contingent of security personnel, including National Security Guard (NSG) commandos, cordoned off the entire Banke Bihari Temple complex, triggering concern among residents and people living in the surrounding areas.

Sirens echoed through the narrow lanes as armed forces moved swiftly and took positions across the temple vicinity. The sudden deployment led to speculation about a possible security threat. However, officials later clarified that there was no real danger and that the operation was a pre-planned mock drill conducted to test preparedness for a terror attack or any other major emergency situation.

The drill began around 11:30 pm. As part of standard operating procedures, civilians were first cleared from all approach roads leading to the temple, and the electricity supply in the area was temporarily switched off to create a realistic emergency scenario.

Under the cover of darkness, more than 150 NSG commandos were deployed inside the temple premises, in adjoining narrow lanes, and on the rooftops of nearby buildings.

A simulated terror attack scenario was staged inside the temple, depicting four people sustaining gunshot injuries amid a crowded situation. Security forces responded immediately, evacuating the injured on stretchers through Gate No. 1. Given the congested and narrow lanes around the shrine, e-carts were used to rehearse quick and smooth evacuation.

One critically injured person was administered first aid within the temple premises, while the remaining injured were transported to hospitals by ambulance as part of the exercise.

During the operation, the commandos carried out a detailed sweep of the entire temple complex and assessed security arrangements at all entry and exit points. The mock drill continued until around 4:30 am.

NAME CHANGE
I, hitherto known as KAUSHALENDRA KUMAR CHAUDHARY alias RAMBALI CHAUDHARI S/o SHASHIKANT CHAUDHARY, R/o B-14/4, Johari Pur, Dungarpur Mohalla, Gokal Pur, North East Delhi, Delhi-110094, have changed my name and shall hereafter be known as RAMBALI CHAUDHARI, for all future purposes.

NAME CHANGE

It is for general information that I, SUBODH VERMA S/o RAJ KAPOOR, R/o 3/47A, Third Floor, Near Fun Cinemas, Moti Nagar, Karam Pura, PO: Ramesh Nagar, Dist: West Delhi, Delhi-110015, declare that the name of my minor son has been wrongly written as BABY TWO OF PRINYAKA VERMA in my minor son namely DEVAANSH VERMA aged 05 years in his Aadhaar Card No. 8988 1725 6538. The actual name of my minor son is DEVAANSH VERMA, which may be amended accordingly.

NAME CHANGE

I, hitherto known as SHIVANI D/O SANT RAM P/O 26/19, TRILOK PURI, S/o Sh. Ram Sagar Roy, R/o B-6/399-400, Sector 17, Rohini, Delhi -110089 have change my name Prashant Kumar Roy for all future purposes.

NAME CHANGE

I, KAMLESH W/o Umesh Chand Tripathi R/o E-1/180, Gali No.3A, TOWER Wali Gali, Nehru Vihar, Dayalpur, Delhi-110094, have changed my name to KAMLESH TRIPATHI permanently

NAME CHANGE

I, Pranav S/o Randhir Singh R/o C1/702, Tower Height Apartment, Pitampura, Delhi-110034 have changed my name to Pranav Singh for all future purposes.

NAME CHANGE

I, hitherto known as SHIVANI D/O SANT RAM P/O 26/19, TRILOK PURI, S/o Sh. Ram Sagar Roy, R/o B-6/399-400, Sector 17, Rohini, Delhi -110089 have change my name Prashant Kumar Roy for all future purposes.

NAME CHANGE

I, hitherto known as ANISHA D/O SHRESTHA D/o KHM PRASAD SHRESTHA, R/o S-139, School Block, Laxmi Nagar, PO: Shakarpur, Dist: East Delhi, Delhi-110092, have changed my name from ANISHA PAHUJA to ANJANA GANDHI for all future purpose.

NAME CHANGE

I, Firdosh W/o Zahid Hussain R/o E-57/A-521, Sunder Nagar, Delhi 110093 Changed my name to Firdos

NAME CHANGE

I, Rajni Singh W/o Vijay Kumar R/o C-2-007, Super Tech Ecoliving-1, Bishrak Dardi, Gautam Buddha Nagar, Uttar Pradesh-201306 have changed my name to Ragni Singh for all future purposes.

NAME CHANGE

I, Ragni Singh W/o Vijay Kumar R/o C-2-007, Super Tech Ecoliving-1, Bishrak Dardi, Gautam Buddha Nagar, Uttar Pradesh-201306 have changed my name to Ragni Singh for all future purposes.

PUBLIC NOTICE

It is for general information that I, Abdul Rahim S/o Aman, R/o House Number 300/3, Purwa Faiyaz Ali, R/o 6/26, 3rd Floor, West Patel Nagar Central Delhi 110008, declared that name of my father and my mother have been wrongly written as Aman Rahim and Tamana in my 10th and 12th class educational documents. The actual name of my father and my mother is AMAN AND TAMANNA. Respectively which may be amended accordingly.

NAME CHANGE

I, hitherto known as SHIVANI D/O SANT RAM P/O 26/19, TRILOK PURI, S/o Sh. Ram Sagar Roy, R/o B-6/399-400, Sector 17, Rohini, Delhi -110089 have change my name Prashant Kumar Roy for all future purposes.

NAME CHANGE

I, hitherto known as RAVI KUMAR MORYAL S/o SHYAM LAL MORYAL, R/o 6457/4, Subz Wali Gali, Satya Narayan Mandir, Nabi Karim Pahar Ganj, Delhi, Nabi Karim, NCT of Delhi, 110055, declare that name of mine and my father have been wrongly written as RAVI KUMAR and SHYAM LAL in my Scheduled Castes Certificate No. 3187. The actual name of mine and my father are RAVI KUMAR MORYAL and SHYAM LAL MORYAL respectively.

NAME CHANGE

I, hitherto known as SHIVANI D/O SANT RAM P/O 26/19, TRILOK PURI, S/o Sh. Ram Sagar Roy, R/o B-6/399-400, Sector 17,

Meet 'Ironman' Delhi cop Nidhin Valsan, who led Turkman Gate demolition

Not many know that the DCP

Central Delhi, IPS officer Nidhin

Valsan who led the demolition drive at Turkman Gate, was diagnosed with Stage-4 Non-Hodgkin's Lymphoma in 2021, a life-threatening form of cancer. After undergoing prolonged treatment, he made a full recovery, an experience he has publicly described as transformative. Read more about the officer here....

New Delhi.(Agency)
Nidhin Valsan, an Indian Police Service (IPS) officer currently serving as Deputy Commissioner of Police (Central District), Delhi, has come into the public spotlight after leading a demolition drive near Turkman Gate aimed at removing the illegal encroachments in the area. The operation was carried out following directions related to court orders on encroachments around the historic Turkman Gate. During the drive, municipal authorities, backed by police personnel, moved to demolish structures, including a banquet hall and a dispensary located near a mosque. The action triggered protests from local residents, with tensions escalating as sections of the crowd allegedly resorted to stone pelting. Police responded with crowd-control measures, including the use of tear gas, and several police personnel were reported injured in the clashes.

Addressing the situation, officials said the police were only enforcing legal orders and

that strict action would be taken against those who attempted to disrupt law and order during the operation. The demolition drive has since sparked political reactions and public debate, given Turkman Gate's sensitive historical and social significance.

Beyond the immediate controversy, DCP Nidhin Valsan's personal and professional journey has drawn widespread attention. A native of Kannur district in Kerala, Valsan belongs to the 2012 batch of the IPS. He has previously served in key policing roles in Goa, Laksdeep and Delhi, earning a reputation for firm action against drug networks and land encroachments during his tenure as Superintendent of Police in North Goa.

Diagnosed with Cancer in 2021
Valsan, an AGMUT 2012 batch IPS officer is

also known for his extraordinary personal resilience. In 2021, he was diagnosed with Stage-4 Non-Hodgkin's Lymphoma, a life-

police officer's journey of arresting illness. The book, is presented as an inspiring example of hope, determination, and overcoming adversity.

Recovery and comeback

Following his recovery, Valsan went on to complete the grueling Ironman Triathlon, one of the world's toughest endurance competitions, which includes a 3.8-kilometre swim, a 180-kilometre cycling segment, and a full marathon of 42.2 kilometres. His achievement was widely lauded as a symbol of determination and mental strength.

As the Turkman Gate demolition continues to remain under public scrutiny, Nidhin Valsan stands out as an officer whose career combines high-profile policing responsibilities with a personal story of perseverance that has inspired many within and outside the police force.



threatening form of cancer. After undergoing prolonged treatment, he made a full recovery, an experience he has publicly described as transformative. Later, he wrote an inspiring memoir book, 'Cancerman to Ironman, a

CM Rekha Gupta engages citizens, promises prompt action at Jan Sunwai

New Delhi.(Agency)

CM Rekha Gupta on Wednesday met residents at the Jan Seva Sadan on Raj Niwas Marg during the Jan Sunwai. Citizens from across the capital presented their problems, complaints, and suggestions directly to the Chief Minister. Listening to the grievances, Gupta instructed officials of concerned departments to ensure prompt and time-bound resolution. She reiterated the Delhi government's commitment to good governance, transparency, and swift redressal of citizens' issues. A warm moment was witnessed when children welcomed the Chief Minister with flowers.



noting that timely action through Jan Sunwai has strengthened public trust in the government.

"Direct engagement with citizens through Jan Sunwai makes governance more sensitive, accountable, and effective," Gupta said. She emphasised that Jan Sunwai is not merely a forum for complaints but a platform for participation, trust, and solution-oriented governance. Public expectations, she said, guide policies and administrative functioning.

Gupta further stated that the government works with public interest at its core, taking every problem seriously and ensuring timely solutions. Officials were directed to follow up on all cases received during Jan Sunwai so that no resident faces inconvenience.

ED attaches Rs 400-crore assets amid probe into Jaypee Group 'fraud' case

Immovable properties of JSS and Page 3 Buildtech seized over alleged diversion of 14,599 crore collected from 25,000+ homebuyers; Manoj Gaur in judicial custody.

New Delhi.(Agency)

The Enforcement Directorate (ED) on Wednesday said it has attached immovable assets worth approximately 400 crore as part of its ongoing money laundering investigation into the Jaypee Group. The immovable assets belong to the Jaiprakash Sewa Sansthan (JSS) and Page 3 Buildtech Private Limited. These properties have been seized under the provisions of the Prevention of Money Laundering Act (PMLA), 2002. The action is linked to an alleged large-scale diversion of funds collected from homebuyers of Jaypee Wishtown and Jaypee Greens projects.

The federal investigation agency had initiated a probe against the Jaypee Group on the basis of multiple FIRs registered by the Economic Offences Wing (EOW) of the Delhi and Uttar Pradesh police departments following complaints of criminal conspiracy, cheating and criminal breach of trust by the homebuyers against Jaypee Infratech Ltd and Jaiprakash Associates Limited and their promoters.

"It has been alleged that the funds collected from thousands of homebuyers for the construction and completion of residential projects were diverted for purposes other than construction, leaving the homebuyers defrauded and their projects incomplete," an official of the agency said.

The ED said the two Jaypee Group companies, JAL and JIL, collected 14,599 crore from more than 25,000 homebuyers, but "substantial" amounts were diverted and siphoned off to related group entities such as the JSS, Jaypee Healthcare Limited and Jaypee Sports International Limited.

"The investigation has established the central role of Manoj Gaur (former Jaypee Infratech MD) in the planning and execution of the fund diversion through a complex web of transactions within the Jaypee group and its associated entities," the agency stated. Gaur was arrested on November 13 last year under Section 19 of the PMLA, 2002. He is currently in judicial custody.

Manipur Violence: Court Orders Forensic Probe Of 48-Minute Audio Clip

New Delhi.(Agency)

The Supreme Court on Wednesday ordered forensic examination of the entire 48-minute audio recording which a plea has alleged that the leaked clip points to the role of former Manipur chief minister N Biren Singh in the 2023 ethnic violence.

A bench comprising Justices Sanjay Kumar and K Vinod Chandran said that the entire available leaked audio be forwarded to the National Forensic Science University (NFSU), Gandhinagar, for forensic examination. "The entire 48 minutes of the conversation in question along with the admitted voice recordings of the former Manipur CM are available... All the voice recordings furnished to the respondents by the learned counsel for the petitioner shall also be included therewith and forwarded to the

National Forensic Science University Gandhinagar," the bench ordered. It also asked the NFSU to expedite the process and submit final report in a sealed cover. During brief proceedings,

minute conversation and that the audio had been supplied. Additional Solicitor General Aishwarya Bhati, appearing for Manipur government, said that the state received the full recording only after the last hearing.

On December 15 last year, the bench questioned why the entire available leaked audio clips were not sent for forensic examination. The top court had said it was "little disturbed" by the affidavit filed on behalf of the petitioners on November 20, 2025 that "states to the effect that only select clippings were sent". The NFSU had virtually given a clean chit, saying the leaked audio clips were "tampered with".

Singh resigned as the chief minister of Manipur on February 9 last year, amid rumblings within the state BJP and growing demands for a change in leadership.



lawyer Prashant Bhushan, appearing for the petitioner Kuki Organisation for Human Rights Trust, said the matter had been listed around 10 times. He submitted that the petition itself contained the transcript of the full 48-

'Violence will not be tolerated,' Delhi Home Minister warns after stone pelting during MCD demolition

New Delhi.(Agency)

Delhi Home Minister Ashish Sood on Wednesday said stone pelting during the removal of encroachment near Faiz-e-Elahi mosque in Turkman Gate area was "unfortunate" and warned that violence will not be tolerated. At least 5 police personnel were injured after certain "criminal and mischievous elements" allegedly pelted stones and glass bottles at the force when the MCD was carrying out a demolition.

The minister said, "I want to clearly state that Faiz-e-Elahi mosque is completely safe. There is no arbitrariness or mala fide intent on the part of the government in this matter."

Sood appealed to the people not to fall prey to any kind of provocation. Strict action will be taken against those who

take the law into their own hands under provocation, he said, while urging the people to cooperate with the

diagnostic centre, a marriage hall and

two two-storey boundary walls. Kumar

added that debris, sufficient to fill around

200 to 250 vehicles, is still lying at

the site and will soon be removed.

Meanwhile, Aam Aadmi Party (AAP) MLA Amanatullah Khan alleged that the anti-encroachment demolition drive was illegal. He claimed that the land in question is part of the 123 Waqf property and that the demolition was carried out unlawfully.

He added, "Anyone comes and says that this has been built illegally, and the MCD demolishes it.... You will demolish the Waqf lands of Muslims."

Then you are saying that stone pelting took place. You are firing tear gas shells, charging with sticks, and sending people to jail. They are just doing Hindu-Muslim politics."



Wife Can't Be Presumed To Be Earning At Interim Maintenance Stage: Delhi High Court

The husband claimed that the petitioner wife was working as a nursery teacher and was, therefore, earning, but he did not place any documentary proof on record.

New Delhi.(Agency)

Wife cannot be presumed to be earning or being capable of maintaining herself at the stage of granting interim maintenance, the Delhi High Court has said. Justice Swarana Kanta Sharma made the observation while dealing with a woman's plea challenging a family court order granting her monthly interim maintenance of Rs 2,500. The husband claimed that the petitioner wife was working as a nursery teacher and was, therefore, earning, but he did not place any documentary proof on record. The court noted that the woman studied only up to 11th standard and rejected his assertion, saying the husband's "bald assertion" with any proof could not be of any help at this stage.

"Accordingly, this Court is of the view that, for the purposes of grant of interim maintenance, the petitioner-wife cannot be presumed to be earning or being capable of

maintaining herself," the court said in the 2022 Seeking enhancement of interim judgement passed on January 5. "Mere bald maintenance, she argued that her husband

assertion that the wife is working and was a graduate who was working as a

teacher in a private school, earning approximately Rs 25,000 per month. She further alleged that he also gave private tuition and earned an additional Rs 15,000 per month, besides running a grocery shop 10,000 per month.



and earning rental income of about Rs 30,000 per month.

She said Rs 2,500 per month was insufficient and inadequate.

The husband defended the interim maintenance amount of Rs 2,500 per month on the grounds that he was working as a teacher/special educator with an NGO and earned Rs 10,000 per month.

The court, however, observed that the claimed income was even lower than the minimum wages payable to a skilled person, despite the husband admittedly being a graduate. It further noted that the husband did not file his complete bank account statements and produced account statements only for a limited period, which did not have specific transactions highlighting receipt of any salary of Rs 10,000 per month.

NEWS BOX

Tottenham boss Thomas Frank trolled after spotted drinking from Arsenal cup

NEW DELHI. (Agency)

Tottenham Hotspur head coach Thomas Frank found himself at the centre of unwanted attention on Wednesday night, even before Spurs kicked a ball against Bournemouth. Frank was widely trolled on social media after being spotted drinking from a cup carrying the logo of arch-rivals Arsenal ahead of the Premier League clash. The image, taken at the Vitality Stadium before kick-off, quickly went viral. Given the fierce rivalry between Tottenham and Arsenal, the optics were poor, especially with Spurs struggling for form and Frank already facing growing scrutiny from supporters. Addressing the incident after the match, Frank firmly denied any deliberate intent. The Spurs boss said he had not noticed the Arsenal branding on the cup and stressed that it would have been "absolutely stupid" to knowingly use anything associated with their rivals. "I definitely did not notice it. It would be completely stupid of me to take it if I knew. It's a little bit sad in football that I need to be asked about it. I would never do something that stupid," Frank said after the match.

"I think we're definitely going in the wrong direction if we need to worry about me



having a cup with a logo of another club," he added. According to reports, the cup had been left behind from Arsenal's recent visit to Bournemouth, where they played just days earlier. Neither Frank nor his staff noticed the crest until the image had already circulated online. The Danish coach also voiced his frustration that the episode became a topic of discussion, suggesting football was focusing on the wrong things. Unfortunately for Frank, the night only unravelled further on the pitch. Tottenham suffered a painful 3-2 defeat to Bournemouth, conceding a dramatic late winner to Antoine Semenyo in stoppage time. Spurs had twice taken the lead through Mathys Tel and later Joao Palhinha, but once again failed to close out the game.

What's all this brother?
Ashwin amazed by
Vaibhav Suryavanshi's
run-scoring spree

NEW DELHI. (Agency)

Former India cricketer Ravichandran Ashwin has summed up the cricketing world's growing amazement at 14-year-old sensation Vaibhav Suryavanshi, whose extraordinary run of scores has turned him into one of the most talked-about young batters in the game. At an age when most players are still learning the basics, Suryavanshi is already rewriting expectations with sustained performances across domestic and Under-19 cricket. Ashwin took to X to react to Suryavanshi's latest heroics, laying bare just how remarkable the teenager's recent numbers have been. Listing a string of explosive innings from the past month, the former India spinner highlighted not just the volume of runs, but the tempo and consistency with which they have come.

"171(95), 50(26), 190(84), 68(24), 108*(61),



46(25) & 127(74) today. These are just some of Vaibhav Suryavanshi's scores in the last 30 days across domestic & U19 cricket. Enna thambi, indha adi podhuma, illa innum konjam venuma? (what's all this brother? Is this sample enough or are you going to raise the bar further) You can't explain in words what this kid is doing at 14," Ashwin wrote. The immediate trigger for Ashwin's post was Suryavanshi's commanding display in the third Youth ODI against South Africa in Benoni. Leading the side on his first assignment as India Under-19 captain, the left-hander produced a dazzling 74-ball 127, an innings studded with 10 sixes and nine fours. His knock powered India Under-19 to a mammoth 393/7 and set up a crushing 233-run victory, sealing a 3-0 series sweep in the process. Ashwin also looked ahead to what could be a defining phase in the youngster's early career.

Ben Stokes avoids England captaincy talks after Ashes loss: Time to right our wrongs

Ben Stokes avoided captaincy questions after England's 4-1 Ashes loss in Australia. Speaking after the Sydney Test defeat, the England skipper focused on reflection and future plans, offering no hint of a leadership change.

New Delhi. (Agency)

England's Ashes nightmare in Australia ended in familiar fashion at the Sydney Cricket Ground, and so did the uncomfortable questions around leadership. After Australia sealed a 4-1 series victory with a five-wicket win in the final Test, Ben Stokes chose not to engage with growing speculation about a potential captaincy shift, despite mounting scrutiny following another heavy Ashes defeat. During the post-match presentation, attention quickly turned to England's future direction. However, Stokes avoided addressing suggestions that England may consider a change in Test leadership. Instead, the all-rounder spoke in measured tones about performance gaps and the need for



reflection, comments that sounded very much like those of a captain still planning ahead. "It was a great game to get involved in, Test matches which go to the fifth day always add up drama. If we had got around 200 on the both sides, it would have been a different story. Australia is a great team, they play incredible cricket, they have some outstanding bowlers so we have to give them a lot of credit," Stokes said. Australia wrapped up the Sydney Test on Day 5 by

calmly chasing down a modest 160-run target, with Marnus Labuschagne and Jake Weatherald leading the charge. The result not only secured the match but confirmed a dominant Ashes campaign for the hosts, once again exposing England's struggles in Australian conditions. England's next Test assignment comes only in June, against New Zealand, leaving the side with a lengthy window to reassess. Stokes indicated that the break would be used to address recurring

Malaysia Open: Ayush Shetty proves big-league mettle against world champ Shi Yuqi

Malaysia Open 2026: It ended in defeat against World No. 1 Shi Yuqi, but Ayush Shetty walked away with something far more valuable — proof that his game stands up to the very best.

NEW DELHI. (Agency)

In the opening week of the New Year, 20-year-old Ayush Shetty demonstrated exactly why he is one of the most electrifying prospects on the badminton circuit. After kickstarting his season by dispatching former World No. 2 Lee Zii Jia, the youngster from Mangalore proved his mettle in a tantalising three-game thriller against World No. 1 Shi Yuqi on Thursday, 8 January. While Shetty couldn't quite complete the giant-slaying act, he gave a

masterful account of his ability to go toe-to-toe with the elite. The Super 1000 encounter at Bukit Jalil lasted a gruelling 70 minutes, with Shetty stretching the defending champion to his absolute limits. To



appreciate the scale of Shetty's performance, one must look at the juggernaut across the net. Shi Yuqi entered the season in predatory form, fresh from a runner-up finish at the Tour Finals. Having swept titles at the World Championships, the All England Open, and the China Open last year, Shi has comfortably ascended the throne while Olympic champion Viktor

Axelsen struggled with injury. World No. 32 Shetty, by contrast, had to overcome a back niggle just to make the start line for his maiden Super 1000 appearance. Currently in his only second senior year, he has already turned heads by winning the US Open and claiming the scalps of heavyweights like Loh Kean Yew and Chou Tien Chen. Standing at an imposing 6'5", Shetty's stature has drawn inevitable comparisons to Axelsen; in Malaysia, he proved he has the temperament to match the frame.

NOT QUITE DAVID vs GOLIATH
On paper, it was a classic mismatch. On court, it was anything but. Shi Yuqi was made to toil for every point until a late surge in the decider finally saw him clear.

What truly resonated was Shetty's fearlessness. He refused to be overawed by the occasion or his opponent's glittering CV. From the first serve, he weaponised his reach, retrieving shots that would have been winners against almost anyone else. This defensive solidity clearly rattled Shi, who found himself dragged into exhausting, high-stakes rallies.

Australia win Ashes in style, hand England 4-1 defeat, Bazball reality check

New Delhi. (Agency)

Australia completed a 4-1 Ashes series victory over England after winning the fifth and final Test of the 2025-26 edition by five wickets at the Sydney Cricket Ground (SCG) on Thursday, January 8. Marnus Labuschagne and Jake Weatherald were at the forefront of the victory, emerging as the top scorers as Australia chased down the modest 160-run target with relative ease to seal the match and the series. It was a refreshing return for both fans and pundits to a five-day Test match after the fourth game in Melbourne had finished inside two days. Jacob Bethell's heroic innings of 154 could not save England from a crushing series defeat, as their tactics and strategy were exposed time and again by an indomitable Australian side. It marked the fourth successive Ashes defeat for England in Australia, with the visitors having won just one Test in the country over the past 15 years. England last held the

Ashes in 2015 and have failed to regain the coveted trophy in the five attempts since. Australia made a terrific start to the chase, with openers Travis Head (29 off 35)



and Jake Weatherald adopting their usual aggressive approach and adding 62 runs for the first wicket off just 63 balls. England managed their first breakthrough when Head holed out to mid-wicket while attempting to accelerate the scoring and

finish the chase quickly. Jake Weatherald (34 off 40) was dismissed at the stroke of lunch, caught at fine leg by Matthew Potts. In the second session, Steve Smith joined

Marnus Labuschagne at the crease, with the latter determined to wrap up the chase without unnecessary delay.

A chaotic second session

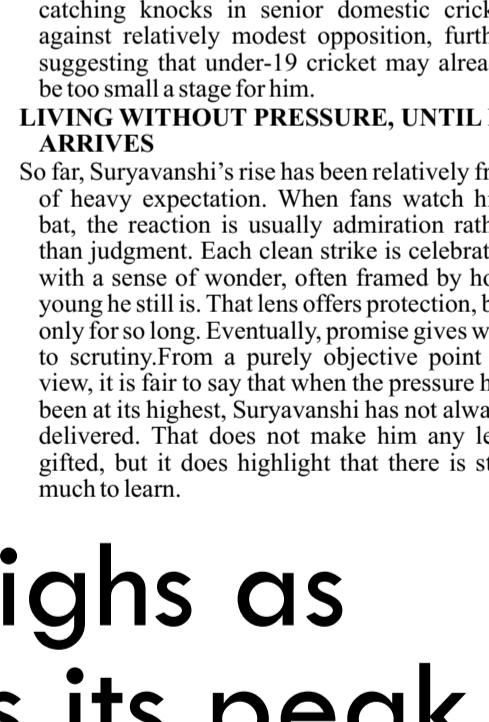
Smith and Labuschagne appeared well settled as Australia cruised towards victory. However, the momentum briefly shifted when Will Jacks extracted sharp turn from the surface and bowled Smith through the gate with a superb delivery.

Smith's dismissal brought Usman Khawaja to the crease for the final time in his Test career, with the English players and umpires forming a guard of honour to acknowledge the moment. Labuschagne continued to accumulate runs at a brisk pace, finding the boundary regularly to keep Australia firmly in control.

the youth level points towards higher honours. Suryavanshi has also produced a few eye-catching knocks in senior domestic cricket against relatively modest opposition, further suggesting that under-19 cricket may already be too small a stage for him.

LIVING WITHOUT PRESSURE, UNTIL IT ARRIVES

So far, Suryavanshi's rise has been relatively free of heavy expectation. When fans watch him bat, the reaction is usually admiration rather than judgment. Each clean strike is celebrated with a sense of wonder, often framed by how young he still is. That lens offers protection, but only for so long. Eventually, promise gives way to scrutiny. From a purely objective point of view, it is fair to say that when the pressure has been at its highest, Suryavanshi has not always delivered. That does not make him any less gifted, but it does highlight that there is still much to learn.



WPL 2026 set for new highs as Indian women's cricket finds its peak

WPL 2026: The fourth edition of the Women's Premier League will be held from January 9 to February 5 across Navi Mumbai and Baroda.

Mumbai Indians are the competition's two-time champions, while Royal Challengers Bengaluru lifted the title in 2024.

New Delhi. (Agency)

2025 is firmly in the past. The Women's World Cup victories remain moments of celebration, the trophies safely housed in the cabinet. But cricket moves relentlessly forward. With a busy international season behind them, the spotlight now turns to the Women's Premier League, the country's

premier T20 competition for women. Running from January 9 to February 5, the WPL will unfold across Navi Mumbai and Baroda, promising four weeks of high-octane action in a 22-match extravaganza. Mumbai Indians and Royal Challengers Bengaluru already know what it takes to lift the title. Delhi Capitals, meanwhile, are all too familiar with heartbreak, having reached every final only to fall short each time. UP Warriorz and Gujarat Giants have flashed promise but are yet to turn potential into something tangible. As the next chapter begins, the WPL once again stands ready to shape the future of women's cricket in India.

BIGGER AND BETTER
This edition of the WPL feels different from the last three. There is a sense of arrival, a belief shaped by success. Much like the IPL's

explosion after India's men lifted the 2007 T20 World Cup, the women's league now stands on the cusp of a similar surge, bigger crowds, louder noise, and deeper emotional



investment. Harmanpreet Kaur, Smriti Mandhana, Deepa Sharma and Shafali Verma are no longer just familiar faces; they are national icons. The spotlight will follow them, and the stands

will echo their names. Where attendance was once a talking point, it may soon become a footnote. This time, Indian players walk out carrying the aura of world champions, not as contenders weighed down by pressure, but as winners who know how to finish the job.

START OF PREPARATIONS

Make no mistake, the spotlight may be firmly on the WPL, but the larger horizon looms in the distance. 2026 is also a Women's T20 World Cup year, with England set to host the global showpiece. Every outing in the league will double as preparation, as players tweak, adapt and polish their games for the world stage. Just as last season's WPL unearthed talents like Kranti Goud, Kashvee Gautam and Shree Charani, the upcoming edition promises fresh discoveries and new narratives. The WPL, therefore, is not merely a tournament—it is a breeding ground for the future.

Indian Company Has Barred All Activities On LinkedIn, Says Employee; Viral Reddit Post Triggers Massive Debate

New Delhi.(Agency)

An employee's viral post has revealed managerial orders not to like, comment or post 'Open to Work' status on LinkedIn has triggered a widespread online debate over managerial orders and workplace toxicity. The user went on to say that the company has restricted the employees from using the 'Open to Work' badge, citing the need to protect the company's image. "They have also said we should not use the 'Open to Work' badge. Reason given was professionalism/company image. LinkedIn is not internal company property and this is outside office hours." The user stated that management instructed employees to discontinue all activity on LinkedIn. The user started the Reddit post with the title, "Employer policing LinkedIn activity no likes, no comments, no 'Open to Work'. Normal?" The user said, "My company has told employees not to like or comment on any other company's LinkedIn posts. Not competitors, not clients, not even a basic 'congrats'." The user said that disclosing confidential information was unethical but liking a post on LinkedIn is normal. "I get not posting confidential stuff, but liking a post? Is this actually common in Indian workplaces especially manufacturing / plant-based companies or is this just control + insecurity?" the user wrote.

Netizens Reaction
The Reddit post sparked widespread debate about workplace toxicity with some users advising the employee to look for a new job.

One user commented, "Put this'rules' on LinkedIn, tag organization and ask if this is true. Also start searching for a new job." Another user commented, "Outside work, your company has no authority over you and nor do you have any obligation towards them. As long as you do not disclose confidential information or participate in activities that harm the image of the company (this is while you are employed with them), it's all good. Your company is acting as if it gives a great pay, great job security and substantial retirement benefits that one would not leave them till they retire."

Budget 2026: Real estate sector seeks tax relief and policy clarity

CHENNAI.(Agency)

With Budget 2026 fast approaching, the real estate sector is looking to the government for clear policy signals that can revive housing demand and unlock stalled projects. Developers say rising land prices, higher construction costs and outdated tax limits are making many housing projects unviable, especially in large cities. Industry leaders believe the upcoming Budget offers an important opportunity to realign tax policies with today's urban housing realities and support both buyers and developers. **CALL TO REDEFINE AFFORDABLE HOUSING LIMITS**

One of the key demands from the sector is a revision of the Rs 45 lakh cap for affordable housing, which developers say no longer reflects market conditions in most urban areas. Shiv Garg, Director, Forteasia Realty Pvt. Ltd., said the current definition is out of touch with ground realities. "The real estate sector is looking for a clear signal from the government regarding the alignment of tax policies with the new urban housing price realities as we approach Budget 2026. The existing limit of Rs 45 lakh for the affordable housing category and the associated 1% GST benefit do not correspond to the land and construction costs in most development areas," Garg said. He added that increasing the price bracket to Rs 80-90 lakh and reducing GST on works contracts from 18% to 12% could revive stalled projects and create new housing supply.

FOCUS ON FIRST-TIME BUYERS AND MID-INCOME HOMES

Developers also want stronger incentives for first-time homebuyers, especially those buying mid-income homes who currently fall outside the affordable housing benefits.

AI's productivity payoff yet to move the needle for IT cos

New Delhi.(Agency)

Getting real with AI by tracking audited metrics is the need of the hour for IT firms. While companies highlighted aggressive AI adoption by giving out the percentages of new code generated by AI and workforce skilling metrics, audited financial data that presents the real productivity impact is yet to fully show up. A comparison of productivity metrics since 2020 shows that the much-touted AI push did not deliver a step-change in per-employee economics across global and Indian IT services firms. This is despite revenue growth being supported by M&A-led expansion and a sharply depreciating rupee, raising questions around the pace of underlying organic growth.

Overall, the top 10 Indian IT services firms spent about \$4.3 billion on acquisitions over the same period, underscoring the sector's reliance on M&A to bolster growth. Infosys, HCL Tech, and Wipro spent about \$1 billion to acquire 7 companies in the first 9 months of the current fiscal. In 2024, Cognizant made two major acquisitions, including its second largest ever—the \$1.3 billion purchase of US engineering R&D firm Belcan—along with the \$430 million acquisition of ServiceNow partner Thirdera. More recently, it acquired 3Cloud to strengthen its Azure capabilities. Further, companies also became aggressive with large deals.

Why France's generous pension system is becoming an economic burden

New Delhi.(Agency)

France's pension system, built in the aftermath of World War II, is increasingly at the centre of concerns about the country's economic future. What was once seen as a pillar of social security is now becoming a growing strain on public finances, as demographic and economic pressures mount. France runs a pay-as-you-go pension system, known locally as *partition*. In simple terms, today's workers pay for today's retirees. This model worked well for decades when the population was younger, birth rates were higher, and economic growth was strong. That balance is now shifting, and the costs are becoming harder to manage.

HOW THE SYSTEM WORKS AND WHY IT IS UNDER PRESSURE

The basic logic of the French pension system is straightforward. Contributions collected from people in work are used immediately to pay pensions.

There is no large savings pool set aside for the future. This makes the system highly

sensitive to changes in the labour market and population structure.

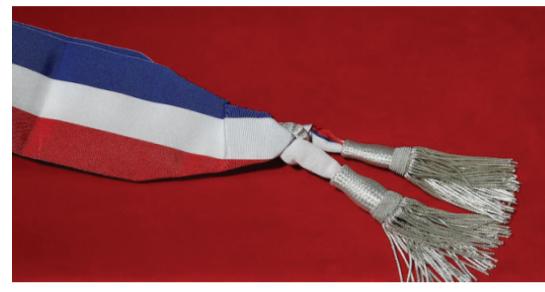
France is facing an ageing population, lower birth rates, slower entry of young people into the workforce, and weaker GDP growth. Fewer workers are supporting a growing number of retirees, which is stretching the system's finances. Each year, the gap between what the system collects and what it pays out becomes harder to close without higher taxes, spending cuts, or more borrowing.

WHY PENSION REFORM HAS BECOME A POLITICAL FLASHPOINT

Pension reform is one of the most sensitive political issues in France. Prime Minister Sébastien Lecornu underlined this again by pledging to suspend the 2023 pension reform to prevent his government from failing. In October 2025, he promised to freeze President Emmanuel Macron's flagship reform until after the 2027 presidential election. The move was aimed at securing support from Socialists,

who agreed not to back no-confidence motions against the government. The reform itself was hard-won. After weeks of street protests in 2023, it was pushed through parliament without a vote.

Its main goal was to gradually raise the statutory retirement age from 62 to 64 by



2030. While this would still leave France broadly in line with many European countries, it was seen as an attack on a deeply valued social benefit.

The resistance also reflects history. The retirement age was cut from 65 to 60 in

1982 under Socialist President François Mitterrand. Any move to reverse that legacy remains politically explosive.

HOW FRANCE COMPARES WITH THE REST OF EUROPE

France already has one of the lowest statutory retirement ages in the European Union. The EU average stands at 65 for men and 64.5 for women, and both are expected to rise further in the coming decades, according to the European Commission's 2024 Ageing Report. Early retirement, combined with high life expectancy, means French people spend longer in retirement than almost anyone else. OECD (Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development) data shows that French men spend an average of 23.3 years in retirement. This is the highest among OECD countries and well above Germany's 18.8 years.

Thinking of moving abroad These places charge zero income tax

New Delhi.(Agency)

With the Union Budget just a month away, many Indians are once again hoping for some relief on income tax. Every year, there is fresh hope that the government may raise exemption limits or offer higher deductions. At the same time, there are countries across the world where people do not pay any personal income tax at all. These places are often called tax havens. But zero income tax does not mean the government there runs without money. These countries follow very different ways to earn revenue and fund public spending. Across the world, around 19 countries are spread across the Middle East, the Caribbean, parts of Europe, and the Pacific. While this sounds attractive, living in these countries is not always easy or cheap, and many have high entry barriers.

THE MIDDLE EAST AND OIL-DRIVEN ECONOMIES

Several countries in the Middle East do not levy income tax because they earn large sums from oil and natural gas. These include Qatar, Kuwait, Saudi Arabia, Bahrain, United Arab Emirates, Oman and Brunei. Qatar earns most of its money from natural gas exports. Residents do not pay income tax, but companies pay a 10% corporate tax. The government also earns from licence fees and state-owned businesses. Kuwait depends heavily on oil, with more than 90% of its government income coming from crude exports. There is no income tax, but foreign companies pay around 15% corporate tax.

Saudi Arabia also relies on oil revenue. While individuals do not pay income tax, companies are taxed, with rates that can go up to 85% in oil-related sectors. The UAE has moved beyond oil and earns from tourism, real estate, aviation and financial services. It charges 5% VAT on most goods and services and has introduced a 9% corporate tax. These countries are not easy to move to. The UAE, Saudi Arabia and Bahrain offer investor or long-term residency programmes, but they often need investments ranging from \$205,000 to over \$1.1 million. Kuwait and Brunei do not offer clear investor residency routes and mostly allow entry through jobs or family ties. Social rules and cultural norms are also strict in many Gulf nations, which may not suit everyone.

CARIBBEAN ISLANDS AND TOURISM-LED MODELS

The Caribbean region has several countries with no income tax. These include The Bahamas, Saint Kitts and Nevis, Antigua and Barbuda, Cayman Islands, British Virgin Islands, Turks and Caicos and Bermuda.

New Income Tax rules from April 2026: What will change for taxpayers

New Delhi.(Agency)

India is set to roll out a new Income Tax law from April 1, 2026. Called the Income Tax Act, 2025, the new law will replace the existing Income Tax Act of 1961, which has governed taxation in the country for over six decades.

Taxpayers are being advised to understand the changes early to avoid confusion once the law comes into force.

WHY A NEW INCOME TAX LAW?

Over the years, the existing tax law has become lengthy and complex due to repeated amendments, explanations and exceptions. The new Act seeks to clean this up by rewriting the law in simpler language and updating procedures to match modern financial practices. While the core structure of income tax remains the same, the focus is on easier compliance, fewer disputes and better use of technology.

WHAT CHANGES THE NEW TAX LAW BRINGS FOR TAXPAYERS

The Income Tax Act, 2025 introduces revised rules, processes and formats to make filing and compliance smoother. The aim is to reduce ambiguity and help taxpayers understand their

obligations more clearly. According to tax officials, the law places strong emphasis on clarity and ease of doing taxes, especially for individuals and small businesses.

KEY CHANGES TAXPAYERS SHOULD NOTE

New procedures and forms: The Central



Board of Direct Taxes (CBDT) is working on updated forms and procedures under the new law. Taxpayers may need to follow revised formats while filing income tax returns, responding to notices or completing other tax-related tasks. These changes are expected to be announced gradually through official notifications.

Focus on guidance, not just enforcement:

The Income Tax Department is placing more emphasis on helping taxpayers comply voluntarily. One such approach is the NUDGE framework (Non-intrusive Usage of Data to Guide and Enable), which uses data to gently guide taxpayers instead of taking harsh action. The idea is to prevent mistakes before they happen and reduce unnecessary litigation. Greater use of technology: Technology will play a bigger role under the new Act. The law supports digital systems for assessments, data matching and communication. Taxpayers may see changes in how notices are issued, how responses are filed and how information is verified. Automated processes are expected to reduce manual intervention and speed up decision-making.

HOW TAXPAYERS CAN PREPARE NOW

Taxpayers should regularly check official updates from the Income Tax Department and the CBDT. Notifications on new forms, procedures and timelines will be key in the coming months.

SEBI 'Finds' Confidential Information Leak From BofA On 2024 Block Trade: Report

New Delhi.(Agency)

Capital markets regulator Securities and Exchange Board of India (SEBI) has found that a Bank of America (BofA) unit improperly shared material non-public information about a \$180 million block sale and misled investigators, a report has claimed.

SEBI's November show-cause notice alleges the bank's deal team disclosed price-sensitive details of a 2024 sale of Aditya Birla Sun Life AMC shares to employees outside the execution team and later provided inaccurate statements to investigators, the report from the Wall Street Journal said, citing people familiar with the matter.

The regulator also allegedly faulted the bank for lacking adequate safeguards to prevent leaks of confidential capital-

markets transactions. Bank of America is preparing a response to SEBI's accusations and is expected to seek a multi-million-dollar settlement without admitting or denying wrongdoing, it said. Sharing non-public information ahead of announcements is illegal in India and several other markets as privileged parties to such information can profit from expected price moves.

The bank corrected its earlier account to SEBI and produced records showing communications between non-deal team staff and investors, the report noted. Bank of America and SEBI did not immediately respond to the report.

The Wall Street Journal had reported a whistleblower complaint alleging the leak in 2024, but a spokesperson of the bank then denied allegations, saying it

found no evidence to support the claims. In November 2023, the Reserve Bank of India had imposed fines on Bank of America under the powers vested in it through sections of the FEMA.

Bank of America had been imposed a penalty for violating instructions on reporting requirements under the Liberalised Remittance Scheme of FEMA 1999. Market regulator in September had imposed a penalty of Rs 2 lakh on Rahul Sharma, CEO of Swan LNG and designated person of Swan Corp (formerly Swan Energy Limited), for insider trading violations.

SEBI's investigation found that Sharma carried out trades and contra-trades in Swan Corp shares between September 1 and November 30, 2023, earning unlawful gains of Rs 30.25 lakh.

Promoter families seek Sebi nod to recognise daughters-in-law as relatives: Report

Over the past decade, an increasing number of business families have moved promoter holdings, or portions of them, into private family trusts, with family members as beneficiaries.

New Delhi.(Agency)

Several promoter families have approached the market regulator seeking a change in takeover rules to allow daughters-in-law to be recognised as relatives, a move they say is essential to smooth succession planning and trust-based ownership structures in family-run listed companies, according to a report by The Economic Times. Currently, the takeover regulations framed by the Securities and Exchange Board of India (Sebi) do not include sons or daughters-in-law within the definition of "immediate relatives", unlike the Income Tax Act, which treats them as relatives for gifting purposes. Advisers say

this regulatory gap is creating avoidable hurdles for promoters transferring shareholdings to family trusts as part of long-term succession planning. Over the past decade, an increasing number of business families have moved promoter holdings, or portions of them, into private family trusts, with family members as beneficiaries. Under Sebi's takeover code, an acquisition of 25% or more shares in a listed company, or a change in control, typically triggers an open offer to public shareholders. Sebi grants exemptions where promoters gift shares to family trusts, provided the trustees are recognised relatives.

While sons can be appointed trustees even if they are not named promoters, daughters-in-law remain excluded under the current rules. As a result, several patriarchs seeking to appoint daughters-in-law as trustees, or in some cases external professionals where children are minors, have had to seek specific regulatory exemptions. Around a dozen business families are learnt to have made such representations to Sebi. The need for exemptions is not theoretical. In multiple

past cases, Sebi has granted case-specific relief to promoters transferring shares to family trusts under Regulation 11 of the takeover code, provided there was no change in control and public shareholding remained unaffected. These include



exemptions granted in listed entities such as PI Industries, Prince Pipes & Fittings and Everest Kanto Cylinders, where promoter share transfers to family trusts were allowed after regulatory scrutiny. In earlier precedents as well, Sebi has cleared succession-driven trust structures through exemption orders. In cases involving Jyothy Labs and Borosil Glass Works, promoter families were permitted to transfer shares to family trusts as part of

estate and succession planning, with Sebi noting that the arrangements did not alter control or harm minority shareholders. However, these approvals were granted on a case-by-case basis rather than through automatic exemptions under the takeover regulations. Advisers quoted in the report argue that the repeated need to approach Sebi for exemptions highlights the structural gap in the rules. The ET report also noted that Sebi streamlined the exemption process in December 2017 by introducing a standard format for promoters to seek relief under the takeover code. Administrative scrutiny by Sebi officials replaced the earlier takeover panel system, significantly improving turnaround times. However, advisers say the framework itself has not kept pace with evolving family structures and governance needs.

The rigidity extends beyond trustee appointments. Under existing rules, families with minor children cannot provide for trusted advisers or friends to act as trustees in the event of both parents' death.

Sreeleela Surapaneni

Opens Up About Adopting 3 Kids By 24, Says They Don't Live With Her: 'I'm Not A Mother...'

South Indian sensation Sreeleela, known for her infectious energy and dazzling performances, has captured everyone's hearts. Beyond the glitz of the entertainment world, Sreeleela's story remains deeply inspiring. In 2022, at just 21, she adopted two differently-abled children — Guru and Shobhit — from an orphanage. Last year, she also adopted a little baby girl. Now, in a chat with Galatta Plus, the actress opened up about balancing motherhood and work.

Sreeleela was asked about how, at just 24, she manages to have a thriving film career and also take care of three kids. She revealed that while her children don't live with her, they are well taken care of. However, she wished they stayed with her. "I fall short of words and get jittery when I talk about it. But it's taken care of," she said, adding, "I'm not a mother mother because there's an entirely different

story to that." Sreeleela mentioned, "It was a film (Kiss in 2019) I did early on in my career in Kannada that my director decided to take me to an ashram. The kids live there. We speak on the phone, and I keep visiting them there. It was a secret for the longest time. The institution wanted me to talk about it so that more people are encouraged. I don't want to be given credit for anything, but I want people to start looking in that direction."

About Sreeleela

Born on June 14, 2001, Sreeleela made her cinematic debut with the Kannada film Kiss and quickly rose to fame with memorable roles across Kannada and Telugu industries. Apart from acting, she is also a trained Bharatanatyam dancer and impressively completed her MBBS degree in 2021, proving her mettle both on-screen and academically.

Meanwhile, Sreeleela is all set to make her Bollywood debut with Kartik Aaryan. Last year, Kartik and Sreeleela gave fans a sneak peek of the film's song, and the teaser already got the audience excited. The film is said to be an Anurag Basu and Pritam musical.



of their upcoming love story on social media. The teaser opened with Kartik in a rugged rockstar avatar, while Sreeleela's sizzling chemistry with him added a fiery spark to the video. It also offered a glimpse of the film's song, and the teaser already got the audience excited. The film is said to be an Anurag Basu and Pritam musical.



Katrina Kaif

And Vicky Kaushal Finally Reveal Baby Boy's Name, Share Adorable First Picture

Katrina Kaif and Vicky Kaushal welcomed their little bundle of joy, a baby boy, on November 7, 2025, and ever since, everyone has been waiting to see a glimpse of their little one. Today, Katrina Kaif and Vicky Kaushal took to their social media and not only shared the first glimpse of their baby boy but also revealed the name of their little Kaushal.

While sharing a picture of them holding the hands of their baby boy, Katrina and Vicky, in a joint post, shared that they have named their baby boy Vihaan Kaushal. While revealing the name of their baby boy, the couple wrote:

Vicky Kaushal On Embracing Fatherhood

In an interaction with GQ India, Vicky Kaushal opened up about this new phase of life. "Becoming a father this year is my biggest moment of 2025. It is a magical feeling. I always felt that when the time came, I would be very emotional and ecstatic, but it has actually been the most grounding moment that I have ever experienced in my life," he said.

Katrina Kaif and Vicky Kaushal Announce the Arrival of Their Baby Boy

Katrina Kaif and Vicky Kaushal took to Instagram to share the happy news with their fans and followers. The couple wrote, "Our bundle of joy has arrived. With immense love and gratitude, we welcome our baby boy. 7th November 2025."

Back in September 2025, the couple had announced their pregnancy with a beautiful post on social media, "On our way to start the best chapter of our lives with hearts full of joy and gratitude," they wrote.

Meanwhile, Vicky's father, Sham Kaushal, also took to social media to express his gratitude, calling the



newborn "a blessing from God." He wrote: "Shukariya Rab Da... Kal se Bhagwan ka mere parivar pe itna meherban rehne ke liye jitna bhi shukar kar raha hun, unki blessings ke samne kam pad raha hai." He added, "God is and has been so kind. Bhagwan ki meherbani aise hi mere bachon pe aur sabse junior Kaushal pe bani rahe. Hum sab bahut khush hain aur bahut blessed hain." He concluded his post with: "So so happy on becoming Dada. May God bless all. Rab Rakha."

Bharti Singh Resumes Work 2 Weeks After Welcoming Baby: 'Kaju Is At Home'



Stand-up star Bharti Singh is back to work just two weeks after giving birth to her second son, whom she fondly calls Kaju. Bharti was seen at the shoot location for the third season of "Laughter Chefs Fun Unlimited." In the clip, she is seen posing for the paparazzi before stepping into the set. She was heard telling the shutterbugs: "Yes, Kaju has come. We thought Kishmish (girl) would come. Kaju is at home."

When a cameraperson quipped that she should have a baby girl too, Bharti in her own comic style, said: "Yehi karti rahun. Shooting bhi toh hoti hai." She then went on to distribute sweets to the paparazzi and said that they all have become "mamus" and should bless Kaju.

It was on December 19 when Bharti welcomed her second baby with husband Haarsh Limbachiyaa. She, in her vlog, had shared that her water broke unexpectedly early in the morning, prompting an immediate hospital visit. They also have a three-year-old son Laksh Singh Limbachiyaa, fondly called as Gola, whom they welcomed in 2022. The couple got married in 2017 after they dated for a few years.

Bharti has participated in the reality shows Jhalak Dikhhla Jaa 5, Nach Baliye 8, and Fear Factor: Khatron Ke Khiladi 9. In 2019, she appeared on Khatra Khatra Khatra, a show conceptualised by her with husband Haarsh. Talking about Laughter Chefs Fun Unlimited, it is hosted by Bharti and Harpal Singh Sokhi. The third season features participants cooking dishes with particular criteria assigned. The pairs with the most accurate delicacy receive stars from Sokhi. Contestants who are seen in the show include names such as Aly Goni, Jannat Zubair, Elvish Yadav, Isha Malviya, Karan Kundrra, Tejasswi Prakash, Kashmera Shah, Krushna Abhishek, Abhishek Kumar, Samarth Jurel, Debina Bonnerjee, Gurmeet Choudhary, Eisha Singh and Vivian Dsena.

Avika Gor Pregnant? Actress Sparks Rumours 3 Months After Marrying Milind Chandwani



Avika Gor tied the knot with Milind Chandwani in a grand ceremony on the reality show Pati Patni Aur Panga.

Popular television actress Avika Gor, who recently married her long-term beau, Milind Chandwani, has sparked pregnancy rumours after she shared in her latest vlog that there will be a big change in their lives in 2026. Reflecting on an amazing 2025, full of new beginnings, the 'Balika Vadhu' actress claimed that 2026 will bring some big changes for them, something they are extremely excited for. Pitching in, Milind shared, "A change which we neither anticipated nor planned. In fact, we never even dreamed about it. But this is a huge and amazing change."

When Avika asked him, "Are you nervous?", Milind replied, saying that he is excited. However, he did admit that he is a little nervous. "It is important for a person to be a little nervous in life," he added. Avika promised to share this exciting update with their YouTube family soon.

The latest statement from Avika and Milind has led some of the cyberspace citizens to believe that the couple might be expecting their first child. One of them even wrote, "baby coming" in the comment section of the vlog.

Avika tied the knot with Milind in a grand ceremony on the reality show "Pati Patni Aur Panga." Talking about tying the knot on National television, Avika stated, "When we decided to do this, we were very aware that there would be criticism—we weren't surprised by that at all. But I've been making unconventional choices since a young age, including when I started working and even when I got married. There were always people who didn't agree with what I was doing. Still, I've always believed in carving my own path."

Calling the wedding just another chapter in their journey, she added, "I knew my wedding would be unconventional. I've always said that my life and my journey are something people would dream of living, and I acknowledge that. I'm very grateful for it. But it's not easy. It takes a lot to handle criticism and still keep going with what you believe in. That's the reason I'm here today."

Why a visit to the world's Largest river Island in Assam is a must

Majuli, a hub of the Assamese neo-Vaishnavite culture, has many satras (religious and cultural institutions). After the half-hour ferry ride, you will reach the shrinking island, which is located over 300 km from Guwahati, Assam's main city, and is home to approximately two lakh people consisting of Brahmins, Kalitas, Mishings, Deori and more.

Assam's Majuli faces flood fury – and the threat of erosion – whenever the mighty Brahmaputra river swells. So take a break from your high-tech lifestyle and hop on that double decker boat to live the simple life in the world's largest river island before it loses the title.

Cruises on luxury vessels can take you to your destination, but to understand the locals' lives, it is best to travel like them on a rickety motor boat, which can also carry cars, bikes and anything that can't swim, from Neemati ghat to Kamalabari ghat. First-timers might fear for their lives but for the frequent travellers, it's like any other public transport. Some are

so carefree that they even play cards.

After the half-hour ferry ride, you will reach the shrinking island, which is located over 300 km from Guwahati, Assam's main city, and is home to approximately two lakh people consisting of Brahmins, Kalitas, Mishings, Deori and more. Visitors can stay in various resorts, which might remind you of your hostels due to availability of only basic amenities, or limited homestays. While driving to your accommodation, you will see paddy and mustard fields, and bamboo plantations along the roads. Out of the various house forms, the bamboo stilt houses – with an open fireplace in the middle – of the Mishing tribe, are quite unique, and you will see women working on looms made with bamboos and a cycle's wheel. Unlike the people of Sualkuchi, a silk-weaving village in Assam, Mishings here make "mekhela chador" and other traditional outfits only for their own use. And men use their physical strength to make beds out of bamboos or other furnitures, when they are not farming.

Majuli, a hub of the Assamese neo-Vaishnavite culture, has many satras (religious and cultural institutions). "Earlier, there were over 60 satras in Majuli but due to erosion, there are currently just 32 satras here. Auniati Satra is the biggest one in Assam. The land measures up to 500 bigha," Anant Kalita, the satra's museum guide, told this visiting IANS correspondent.

"We don't call ourselves monks or pandits. The ones who stay in satras are called Vaishnavs. We worship lord Krishna. We dance, pray and do dramas, which were created by (saint-scholar) Sankardev," he added.

The satra is open to all – Brahmins, Kalitas and people from other communities of Assam. "Even Muslims can come. Ladies can come but can't stay in the satra.

After marriage, people need to stay out of the satra.

"There are 350 people in the satra.

Vaishnavs and bhakts stay in satras, the ones who

are outside are called

disciples," said

Kalita, who has been

here for the past 18

years.

The Samaguri Satra, on the other hand, has kept alive the tradition of mask-making. Its studio houses numerous masks, like those of Narasimha, Ram and Laxman that are used during festivals and Bhaona,

which is a traditional form of entertainment through which religious messages are shared.

Explaining the process of mask-making, popular mask artiste Hem Chandra Goswami's brother Tilak Goswami said: "The masks are made of mud, cotton cloth, cow dung and vegetable colours. One mask takes about 15 to 20 days to make." "Our entire family knows how to make masks. We have been making masks for the last six generations," added the 65-year-old.

After learning the craft here, some even go to Dibrugarh or Guwahati.

It's not just the people at satras who are warm and welcoming. Once the local children spot new faces, especially with DSLR cameras, they will happily follow you and strike a pose. You might have to use a lot of hand gestures while communicating with the locals as they aren't fluent in English or Hindi, but they will leave you overwhelmed –



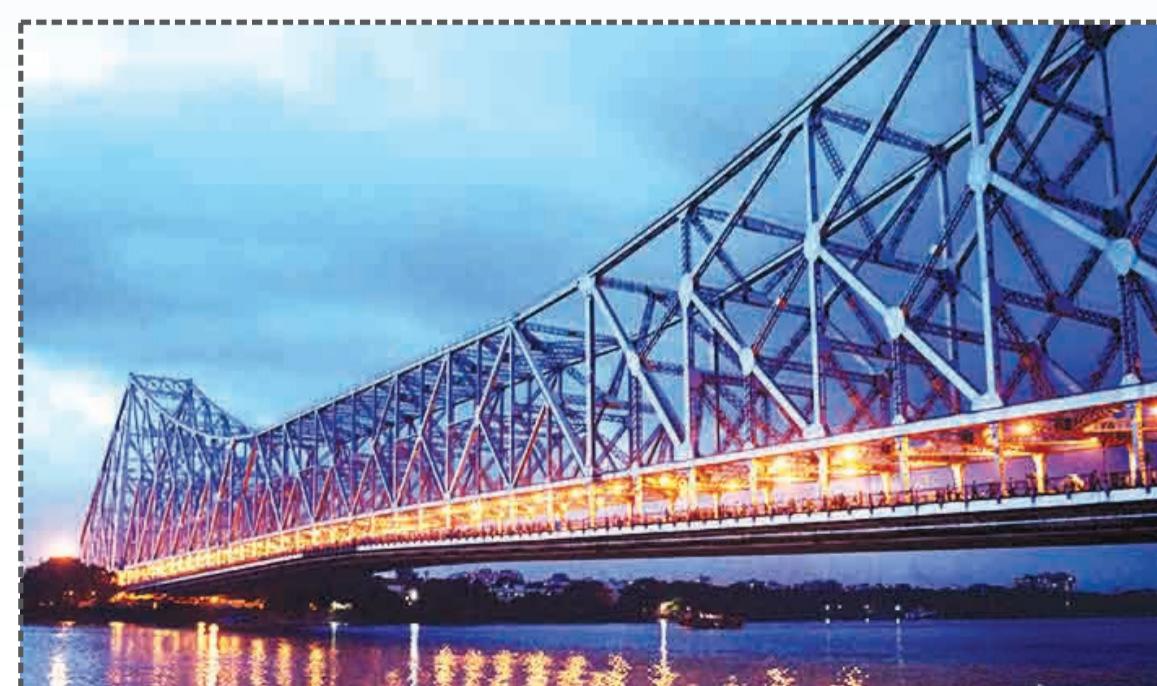
irrespective of their financial condition, they will not let you leave empty handed.

A cup of tea or a plate full of homemade sweets (rice flour pitha) is the least they can offer, and a request: "please visit again."



Kolkata's Howrah Bridge turns 75: Seven lesser-known facts about the iconic bridge

As Rabindra Setu – popularly known as Howrah Bridge – celebrates its 75th anniversary, here are some interesting and lesser-known facts about the iconic structure. Opened to the public in 1943, in a pre-Independence era historic bridge is a engineering marvel and one of the busiest bridges in the world.



Even as a marvel for architects, engineers and the Colonials who built the emblematic landmark, it did not even have a formal opening, forget a grand inauguration. It was completed in 1942 and opened to the public in February 1943 but was not highlighted due to a fear of attacks by Japanese planes fighting the Allied Powers. Japan had already attacked Pearl Harbour in 1941 and that instilled fear among the Britishers that this could prove to be a target as well.

A made-in-India bridge

Unlike now, during the British Era, not only the raw materials but even the finished product were made in England and assembled here. Even the former Sir Bradford Leslie's pontoon bridge – different parts were constructed in England and shipped to Calcutta. However, it incurred a huge cost. Owing to the ongoing WWII (1939-1945) all the steel (26,000 tonnes) that was to come from the UK were diverted for the war effort in Europe. Out of total steel required for the bridge, only 3,000 tonnes were supplied from England. The remaining 23,000 tonnes were supplied by India's Tata Steel and even the erection work was reassigned to a local engineering firm of Howrah — the Braithwaite, Burn and Jessop Construction Co.

Trams used the bridge

As lakhs of commuters daily cross the bridge now either by foot or on cars and buses, but during its initial days of existence, trams used to ply on the bridge transporting people to and fro from the twin cities. In fact, the first vehicle to use the bridge was a solitary tram. The tram services on the bridge were discontinued in 1993 owing to rise in vehicular traffic.

Sutanati and Gobindapur, there was an urgent demand to link the city with the commercial hub Howrah. And after the Howrah station was built in 1906, the to-fro movement on the bridge began to escalate and engineers at Calcutta Port Trust started brainstorming ideas to build a better and stronger bridge.

Stalled by First World War

The bridge has a sad association with World War I (1914-1919). Even though the proposal to replace the old pontoon bridge had begun in the early 1900s, it was delayed owing to the catastrophic war. The bridge was partially renewed in the years 1917 and 1927. However, it was completed until the Second World War.