

## Delhi Govt Director Has Stopped Advertisements to Punjabi Newspapers

The Sikh Times  
Sourabh Sharma

New Delhi 13th January

Under a well-planned and deliberate conspiracy, senior officials of the Delhi Government have allegedly started racial and linguistic discrimination. Ever since the BJP government came to power in Delhi, continuous efforts are being made to eliminate the respected Gurus' Gurmukhi Punjabi language. From that time till today, the condition of Punjabi Gurmukhi language in Delhi NCR has become extremely poor.

The situation of Gurmukhi Punjabi language in schools and colleges is very alarming. Punjabi language has been badly neglected in educational institutions. In government offices, the condition of Gurmukhi is also very poor, and people who read and write Gurmukhi are not being given government jobs. Punjabi Gurmukhi language newspapers are not being given advertisements. Newspapers are being

forced towards closure. Many Punjabi newspapers have already shut down, while many others are facing severe financial crisis. Senior officials of the Delhi Government, through racial discrimination, are destroying Punjabi newspapers.

Gurmukhi is the sacred language of the Sikh Gurus and is the fifth largest language in the world. In Punjab, across India, and all over the world, millions of people read and write Gurmukhi. In Delhi alone, there are nearly 10 lakh Punjabi Gurmukhi-speaking people. The All India Sikh Conference has appealed to the Honorable Prime Minister of India Narendra Modi to personally take this matter into his hands and ensure that the sacred language of the Gurus is not eliminated from Delhi NCR, and that strict action is taken against those involved in racial and linguistic discrimination.

The Conference has also demanded that daily Punjabi Gurmukhi newspapers should not be economically strangled and pushed towards closure. Sikh organisations have warned that the continuous denial of

government advertisements to Punjabi newspapers is not merely an economic issue but a direct attack on linguistic freedom, cultural identity, and constitutional rights. They argue that Article 29 of the Indian Constitution guarantees the protection of distinct language, script, and culture, and any attempt to marginalise Punjabi violates this constitutional spirit.

Media experts have pointed out that government advertisements are a major source of survival for language newspapers, and selective denial amounts to indirect censorship. Sikh bodies have demanded an immediate review of Delhi Government's advertisement policy and equal treatment for Punjabi newspapers at par with other language publications.

The Sikh community in Delhi, Punjab, and abroad is closely monitoring the situation. If corrective steps are not taken immediately, Sikh organisations have indicated that a nationwide democratic movement may be launched to protect the language of the Sikh Gurus.



### 'Constant confusion' over CM issue, Siddaramaiah seeks clarity from Rahul Gandhi

Bengaluru.(Agency)

Karnataka Chief Minister Siddaramaiah has sought clarity from Congress MP Rahul Gandhi, saying there was "constant confusion" over a power tussle in the state, sources told .According to sources, Siddaramaiah said he was keen to expand his cabinet and sought a meeting with Rahul Gandhi over rumours of a leadership change.

The development comes amid persistent speculation over leadership tensions within the Congress government in Karnataka, even as the party's central leadership has repeatedly denied any internal crisis.

Last month, Congress president Mallikarjun Kharge sought to play down reports of a leadership tussle, asserting that there was no confusion at the level of the party high command. "The high command has not created any confusion," Kharge had said, stressing that any internal issues should be resolved by the state leadership itself.

Kharge also warned party leaders against taking personal credit for the Congress' electoral success in Karnataka, emphasising that the organisation was built collectively by its workers over



decades. Both Siddaramaiah and Shivakumar have consistently denied reports of discord. Siddaramaiah has maintained that he enjoys the confidence of the party leadership and will complete his full term, rejecting claims of any rotational chief minister arrangement. Shivakumar, for his part, has dismissed talk of rifts as

media speculation and opposition propaganda. "Aren't the CM and I working like brothers? I don't have any differences with any Congress leader," he had said earlier, adding that the Congress leadership would take a call at an "appropriate time" and that both leaders would abide by the party's decision.

#### WHAT IS THE LEADERSHIP TUSSLE ALL ABOUT?

The chatter centres on an alleged internal pact that Siddaramaiah and Shivakumar would share the CM's post: 2.5 years each. Siddaramaiah took oath on May 20, 2023, and a leadership change was expected around November 20 last year as the government completed the halfway mark of its term.

When nothing moved, some MLAs loyal to Shivakumar escalated their demands and landed in Delhi. The Congress has denied that no such agreement on sharing of power was reached and repeatedly made it clear that Siddaramaiah would complete the full five-year term.

### 'Will see you in Court': Bengal LoP Suvendu after CM Mamata fails to reply to legal notice

KOLKATA .(Agency)

West Bengal Leader of Opposition (LoP) Suvendu Adhikari on Wednesday said he would take legal action against Chief Minister Mamata Banerjee, saying that the time given to her to respond to a defamation notice has expired.

In a post on X, Adhikari said the Chief Minister's failure to reply has exposed the "imaginary" nature of her allegations linking him to an alleged coal scam.

"Mamata Banerjee seems to be at wits end. The time given to Mamata Banerjee vide the Defamation Notice on my behalf has now expired and being in a fix has prevented her from replying. The Chief Minister by her conduct has made it clear that her imaginary allegations pertaining to me being involved in a coal scam was a product of her insidious mindset. Get ready to face legal consequences in the Court. Mamata Banerjee, now I will see you in Court," Adhikari said in his post.

This comes after Adhikari on Friday sent a legal notice to the Chief Minister, demanding that she produce evidence within 72 hours to substantiate her claims that he was involved in a coal smuggling case. He had warned that failure to do so would compel him to initiate appropriate civil and criminal defamation proceedings. In an earlier post on X, Adhikari said the allegations were made in a "desperate attempt to divert attention" from an ongoing Enforcement Directorate (ED) investigation. He described the remarks as defamatory, politically motivated, and damaging to public discourse.

"These reckless statements, laced with personal insults, were made publicly without any shred of evidence. Such unsubstantiated claims not only tarnished my reputation but also undermine the dignity of public discourse," he had said.

The legal notice, sent through advocate Suryaneel Das, came after Mamata Banerjee publicly alleged that Union Home Minister Amit Shah and Suvendu Adhikari were involved in the alleged coal scam, claiming that money from the scam was routed to Amit Shah through Adhikari. The Chief Minister made these remarks while addressing a public gathering amid protests against an ED raid at Kolkata's I-PAC office.

### Jaishankar, Rubio talk: Trade to rare minerals, nuclear to defence

New Delhi .(Agency)

A day after US ambassador-designate Sergio Gor struck a conciliatory note in Delhi in an attempt to repair strained ties between the two countries, External Affairs Minister S Jaishankar and US Secretary of State and National Security Advisor Marco Rubio spoke over phone Tuesday and discussed bilateral trade negotiations, critical minerals, defence, nuclear cooperation, energy and a possible meeting next month.

While the trade deal negotiations are key, the importance of the other topics – critical minerals, defence, energy and nuclear – cannot be underestimated. For both Washington and Delhi, these issues are critical for a productive partnership. It is not clear whether Rubio and Jaishankar will meet during a bilateral visit, or on the

sidelines of a multilateral event, including the AI Impact summit in Delhi next month.

Following the discussions, Jaishankar described it as a "good conversation", while Gor called it a "positive call".

In a post on X, Jaishankar said, "Just concluded a good conversation with @SecRubio. Discussed trade, critical minerals, nuclear cooperation, defence and energy. Agreed to remain in touch on these and other issues."

Minutes later, Gor, in an X post, said, "A quick update: @SecRubio Just concluded a positive call with @DrSJaishankar. They discussed next steps regarding our bilateral trade negotiations, critical minerals and a possible meeting next month."

US State Department's Principal Deputy



Spokesperson Tommy Pigott said, "Secretary Rubio spoke today with Indian External Affairs Minister Subrahmanyam Jaishankar, exchanging best wishes for the New Year."

US congratulates India on nuclear energy law

Referring to the recently enacted n-energy

law, he said, "The Secretary congratulated India on enacting the Sustainable Harnessing and Advancement of Nuclear Energy for Transforming India Bill. He expressed interest in capitalizing on this important development to enhance US-India civil nuclear cooperation, expand opportunities for American companies, advance shared energy security goals, and secure critical mineral supply chains."

"Secretary Rubio and Minister Jaishankar discussed ongoing bilateral trade agreement negotiations and their shared interest in strengthening economic cooperation," Pigott said. They also "exchanged perspectives on regional developments, reaffirming the United States' and India's commitment to a free and open Indo-Pacific".

### Devendra Fadnavis Dismisses Thackeray Alliance Ahead Of Mumbai Civic Polls

Mumbai .(Agency)

Maharashtra Chief Minister Devendra Fadnavis on Tuesday said the alliance between cousins Uddhav and Raj Thackeray won't make a difference in the municipal corporation elections in Mumbai, adding that the latter will emerge as the biggest loser.

Fadnavis also said that the mayor in as many as 27 of the 29 municipal corporations in the state, where elections will be held on January 15, will be from the ruling Mahayuti alliance, led by the BJP. In the high-stakes Brihanmumbai Municipal Corporation (BMC) elections in the city, it will be a battle for "change and development", Fadnavis said, in an interaction with select media at his official residence Varsha in south Mumbai. The

campaign for the elections ended on Tuesday. Fadnavis participated in 37 campaign rallies and road shows in the last fortnight.

Ending a 20-year political feud, Shiv Sena (UBT) chief Uddhav Thackeray and MNS president Raj Thackeray forged an alliance last month ahead of elections to the cash-rich Brihanmumbai Municipal Corporation.

"This election is for change and development issues during their poll campaign, Fadnavis said. "They didn't campaign and also didn't put their prestige at stake. For namesake there were some rallies outside Mumbai," he said.

Asked if he felt the election was one-sided, Fadnavis said, "No election is one-sided. There are challenges. However, the Opposition wasn't up to the mark," he said. In Pune and Pimpri-Chinchwad, where the BJP and NCP, led by Deputy Chief Minister Ajit Pawar) are contesting separately, the BJP will have a comfortable majority. In Mumbai, we will have a good majority. We will do well in Nashik as well," he said. The chief minister said people in Mumbai feel that the Mahayuti can be trusted with development going by what has been delivered so far.

Marathi speaking voters do not vote en bloc for Shiv Sena-UBT, Fadnavis said. "In 2014, 2019 and 2024 elections, we contested separately and got more seats than them in Mumbai. This cannot happen without Marathi voters. Our vote share is constant. We have to tap the 'floating' voters," he said.



## News box

**Man rents Gurgaon flat to six foreigners without police verification, arrested****Gurgaon.(Agency)**

A man has been arrested for allegedly renting out his flat to six foreigners without police verification. The accused had not filled mandatory C-Forms for police verification. The arrest followed a police check conducted on Sunday at M3M Woodshire Society in Sector 107 by a team from Rajendra Park police station. During the verification drive, police found six foreigners staying in a flat without the required documentation or prior intimation to the authorities. "During the investigation, police examined documents related to the flat owner and found that he had neither informed the police about the stay of foreign nationals nor filled the mandatory C-Form, which is required under the rules. When questioned, the flat owner failed to provide any satisfactory explanation," a police officer said. Police filed an FIR against Ashmit Grover, a Dwarka resident, at Rajendra Park police station, following which he was arrested on Monday. Police cautioned hotel operators, guest house owners and those running homestays to ensure timely filling of C-Forms for foreign nationals and to inform the concerned police station about their stay, warning that

**3 of family found dead at room in Faridabad, cops suspect suffocation****Gurgaon.(Agency)**

Three members of a family were found dead under suspicious circumstances in Faridabad on Tuesday afternoon. Police, who suspected suffocation due to a brazier (angithi), are awaiting autopsy reports to ascertain the exact cause of death of the three—Ramesh Yadav (21), his wife Mamta (27) and their son Chhotu (4)—at their rented room in Sarupur Colony.

"A brazier was found placed inside an iron bucket," a police officer said. Police are also checking if the three died due to food poisoning. Officials said no visible injury marks were found on the bodies. Blood was observed coming from Ramesh's nose, which, according to police, could be linked to suffocation and a sudden rise in blood pressure.

**Canteen owner shot in contract hit in Gurgaon, cousin hired killer for ₹ 10L; two held****Gurgaon.(Agency)**

It was a contract killing in which the maternal cousin of the Sector 34 canteen owner, who was found dead a week back, hired an accomplice for ₹ 10 lakh to execute the crime. The accused learnt methods of committing the murder and evading the police by watching videos on YouTube, the probe into the murder of Sanjay Sharma has found. Sources said that the accused used a country-made weapon in the crime. The Palam Vihar crime branch team, led by inspector Jaibir, arrested the two accused in the case and is searching for other associates involved in the conspiracy.

Sanjay (50) was shot dead near Rama Park in Sector 37D on Jan 6 while on his way to work. He was found lying in a pool of blood outside his car around 7.10am and was declared dead at Civil Hospital in Sector 10.

Police earlier arrested Gurudatt Sharma alias Baleshwar Sharma (56) from Dehradun on Saturday and then nabbed Anil (48), a private bus driver from Muzaffarnagar, on Monday. Gurudatt was Sanjay's maternal cousin and knew Anil for nearly a decade. The accused were tracked down following technical surveillance and analysis of movement patterns, police said. Gurudatt paid Anil the amount for surveillance and execution of the murder. "Gurudatt got the receipt of the victim done through Anil and other associates before committing the crime," police spokesperson Sandeep Kumar said. Gurudatt ran a café in Dehradun. During interrogation, the accused said they planned the murder for several weeks and used "online videos to chalk out the execution and their escape plan".

Police said the two cousins—Sanjay and Gurudatt—earlier ran a construction and crusher gravel business together, which shut down over a decade ago after disputes. The rivalry deepened over the years and Gurudatt allegedly nursed a personal grudge against Sanjay, blaming him for family issues, including his son's suicide recently. On Jan 6, the accused and their associates followed Sanjay's car from his home and rammed it near Rama Park, forcing him to stop.

When Sanjay stepped out, they tried to push him into their vehicle. When he resisted, Gurudatt allegedly fired at him from close range, killing him on the spot, police said. Investigators said CCTV footage from the area is being analysed to identify other suspects. Police earlier said there were no bloodstains inside Sanjay's car, indicating the shooting took place outside the vehicle.

**Welcome posters for new BJP chief and CM deface Gurgaon's walls, flyovers****Ghaziabad.(Agency)**

The city witnessed widespread defacement since Monday as posters welcoming BJP national president Nitin Nabi, Haryana CM Nayab Singh Saini and other BJP functionaries were put up across public spaces by party workers and councillors. The posters appeared on flyovers, walls and other public infrastructure across multiple areas. MCG officials did not respond to calls on the matter. Haryana BJP media in-charge, Arvind Saini, said it is normal practice for party workers to put up banners and posters to welcome leaders.

"The party is always mindful about hygiene and cleanliness and follows the law," said Saini. He, however, clarified that banners and posters are removed after the events. In the previous MCG House tenure, councillors raised issues of defacement. However, several councillors have now put up the welcome banners across the city. As per the Haryana Prevention of Defacement of the Property Act, 1989, any form of writing, painting, advertisement, poster, or banner on public property without prior approval is a punishable offence.

**Tanker prices rise amid short supply in Gurgaon, MCG starts emergency service****Noida.(Agency)**

Tankers are in high demand. As the water crisis deepened, residents across the city were seen frantically calling them on Tuesday, with most tankers remaining unavailable and those still operating sharply hiking their rates. "We are calling vendors, officials and everyone we know, but there are no clear answers," said PN Mishra, the RWA general secretary of Suncity Avenue in Sector 102, adding, "Vendors are saying they do not have the bandwidth to supply because the demand is overwhelming. Residents are questioning us every day." Tankers that were available for ₹ 1,300 until Monday were being quoted for ₹ 2,000 or ₹ 2,500 a day later, adding to the distress of residents, who were dependent almost entirely on private water supply since Saturday. The crisis was triggered by major repair work being undertaken by GMDA on a damaged joint of a 1,600-mm master pipeline connected to the Chandu

Budhera water treatment plant, one of the city's main water supply sources. The disruption affected large parts of the city, pushing residential societies into emergency arrangements.

When shortages arise due to laxity on part of the civic agency, "the burden should not fall on citizens", Suncity RWA chairperson Kusum Sharma told TOI. PN Mishra (Suncity Avenue) said, "We have been dependent on tankers since Saturday. Our daily requirement is around 30 tankers, but on most days we are managing with barely 15. On Tuesday, only five tankers arrived."

The shrinking supply also triggered sharp price escalation. Neeraj Yadav, a resident of South City 2, said tanker availability itself became uncertain. "Tankers that were available at ₹ 1,300 on Monday were charging ₹ 1,500 on Tuesday. Some vendors stopped responding altogether. I am now forced to buy bottled water even for cooking and drinking," Yadav said. At Imperial

Gardens in Sector 102, the crisis is causing a heavy financial burden on residents. Sunil Sareen, vice-president of the RWA, said around ₹ 2 lakh was already spent on private tankers over the past three to four days. "Despite spending so much, water quality is a serious concern. Total dissolved solids (TDS) levels often exceed permissible limits and sourcing tankers became extremely difficult due to the sheer demand from nearby societies," he said. With complaints pouring in, MCG on Tuesday began deploying water tankers to multiple areas.

"We were sending water tankers to different parts of the city as residents were complaining about the water supply. Tankers were sent mostly to sectors 7, 9, 10, New Colony and surrounding areas," an MCG official said. The official added that earlier in the day, residents created a ruckus at the New Colony boosting station, prompting the deployment of police to control the situation. Chairman of

Malibu RWA's Federation Vijay Shiv Nath said, "The disruption occurred suddenly and without prior intimation, leaving us with no time to store water or regulate supply in a staggered manner." He added that Malibu Towne, developed in 1995, has limited underground reservoir capacity, which is inadequate for prolonged emergencies. "Our tubewells were sealed by the town planning department (enforcement) about three years ago following complaints. This significantly reduced our ability to manage shortages during unforeseen disruptions," he said.

Kusum Sharma (Suncity) added that tanker rates spiralled sharply during the crisis. "Tankers that were earlier available for around ₹ 750 are now quoted at ₹ 1,200 or even more. Water tanker rates need to be regulated by the govt. Deployment of govt tankers, strict action against overcharging and immediate price control measures are urgently required to prevent exploitation," she said.

**Key accused held in kidnapping case in Gurgaon, plot linked to money dispute****Gurgaon.(Agency)**

A leakage in the 1,600 mm master water pipeline at Chandu Budhera water treatment plant (WTP) has disrupted supply from one of the city's main water sources, with new sectors bearing the brunt. Areas severely affected by the disruption include sectors 3, 4, 5, 7, 9, 11 and 12 as well as sectors 81 to 115. Several other areas—such as Chandu village, Dhankot, sectors 10, 33, 37D, and 38, along with the Sector 51 boosting station serving sectors 42 to 74, and Badshapur village—also faced major supply disruptions. The leak was detected on Friday after the pipeline shrank due to variations in temperature.

The situation worsened as repair work could not be immediately carried out due to heavy water accumulation inside the water treatment plant, which first needed to be dewatered. The problem escalated on Monday when the repair work undertaken to plug the leakage failed because of backflow in the pipeline. Officials said the damage was caused by extreme cold conditions.

"The pipeline is made of steel. During very low temperatures, the metal contracts, which causes joints to loosen. This led to the leakage. Water leaked out due to the joint failure and it was necessary to dewater the site, which took time before carrying out the repair work," the official added. At 8pm on Tuesday, GMDA said that the repair work to plug the leakage in the 1,600-mm diameter pipeline at WTP Chandu Budhera was completed. Officials said teams have been deployed to open the sluice valve and water supply is expected to be restored within the next few hours. Most housing societies and MCG's supply boosters are expected to start receiving water between 11pm and midnight. Supply conditions across most connections are likely to improve by Wednesday. "Once the supply is restarted, it will take time for water to circulate across the city as the pipeline needs to be filled completely," an official said. "Water generally reaches tail-end areas with some delay."

**Haryana to set up model Sanskriti colleges in all districts, announces Rs 20-crore research fund****Gurgaon.(Agency)**

Gurgaon: Haryana chief minister Nayab Singh Saini on Monday announced two major initiatives aimed at reforming higher education in the state, the creation of a ₹ 20-crore Haryana state research fund and the establishment of a Model Sanskriti College in every district. The chief minister made the announcement while addressing a pre-Budget consultation meeting with educationists and women representatives in Gurgaon.

Emphasising the importance of research in academia, Saini said research and innovation form the core of higher education and the newly created fund would strengthen academic inquiry and knowledge creation across universities and government colleges. "Research and innovation are the essence of higher education," he said, adding that the fund

would help build a robust research ecosystem in the state. He said the govt has resolved to upgrade one government college in each of the 22 districts into a Model Sanskriti College, with full implementation of the National Education Policy (NEP) by the 2026-27 academic session. These colleges, he said, will focus on holistic learning, modern teaching tools and stronger institutional linkages in line with NEP-2020. Saini also highlighted the recent launch of the NEEV Portal, an intelligent data-driven system designed to bridge gaps between policy formulation and execution.

Recalling last year's Budget, the chief minister said the govt had allocated ₹ 21,893 crore for the education sector after incorporating 63 suggestions received from stakeholders. He said key initiatives announced included Model Sanskriti Schools, two-shift school operations,

STEM laboratories and student linkages with premier institutions such as ISRO and DRDO. The chief minister underlined that women's welfare will remain a priority in the upcoming Budget. He said ₹ 2,101.55 crore was allocated to the Women and Child Development Department in the previous Budget, nearly half of which has already been utilised. He cited schemes such as Lado Lakshmi Yojana, the expanded Kishori Yojana and the construction of women's hostels in six districts. He also noted that 2,000 Anganwadi centres are being upgraded into Saksham Anganwadi Centres. Saini assured that all meaningful suggestions received during the consultation would be considered for inclusion in the 2026-27 Budget. Senior officials from the Education and Women and Child Development departments were present at the meeting.

**Blame it on met factors, air quality in Gurgaon turns 'very poor' after 2 days****Noida.(Agency)**

The city's air quality deteriorated sharply in the past 24 hours, slipping from 'poor' zone on Monday to 'very poor' on Tuesday with an AQI of 378. AQI was 297 on Monday. Three out of four active air monitoring stations reported readings above 300, with two stations crossing 430. Sector 51 (436) and Vikas Sadan (434) recorded AQI readings in the 'severe' range. Similarly, Gwalphari (326) remained in the 'very poor' category, while Teri Gram (288) stayed in the 'poor' range. The city saw repeated pollution spikes since the start of the month, with readings crossing 300 on multiple days. The sharpest rise was recorded on Jan 9 (373), followed by Jan 10 (349) and Jan 4 (333), suggesting that pollution levels in the city remained persistent despite brief fluctuations.

Health advisories caution that prolonged exposure to very poor air can trigger

respiratory illness, particularly among children, elderly people, and those with pre-existing heart or lung ailments. The advisory displayed on the state dashboard notes that air quality at these high levels can cause serious respiratory illness on prolonged exposure. An AQI between 301 and 400 is classified as 'very poor', a range associated with increased respiratory stress, especially for children, the elderly, and people with pre-existing conditions. Pollution levels fluctuated over the last few days. The city's AQI was recorded at 349 on Jan 10, improved to 280 on Jan 11, rose again to 297 on Jan 12, and then spiked to 371 on Tuesday, indicating a worsening trend. Experts attribute such winter spikes to stagnant atmospheric conditions, including low wind speed and reduced mixing height, which trap pollutants closer to the surface. Emissions from vehicles, dust from construction activity,

and local sources often accumulate in the absence of dispersal conditions, pushing air quality into hazardous categories. With calm winds, low mixing height and winter inversion trapping pollutants close to the surface, officials said any significant improvement is currently unlikely unless weather conditions change, such as the arrival of stronger winds or rainfall. Residents were advised to avoid prolonged outdoor exposure, especially during peak hours, and to limit outdoor exercise until pollution levels improve. Meanwhile, Delhi's air quality has deteriorated to the 'very poor' zone with an AQI of 360. It was recorded at 297 in the 'poor' range a day before on Monday. The air quality index is likely to stay in the 'very poor' category in the city until Jan 16 and even after, according to the Centre's Air Quality Early Warning.

**Noida razes walls built on dry ponds, reclaim land**

Noida.(Agency) The district administration on Tuesday carried out a demolition drive in Bilaspur, clearing encroachments from govt land, including two village ponds, and reclaiming property worth an estimated ₹ 5.5 crore. The action followed reports of unauthorised occupation of rain-fed village ponds that had dried up in recent weeks. Officials said encroachers had constructed boundary walls around the ponds and were in the process of converting the land into residential plots.

A revenue official from Sadar tehsil said the encroachment was being carried out by local property dealers who routinely target govt land. "Their modus operandi is to first make boundary walls around parcels of govt land and then take money from poor and vulnerable people on the pretext of 'selling' this land. Many buyers are unaware that the land belongs to the govt and later end

up facing losses and legal trouble," the official said. Officials said the encroachments had come up over the past week. Locals noticed the sudden construction activity around the ponds and alerted officials of the Sadar tehsil. Acting on the complaint, revenue teams conducted a site inspection and confirmed the allegations. Officials said

multiple notices were issued to the encroachers, directing them to remove the illegal structures voluntarily. When the encroachments were not cleared despite repeated warnings, the district administration decided to proceed with demolition. On Tuesday, teams from the revenue department, accompanied by police personnel, demolished the

boundary walls and cleared the land. Officials said the ponds have been restored and steps will be taken to prevent future encroachment. "If the encroachers try to encroach the land again, the administration will move to register an FIR against them," the official said. Sub-divisional magistrate (Sadar) Ashutosh Gupta said the administration is adopting a

zero-tolerance approach towards illegal occupation.

**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

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RNI No. DELENG/2008/25465

# Technical and Mechanical Employees Union (Reg. No. 36) Punjab releases calendar

The calendar of the year 2026 was dedicated to the employees who died while on duty in the Water Supply and Sanitation Department

## The Sikh Times Malagar khamano

Fatehgarh Sahib, 14, January: Technical and Mechanical Employees Union (Reg. DMF), an organization of field employees of PWD Bhawan and Roads, Water Supply and Sanitation, Irrigation and Sewerage Board, has dedicated the calendar of the year 2026 to the field employees of the Water Supply and Sanitation Department who risked their lives during the Corona epidemic and provided uninterrupted supply of drinking water to the people and who have died while on duty, informing the press, the state executive president Malagar Singh Khamano, vice president Didar Singh Dhillon, assistant finance secretary Bhushan Kumar Goyal said that the organization has taken various regular and contract workers' organizations of the department along with The PWD Water

## Gangster's son-in-law arrested after Shootout

New Delhi: Delhi Police Special Cell arrested Ankit Maan (28), son-in-law of notorious gangster Rajesh Bawana, following a gunfight near Bawana on the Munak Canal road on Thursday. Police said Maan, wanted in multiple cases including murder, extortion, and armed violence, was spotted riding a motorcycle from Ghongha village towards Dariyapur at around 5:30 am. When signalled to stop, he opened fire with an automatic pistol. Officers returned fire, hitting Maan in the right knee and incapacitating him. Head Constable Amit Kumar, protected by a bulletproof jacket, escaped unhurt. Authorities recovered an automatic pistol, three live cartridges, four empty cartridges of 7.65 mm calibre, and the motorcycle used by the accused. A case has been registered under the relevant sections of the Bharatiya Nyaya Sanhita and the Arms Act. Maan, a resident of Bajipur Thakran in Bawana, is a known associate of the Rajesh Bawana gang and had reportedly taken over gang operations during Rajesh's imprisonment. Police said he had absconded after interim bail in September 2025 and was involved in extortion, targeted attacks, and the murder of Ajay Dabas.

### NAME CHANGE

I, NAIMA w/o Amriddin R/o HNo.369, Gali No.18, A-Block, Brijpuri, Delhi-110094, have changed my name to NAZIMA for all future purpose

### NAME CHANGE

I, hitherto known as HASRAT JAHAN alias NUSRAT JAHAN D/O MOHD UMAR DARAJ W/O MOHD MOAZ-ZAM R/O 848, DARYA GANJ CHANDNI MAHAL DARYA GANJ, Darya Ganj, DIST: Central Delhi, Delhi-110002, have changed my name and shall hereafter be known as NUSRAT JAHAN.

### NAME CHANGE

I, NAIMA w/o Amriddin R/o HNo.369, Gali No.18, A-Block, Brijpuri, Delhi-110094, have changed my name to NAZIMA for all future purpose

### NAME CHANGE

I, RAM AVATAR S/O BABU RAM SAINI, R/O HOUSE NO-R2-241(A-H-88), RAJ NAGAR PART-2, PALAM COLONY, PALAM VILLAGE, SOUTH WEST DELHI, DELHI-110045, have changed my name from RAM AVATAR S/O BABU RAM SAINI, to RAM AVATAR SAINI S/O BABU RAM SAINI for all future purposes.

### NAME CHANGE

I, hitherto known as KIRAN KUMAR S/O UMAKANT PRASAD R/O A-345 Pandav Nagar, Patel Nagar, S.O. Central Delhi, Delhi-110008 have changed my name and shall hereafter be known as MOHAMMAD KHIZAR.

### PUBLIC NOTICE

It is a general information that I, CHANCHAL RANI D/O BHAGWAN DASS and Ex-wife of JITEDRA residing at H.NO-202/20, STREET NO.2, OM NAGAR, GURGAON, HARYANA-122001, declare that I got divorced from my husband vide court degree NO-HMA-1752-2024 dated 06/08/2025. Further I have changed the name of my minor daughter namely Baby of CHANCHAL alias DIVYANSHI aged 6 years and she shall hereafter be known as DIVYANSHI.

### NAME CHANGE

I, Animesh Rout S/o Nanda Kishore Rout R/o Tent, Cuttack, Odisha -752400, have changed my name to Bhagdhar Rout

### NAME CHANGE

I, NEERAJ S/O RAJENDER SINGH R/O HNo. 12 Manohar Pura, VPO: Kali Kair, South West Delhi, Delhi-110043 have changed the name of my minor daughter namely GARIMA aged 14 years and she shall hereafter be known as TUSHITI.

### NAME CHANGE

I, hitherto Known as MEENA DEVI W/O CHATURI R/O A-274/A, Begum Vihar, A-Block, Begumpur, North West Delhi, Delhi-110086 have changed my name and shall hereafter be known as MAINA.

Supply Coordination Struggle Committee was formed to mobilize the main demand of providing jobs to the kin of deceased employees on compassionate grounds, and even today the Joint Struggle Committee is struggling with the government and officials on this demand on a priority basis. He said that it was due to the hard work of these field employees that the 'Har Ghar Jal' mission was successful under the guidelines of the Central Government and the State Government, today Punjab is playing a leading role in India for clean drinking water. It is because of the hard work of these field employees that the Punjab government has received an award from the central government under the Har Ghar Jal Mission. Even today, hundreds of regular and contract field employees in the department are continuing the supply of drinking water uninterruptedly despite

the severe cold. Even now, each employee is spending from his own

field employees under the leadership of the organization are making a big

demands. In the meeting, it was announced to strongly support the



pocket to repair the pipelines. He said that the current government of Punjab, which used to claim to run through the villages, has cut the rural allowance and other allowances, instead of paying the field employees their wages. For the restoration of which, the

contribution to the joint employee movement. All the field employees will participate in the district-level protests on January 16 by the organization, the United Kisan Morcha, regarding the Electricity Bill 2025, Labor Code, MNREGA, Sez Law and other

Powercom Outsourcing Support Billing Meter Reader Union's January 19 and Teachers' Justice Committee's Moga

**NAME CHANGE**  
I, Vijay Kumar S/O Ram Chander R/O X2451- Gali No-9 Raghupur no.2- Ghandi nagar, shahdara Delhi 110032, changed my name to Vijay Saini

**PUBLIC NOTICE**  
It is for general information that, I, VIKASH CHAURASIA S/o SHEO NATH CHAURASIA, R/o D-25B, 2nd Floor, Gali No.8, Dashrath Pur, Near Shani Mandir, Dabri, Palam Village, South West Delhi, Delhi-110045, declare that name of mine and my father has been wrongly written as VIKASH and KHALSH KHALENDAL AL R/o 1-A, Third Floor, Gautam Nagar, New Delhi, Gautam Nagar: PO: Andrewsgarj, Dist: South Delhi, Delhi-110049, declare that I got divorce from my husband vide court decree No. P.A.N.109/2024, Judgement dated 26-03-2025. Further, I have changed my name and shall hereafter be known as PRIYANKA JINDAL.

**PUBLIC NOTICE**  
It is for general information that, I, PRIYANKA KHANDELWAL alias PRIYANKA ASHIT KHANDELWAL alias PRIYANKA JINDAL and ex-wife of ASHIT KALASH KHANDELWAL R/o 1-A, Third Floor, Gautam Nagar, New Delhi, Gautam Nagar: PO: Andrewsgarj, Dist: South Delhi, Delhi-110049, declare that I got divorce from my husband vide court decree No. P.A.N.109/2024, Judgement dated 26-03-2025. Further, I have changed my name and shall hereafter be known as PRIYANKA JINDAL.

**PUBLIC NOTICE**  
Mrs. Sudha Sinha and Mr. Bipin Bihari Swaroopa Owner of the Residential Unit no. 101, 1st floor, Tower-B6, having a total super area 915 sq. ft., in the "PANCHSHEEL GREENS-II" built on Plot No. GH-0104, situated at Sector-16, Greater Noida, Dist. Gautam Budh Nagar, U.P. Mrs. Sudha Sinha and Mr. Bipin Bihari Swaroopa have lost Original Allotment Letter executed by Army Welfare Housing Organization (AWHO) in favour of Mr. Prakash Nath, for which complaint lodged to the police. Therefore, by way of this Public Notice it is hereby notified that any person, Attorney and/or entity, firm/company, society and/or member of the Society, Bank, HUF/Member of HUF, Financial Institution having any claim, charge, interest, or lien whatsoever with respect to the Said house or otherwise, may not to be signed only on his rahulkumargupta281401@gmail.com with documentary proof within 15 days from the date of this publication of notice, failing which any such claim etc. shall be deemed to be null and void, whereas title shall be deemed to be clear, and marketable without any defect or encumbrance and free to create equitable mortgage

**RAHUL KUMAR GUPTA**  
(ADVOCATE)  
Off.: 43B, Third Floor,  
Patpargang Village, Mayur Vihar  
Phase-I, Delhi-110006  
M-NO: 7252922875

**PUBLIC NOTICE**  
Mr. Ranjit Kumar Sinha and Mrs. Rupam Sinha Owner of the Residential Dwelling Unit bearing no. 36, on Second floor, AVH/O, Arun vihar Sec 28, Noida, District Gautam Budh Nagar, U.P. Mr. Ranjit Kumar Sinha and Mrs. Rupam Sinha have lost Original Allotment Letter dated 06.11.2013 and BBA issued by M/s Panchsheel Bultech Pvt. Ltd. in favour of Mrs. Sudha Sinha and Mr. Bipin Bihari Swaroopa, for which complaint lodged to the police. Therefore, by way of this Public Notice it is hereby notified that any person, Attorney and/or entity, firm/company, society and/or member of the Society, Bank, HUF/Member of HUF, Financial Institution having any claim, charge, interest, or lien whatsoever with respect to the Said house or otherwise, may not to be signed only on his rahulkumargupta281401@gmail.com with documentary proof within 15 days from the date of this publication of notice, failing which any such claim etc. shall be deemed to be null and void, whereas title shall be deemed to be clear, and marketable without any defect or encumbrance and free to create equitable mortgage

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(ADVOCATE)  
Off.: 43B, Third Floor,  
Patpargang Village, Mayur Vihar  
Phase-I, Delhi-110006  
M-NO: 7252922875

**PUBLIC NOTICE**  
Public at large is hereby informed that my client Smt. Megha W/o Sh. Tarun Kumar is the owner of Property bearing no. 204, (South Side Portion) area measuring 85, sq. Yard, out of Khasra no. 117/2, Situated in the Lal Dora Abadi of Village Naharpur, Sector-7, Rohini, Delhi-110085 vide Sale dated 09.04.2024 executed by Smt. Kanta Devi W/o Sh. Mahender Kumar in favour of Smt. Megha W/o Sh. Tarun Kumar in respect of Property bearing no. 204, (South Side Portion) area measuring 85, sq. Yard, out of Khasra no. 117/2, duly registered in the name of Smt. Phool Wati in respect of Smt. Kanta Devi W/o Sh. Mahender Kumar in respect of Sale Property. Who executed Notarized GPA, ATS and WLL dated 17.01.1990 in favour of Smt. Phool Wati in respect of the Said Property, Later Smt. Phool Wati died on 21.04.2018 leaving behind Last Regd. WILL dated 07.04.2018 in favour of Smt. Kanta Devi W/o Sh. Tarun Kumar in respect of Sale Property. Who executed Notarized GPA, ATS and WLL dated 17.01.1990 in favour of Smt. Phool Wati in respect of the Said Property. Finally Sale deed dated 09.04.2024 is executed in favour of our abovementioned clients who intends to mortgage said immovable property for bonafide requirements to Mahindra & Mahindra Financial Services Limited Whosoever is having any objection to the said mortgage or anyone has claim or right in the property shall contact the undersigned with the objection within 07 days failing which it shall be presumed that there stands no objections or no litigation or Dispute over the Said Property.

**NEW DELHI**  
DATE: 14/1/2025

**PRAGYA BHUSHAN ADVOCATE**  
Enr. No. D/721/02  
Office: L-27, GF, Kailash Colony, New Delhi-48  
Mob.: 9968006418

**NOTICE**

It is for general information that I, MUNISHA KUMAR S/O RAJENDRA SINGH R/O 101, Sector-11, Chhurya Mohalla Tughlakabad Village, Jaitpur, PO: Jaitpur, DIST: South Delhi, Delhi-110044, declare that name of mine and my father have been wrongly written as MUNISHA, NARAYAN KUMAR and JASIMUN KHATOON in my 10th and 12th class educational documents. The actual name of mine, my father and my mother are MUNISHA KUMAR and JASIMUN KHATOON.

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## NEWS BOX

**Costa Rica's security director says plot to assassinate president uncovered****World. (Agency)**

Costa Rica's national security chief has revealed details of an alleged plot to assassinate President Rodrigo Chaves ahead of presidential and legislative elections. Jorge Torres, director of the Intelligence and National Security Directorate, on Tuesday told journalists about the plot allegations as he prepared to file a formal complaint at the public prosecutor's office.

"What we received is confidential information that I would like to put on record in the complaint. I don't want to go into detail, but I would simply like to tell you that it concerns the life of the president of the Republic," Torres told local media.

Torres said a call was received from a woman who reported a supposed plot against Chaves, adding a payment had been made to a hitman.

Torres also reported that security was being reinforced for the conservative populist leader, who has sought to present himself as a politician who is tough-on-crime.

Torres spoke as El Salvador's President Nayib Bukele, who has gained fame for his controversial security crackdown, was scheduled to visit the country.

On Wednesday, Chaves is scheduled to lay the cornerstone of a new mega-prison that Costa Rica plans to build, modelled on a facility built by Bukele. Costa Rica will hold presidential and legislative elections on Feb 1. While Chaves is ineligible to run for reelection, the ruling party's Laura Fernández is among the presidential candidates.

**Activists claim Iran has aired at least 97 coerced confessions from protesters, often after torture****JERUSALEM. (Agency)**

They are shown handcuffed, their faces blurred. The confession videos, broadcast on Iranian state media, feature dramatic background music interspersed with clips appearing to show protesters attacking security forces. Some showcase gruesome homemade weapons that authorities claim were used in the attacks. Others highlight suspects in grainy security footage, appearing to set fires or destroy property. Iran says these confessions, which often include references to Israel or America, are proof of foreign plots behind Iran's nationwide protests.

Activists allege that they are coerced confessions, long a staple of Iran's hard-line state television, the only broadcaster in the country. And these videos are coming at an unprecedented clip.

Iranian state media has aired at least 97 confessions from protesters, many expressing remorse for their actions, since the protests began on Dec. 28, according to a rights group that is tracking the videos. The US-based Human Rights Activists News Agency claims that based on testimony from prior detainees, the confessions often come after psychological or physical torture — and can have serious consequences, including the death penalty. "These rights violations compound on top of each other and lead to horrible outcomes. This is a pattern that's been implemented by the regime time and time again," said Skylar Thompson, the group's deputy director. Iran's mission to the United Nations did not return a request for comment from The Associated Press. Iranian officials have described the protests as "riots" orchestrated by the United States and Israel. Iranian Foreign Minister Abbas Araghchi has said the violence must be foreign-influenced because Iranians would never set mosques on fire.

**ICE agents continue to attack Minnesota protesters as prosecutors quit after Renee Good's death****MINNEAPOLIS. (Agency)**

US federal officers dropped tear gas and sprayed eye irritant at activists on Tuesday during another day of confrontations in Minneapolis, while students miles away walked out of a suburban school to protest the Trump administration's bold immigration sweeps.

Meanwhile, the fallout from the fatal shooting of a Minneapolis woman by an immigration agent reached the local US Attorney's Office: At least five prosecutors have resigned amid controversy over how the US Justice Department is handling the investigation, according to people familiar with the matter. Separately, a Justice Department official said Wednesday there's no basis for a criminal civil rights investigation. An FBI probe of Renee Good's death is ongoing. Strife between federal agents and the public continues to boil, six days since Good was shot in the head while driving off in her Honda Pilot. At one scene, gas clouds filled a Minneapolis street near where she died. A man scrubbed his eyes with snow and screamed for help after agents in a Jeep sprayed an orange irritant and drove off. It's common for people to boo, taunt and blow orange whistles when they spot heavily armed immigration agents passing through in unmarked vehicles or walking the streets, all part of a grassroots effort to warn the neighborhood and remind the government that they're watching. "Who doesn't have a whistle?" a man with a bag of them yelled. Brita Anderson, who lives nearby and came to support neighborhood friends, said she was "incensed" to see agents in tactical gear and gas masks, and wondered about their purpose. "It felt like the only reason they'd come here is to harass people," Anderson said. In Brooklyn Park, Minnesota, students protesting the immigration enforcement operation walked out of school, as students in other communities have done this week. Later, a large crowd gathered outside a hotel in Minneapolis banging drums and blowing whistles as officers wearing helmets and carrying batons stood guard just inside. Meanwhile, confrontations erupted between protesters and officers guarding the federal building being used as a base for the Twin Cities crackdown.

**Pastoral colonialism': West Bank Bedouin community driven out by Israeli settler violence****JACKSON, Miss. (Agency)**

With heavy hearts, Bedouins in a West Bank village dismantle their sheep pens and load belongings onto trucks, forced from their homes in the Israeli-occupied territory by rising settler violence. While attacks by Israeli settlers affect communities across the West Bank, the semi-nomadic Bedouins are among the territory's most vulnerable, saying they suffer from forced displacement due in large part to a lack of law enforcement. "What is happening today is the complete collapse of the community as a result of the settlers' continuous and repeated attacks, day and night, for the past two years," Farhan Jahaleen, a Bedouin in the village of Ras Ein al-Auja, told AFP. Since Israel took control of the West Bank in 1967, Israeli outposts have steadily expanded, with more than 500,000 settlers now living in the territory, which is also home to three million Palestinians. A minority of settlers engage in violence towards the locals aimed at coercing them to leave, with the UN recording an unprecedented 260

attacks in October last year. The threat of displacement has long hung over Jahaleen's community, but the pressure has multiplied in recent months as about half of the hamlet's 130 families decided to flee. Among them, 20 families from the local Ka'abneh clan left last week, he said, while around another 50 families have been dismantling their homes. "We can't do anything." The trailers of settlers dot the landscape around the village but are gradually being replaced by houses with permanent foundations, some built just 100 metres (300 feet) from Bedouin homes. In May last year, settlers diverted water from the village's most precious resource -- the spring after which it is named. Nestled between rocky hills to the west and the flat Jordan Valley that climbs up the Jordanian plateau to the east, the spring had allowed the community to remain self-sufficient. But Bedouin families have been driven away by the constant need to stand guard to avoid settlers cutting the power supply and irrigation pipes, or bringing their herds to

graze near Bedouin houses.

"If you defend your home, the (Israeli) police or army will come and arrest you. We can't do anything," lamented Naif Zayed,



another local. "There is no specific place for people to go; people are acting on their own, to each their own." Most Palestinian Bedouins are herders, which leaves them particularly exposed to violence when Israeli settlers bring their own herds that compete for grazing land in isolated rural areas. It is a strategy that settlement

watchdog organisations have called "pastoral colonialism." Israel's military chief Lieutenant General Eyal Zamir said in November that he wanted to put a stop to the violence. This month the army announced new monitoring technology to enforce movement restrictions on both Israelis and Palestinians, with Israeli media reporting the move was largely aimed at reining in settler attacks. Asked for comment, the Israeli military said: "Incidents in the Ras al-Ain are well known. (Israeli military) forces enter the area in accordance with calls and operational needs, aiming to prevent friction between populations and to maintain order and security in the area."

It said it had increased its presence in the area "due to the many recent friction incidents." Bedouin way of life Naaman Ehrizat, another herder from Ras Ein al-Auja, told AFP he had already moved his sheep to the southern West Bank city of Hebron ahead of his relocation. But Jahaleen said moving to other rural parts of the territory risks exposing the herders.

**Vance to meet Danish and Greenlandic officials in Washington as locals say Greenland is not for sale****YANGON. (Agency)**

Along the narrow, snow-covered main street in Greenland's capital, international journalists and camera crews stop passersby every few meters (feet) asking them for their thoughts on a crisis which Denmark's prime minister has warned could potentially trigger the end of NATO.

Greenland is at the center of a geopolitical storm as US President Donald Trump is insisting he wants to own the island — and the residents of its capital Nuuk say it is not for sale. Trump said he wants to control Greenland at any cost and the White House has not ruled out taking the island by force. US Vice President JD Vance will meet Denmark's foreign minister Lars Løkke Rasmussen and his Greenlandic counterpart Vivian Motzfeldt in Washington on Wednesday to discuss the Arctic island, which is a semi-autonomous territory of the United States' NATO ally Denmark. Tuuta Mikaelson, a 22-year-old student, told The Associated Press

in Nuuk that she hoped American officials would get the message to "back off." Greenland's Prime Minister Jens-Frederik Nielsen told a news conference in the Danish capital Copenhagen on Tuesday that, "if we have to choose between the United States and Denmark here and now, we choose Denmark. We choose NATO. We choose the Kingdom of Denmark. We choose the EU." Greenland is strategically important because as climate change causes the ice to melt, it opens up the possibility of shorter trade routes to Asia. That also could make it easier to extract and transport untapped deposits of critical minerals which are needed for computers and phones. Trump also said he wants the island to expand America's security and has cited what he says is the threat from Russian and Chinese ships as a reason to control it. But both experts and Greenlanders question that claim. "The only Chinese I see is when I go to the fast food market," Lars Vintner, a heating engineer told AP. He

said he frequently goes sailing and hunting and has never seen Russian or Chinese ships. His friend, Hans Nørgaard, agreed, adding "what has come out of the mouth of Donald Trump about all these ships is just fantasy." Denmark has said the US — which already has a military presence — can boost its bases on Greenland. For that reason, "security is just a cover," Vintner said, suggesting Trump actually wants to own the island to make money from its untapped natural resources. Nørgaard told AP he filed a police complaint in Nuuk against Trump's "aggressive" behavior because, he said, American officials are threatening the people of Greenland and NATO. He suggested Trump was using the ships as a pretext to further American expansion. "Donald Trump would like to have Greenland, (Russian President Vladimir) Putin would like Ukraine and (Chinese President) Xi Jinping would like to have Taiwan," Nørgaard said.

**Crane collapse at China-backed railway project derails train in Thailand, killing 22**

**Incident occurred at around 9:00 am (local time) when a crane being used to build the high-speed rail network fell onto a passenger train in Nakhon Ratchasima province.**

**BANGKOK. (Agency)**

A crane at a China-backed high-speed rail line in Thailand collapsed onto a passenger train on Wednesday, causing it to derail and killing at least 22 people, local authorities said. "Twenty-two people were killed and more than 30 were injured," a local



police chief in Nakhon Ratchasima province, Thatchaporn Chinnawong, told AFP. The incident occurred on Wednesday at around 9:00 am (0200 GMT) when a crane being used to build the high-speed rail network fell onto a passenger train in Nakhon Ratchasima, northeast of the capital Bangkok. "A crane collapsed onto a train causing it to derail and catch fire," the Nakhon Ratchasima provincial public relations department said in a statement. Live footage aired by local media showed rescue workers

rushing to the scene, with a brightly coloured train derailed on its side as smoke billowed from the debris. The Nakhon Ratchasima provincial department said the train was travelling from Bangkok to Ubon Ratchathani province. Transport Minister Phiphat Ratchakitprakarn said 195 people were on board the train and authorities were rushing to identify the deceased. The crane was being used in the construction of a \$5.4-billion project to build a high-speed rail network in Thailand, backed by Beijing, which aims to connect Bangkok to Kunming in China via Laos by 2028 as part of China's vast "Belt and Road" infrastructure initiative. Industrial and construction site accidents have long been common in Thailand, where lax enforcement of safety regulations often leads to deadly incidents.

**Marine Le Pen's appeal trial opens, putting far-right French leader's 2027 presidential bid at stake**

**PARIS. (Agency)**  
France's far-right leader Marine Le Pen denied any wrongdoing as she appeared in court Tuesday to appeal an embezzlement conviction, with her 2027 presidential ambitions hanging on the outcome.

Le Pen, 57, is seeking to overturn a March ruling that found her guilty of misusing European Parliament funds in the hiring of aides from 2004 to 2016. She was given a five-year ban from holding elected office, two years of house arrest with an electronic bracelet, a further two-year suspended sentence and a 100,000-euro (\$116,800) fine. "I'd like to tell the court that... we did not feel we had committed any offence," Le Pen told the three-judge panel. She said European Parliament officials did not at the time tell her party that the way it was hiring people was potentially against any rules. "We have never concealed anything," she added. The room was packed with dozens of reporters and members of the general public. The European Parliament's lawyer,

Patrick Maisonneuve, said he disagrees with Le Pen's presentation of the institution's role as "an arbitrator." "There's a contradiction in saying at the same time: 'I deny you the right to examine the content of my work as a member of parliament' and then saying: 'but the European Parliament didn't conduct a thorough review,'" Maisonneuve told reporters.

Leading presidential contender Le Pen was seen as the potential frontrunner to succeed President Emmanuel Macron in the 2027 election until last year's ruling, which sent shock waves through French politics. She denounced it as "a democratic scandal." Her National Rally party has been coming out on top in opinion polls, and Le Pen alleged that the judicial system brought out "the nuclear bomb" to prevent her from becoming France's president. Anti-corruption campaigners

argue that Le Pen's conviction was proof that French democracy works, and that no one is above the law. Advocacy group Transparency France noted that her conviction came after years of investigation and a lengthy trial in which



Le Pen and other party members were able to freely defend their positions. The appeal trial, involving Le Pen, 10 other defendants and the National Rally party as

a legal entity, is scheduled to last for five weeks. The panel is expected to announce its verdict later, possibly before summer. Several scenarios are possible, from acquittal to another conviction that may bar her from running in 2027. She also could face an even tougher punishment if convicted anew — up to 10 years in prison and a fine of 1 million euros (\$1.17 million).

**Doubt over political future**  
In March, Le Pen and other party officials were convicted of using money intended for EU parliamentary assistants who instead had other duties between 2004 and 2016, in violation of EU rules. Some did work for the party, known as the National Front at the time, in French domestic politics, the court said.

In handing down the sentence, the judge said Le Pen was at the heart of a "system" set up to siphon off EU parliament funds —

## NEWS BOX

**Valsad cop 'assaulted' during police raid, synthetic thread vendor among 5 held**

**Surat. (Agency)**

A HEAD constable with the Valsad Police was beaten up allegedly by a vendor of banned synthetic thread and his family members during a police raid at the latter's residence in the Mograwadi area on Monday evening, police said on Wednesday. The vendor and four members of his family have been arrested in connection with the case, police said. The policeman, Sahdev Solanki, suffered injuries and was discharged from a hospital after treatment. On a tip-off, Solanki reached Hanuman Street in the Mograwadi area on Monday and found two youths travelling on a two-wheeler. On checking the vehicle, three reels of synthetic thread were recovered. During questioning, the duo disclosed that they had come to return such threads to one Yash Nikam, a resident of the same area from whom they purchased it earlier.

Meanwhile, Yash stepped out of his house and had a heated argument with Solanki. After a while, his wife Dimple, his father Dipak, his elder brother Sandeep and his wife Reena came out of the house and they allegedly assaulted the policeman, who soon managed to flee. He was later taken to the Valsad Civil Hospital. Solanki later lodged a complaint against the accused with Valsad town police station. All five have been booked under BNS 121 (Voluntarily causing hurt or grievous hurt to deter a public servant from their duty).

### Telangana sets record in paddy procurement

**HYDERABAD. (Agency)**

Telangana has achieved another historic milestone in paddy procurement, purchasing a record 70.82 lakh metric tonnes (LMT) during the Kharif 2025–26 season, surpassing the previous high of 70.2 LMT recorded in 2020–21. The achievement was announced by Irrigation and Civil Supplies Minister N Uttam Kumar Reddy ahead of Sankranti. The minister said that the massive procurement drive directly benefited around 14 lakh farmers across the state.

"As we celebrate Sankranti, Telangana marks a historic milestone. Record paddy procurement of 70.82 LMT, surpassing the 2020–21 figure of 70.2 LMT, benefiting 14 lakh farmers. An amount of Rs 16,606 crore as MSP and Rs 1,425 crore as bonus has been paid. A festival of gratitude, prosperity and farmer welfare. Happy Sankranti," he posted on X.

The state government ensured timely direct credit of '16,606 crore towards Minimum Support Price (MSP) along with a substantial bonus of '1,425 crore into farmers' bank accounts. According to official data, procurement had crossed the 52 LMT mark by mid-December 2025, reflecting the smooth and efficient functioning of procurement centres throughout the season.

### 'Ahilyabai Holkar's statue' demolished in Varanasi, district admin orders probe

**Lucknow. (Agency)**

The Varanasi district administration has ordered an inquiry into allegations that a structure housing the statue of Devi Ahilyabai Holkar was demolished recently during the ongoing renovation work at Manikarnika Ghat. Maratha queen Ahilyabai Holkar is credited with rebuilding the Kashi Vishwanath Temple in Varanasi in the 18th century.

On Tuesday, a group of people led by Mahendra Pal Pintu, the national president of the Pal Community, protested at the spot where the structure was allegedly demolished. "We demanded that the statue of Ahilyabai Holkar, who made significant contributions to the country as well as to Varanasi and the Kashi Vishwanath Temple, be reinstated at the same location," said Pal, who is also a state committee member of the Samajwadi Party.

Demanding accountability from the district administration over the incident, Pal alleged that the statue of Ahilyabai Holkar was nearly 100 years old and was demolished on Sunday in the name of the renovation of Manikarnika Ghat without any prior notice or consultation.

He claimed that the action hurt the sentiments of the community. "If the government intended to remove the statue for renovation work, it should have first relocated it to a safer place before carrying out any demolition in the area," said Pal, adding they handed over a memorandum outlining their demands to a government officials who arrived at the protest site. He added that Ahilyabai Holkar is deeply connected to the Pal (Gadariya) community, as they consider her a revered ancestor. The Pal community celebrates the birth anniversary of Ahilyabai Holkar.

## 'Kumbh Mela': Stop memo issued against work on banks of Bharathapuzha

**Mahamandaleshwar Swami Anandavanam Bharathi, who is spearheading the initiative, said the organisers "would not step" back despite the order halting construction activities.**

**THRISSUR. (Agency)**

A stop memo issued by the Thirunavaya village officer has triggered a standoff over the proposed 'Kumbh Mela' on the banks of the Bharathapuzha, with the organisers asserting that the event will go ahead as scheduled. Mahamandaleshwar Swami Anandavanam Bharathi, who is spearheading the initiative, said the organisers "would not step" back despite the order halting construction activities at the site. Kerala's first Kumbh Mela-style festival is slated to be held from January 18 to February 3, 2026, at Thirunavaya, reviving the ancient Maha Makkham tradition.

"When a large gathering is expected, basic infrastructure is essential. We had submitted applications and communicated everything to the authorities for permission to carry out preliminary construction work

on the riverbank," Swami Anandavanam told . He said no objections were raised at the time. "In fact, the district administration asked us to proceed with the work, saying formal permission might be delayed due to the model code of conduct for local body elections. Nearly 70% of the work has now been completed. Suddenly, a stop memo was issued and the work was stalled," he said. Swami Anandavanam said the religious gathering and rituals associated with the Kumbh Mela will take place irrespective of administrative hurdles.

"Yajnas and yagas have always been an integral part of Maha Makkham. In ancient times, the festival even concluded with the selection of a new king. It is our religious right to

congregate for spiritual pursuits, and nothing can stop that," he said, adding that several eminent personalities, including the Kerala Governor, had agreed to attend the event.



The district administration in Malappuram, however, clarified that the stop memo pertains only to construction activities that allegedly violated existing environmental norms. Officials said the action was taken against the use of heavy machinery, such as earthmovers, and the levelling

of the riverbank, which are prohibited under rules aimed at conserving the Bharathapuzha. The authorities maintained that the order does not bar the religious event itself, but only unauthorised

work along the river. Historically, Maha Makkham was conducted at Thirunavaya during the reign of Cheraman Perumal and was held once every 12 years. Considered the southern equivalent of the Kumbh Mela in north India, the ritual gathering later

continued in Kumbakonam in Tamil Nadu. The upcoming festival is being organised under the supervision of the Swami Anandavanam Bharathi-led Juna Akhara -- the largest monastic order in India and one of the principal bodies associated with the Kumbh Mela.

**HC issues notices to Gujarat govt, AMC, police in contempt of court plea over demolitions**

**Ahmedabad. (Agency)**

A division bench of the Gujarat High Court has issued notices to the Gujarat government, 12 officials of the Ahmedabad Municipal Corporation and Ahmedabad City Police in an alleged contempt of court case in connection with the demolition of two residential structures in the Rakhial area of Ahmedabad allegedly in violation of the guidelines issued by the Supreme Court.

The court passed the order on January 8, a copy of which was made available on Tuesday, and posted further hearing in the case for February 2.

The petition has been filed by one Saiyda Banu and her son Bhuraji Sikander Ahemad through their lawyer Nitish Nair. As noted by the High Court in its order while issuing notices to the respondents, the petitioners had filed the petition due to "alleged contempt for willful and deliberate disobedience" of the directions of the Supreme Court given in a writ petition on November 24, 2024, on demolition of a structure.

One of the directions issued by the Supreme Court, as noted by the HC in its order, stated, "No demolition should be carried out without a prior show-cause notice returnable either in accordance laws/or with the time provided by the local municipal laws/or within 15 days' time from the date of service of such notice, whichever is later."

The Supreme Court had also clarified that the directions issued by it will not be applicable if there is an unauthorised structure in any public place such as road, street, footpath, abutting railway line or any river body or water bodies and also to cases where there is an order for demolition made by a Court of law.

According to the petitioners, they were issued a notice under the provisions of the Bombay Provincial Municipal Corporation Act (BPMC Act) on December 24, 2024 while "giving only two days" time to file the reply. The petitioners filed the reply on December 26, 2024. However, the respondent authority (AMC) issued another notice the same day, December 26, 2024, under the provisions of the BMC Act.

## On pretext of MGNREGA and VB-G-RAM-G, Cong, BJP push their 2027 agenda in Punjab

**Rallies presented both parties with opportunities to mobilise rural masses before going to the state elections. They will announce the second phase soon.**

**Chandigarh. (Agency)**

Even as both opposition parties in Punjab, the Congress and the BJP, claim to be reaching out to the rural populace over employment and livelihood schemes, parallel rallies by the two parties between January 7 and 12 demonstrate that the real contest has already been shifted towards the 2027 Assembly elections.

The Congress organised 10 rallies in five days from January 8 to 12 under the "MGNREGA Bachao Sangram", beginning with Gurdaspur on January 8 and covering Bholath, Samrala, Muktsar and Moga, with the last rally of the first phase taking place at Guru-Har-Sahai in Ferozepur district. AICC Punjab in-charge

and former Chhattisgarh chief minister Bhupesh Baghel attended all these rallies.

In response, the BJP launched "Jan Jagran Abhiyan" on January 7 in Fazilka, followed by 7 programmes in Jalandhar, Sujanpur, Jagraon, Samrala, Fatehgarh Sahib and other areas till January 11 to counter the Congress's narrative against the Viksits Bharat-Guarantee for Rozgar and Aajeevika Mission-Gramin (VB-G-RAM-G) as well as to sensitise people about the newly launched scheme, even roping in Haryana Chief Minister Nayab Singh Saini for a rally in Samrala on January 11.

**Cong's unity takes centre stage**

Though the Congress launched these

rallies to protest the replacement of the Mahatma Gandhi National Rural Employment Guarantee Act (MGNREGA), 2005, with the VB-G-RAM-G, the party's dominant



narrative revolved around its unity, denial of factionalism and the 2027 elections, with Leader of the Opposition in Punjab Partap Singh Bajwa striking a sharp political note at the concluding rally. "The

people of Punjab want a united Congress. The way the AAP has troubled the masses, the Congress is the only alternative in Punjab. We are assuring our workers that all fake FIRs lodged by the AAP government against them will be withdrawn after we are voted to power.

We will end this gangsterism... no one will get extortion calls... law and order has gone for a toss under the AAP government," Bajwa said. At their first rally in Gurdaspur, Bajwa, former deputy CM and local MP Sukhjinder Singh Randhawa, PPCC president Amarinder Singh Raja Warring, and Bhupesh Baghel reached the rally venue in one vehicle, sending out the message of unity.

## Maghi Mela begins at Sri Muktsar Sahib amid heightened security and revival of political conferences

**Chandigarh. (Agency)**

As it geared up for lakhs of devotees, centuries-old Maghi Mela opened in Sri Muktsar Sahib on Wednesday to commemorate the martyrdom of the Forty Mukts (Chali Mukte in Punjabi), who laid down their lives fighting the Mughal forces in the Battle of Khidrana in 1705. After the battle, Khidrana came to be known as Muktsar — the "pool of liberation". According to Sikh history, the martyrdom took place during the period of Vaisakh (April–May). However, due to water scarcity about a century ago, the annual fair began to be organised on Magh Sankranti in January and came to be known as the Maghi Mela, a tradition that continues till today.

Gurdwaras also organise separate commemorative programmes in May as per the Shiromani Gurdwara Parbandhak Committee (SGPC). The three-day Maghi Mela, beginning on January 13 and concluding on January 15, draws devotees from across Punjab and neighbouring states. Pilgrims take a holy dip in the sarovar at Gurdwara Darbar Sahib and pay obeisance to the Forty Mukts. Alongside religious fervour, political activity is set to regain prominence at the Maghi

Mela this year after several years of relatively low-key participation. Political conferences at the mela date back to the mid-1950s. In 2017, then Akal Takht Jathedar, Giani Gurbachan Singh, had appealed to political parties not to hold conferences at religious fairs associated with martyrdom. Following this, parties discontinued political conferences at Shaheedi Jor Mela at Sircind held on December 26 every year and at Maghi Mela from 2018, except the Shiromani Akali Dal (SAD) and few other groups. The SAD meanwhile has maintained that Maghi Mela conferences predated the party's formation in 1920 and that the martyrdom itself occurred in Vaisakh.

This year, however, political activity has intensified again. The ruling Aam Aadmi Party (AAP) is organising a state-level programme on Wednesday near DAV School on Kotkapura Road, where Chief Minister Bhagwant Singh Mann will address the gathering after paying homage at Gurdwara Darbar Sahib. Sources claimed that state-run transport corporations — Punjab Roadways, PRTC and Pepsu Roadways — have been directed to ply buses to bring people to the programme, triggering sharp criticism from the Congress.



## HC rips into UP ATS: 'Why man accused of helping Rohingya, Bangladeshis settle illegally not arrested yet?

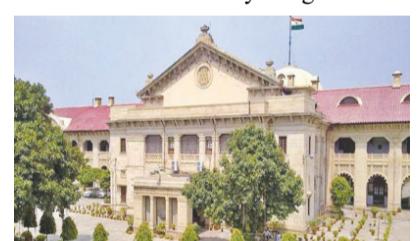
**Lucknow. (Agency)**

The Lucknow bench of the Allahabad High Court gave the Uttar Pradesh Police's Anti-Terror Squad (ATS) a dressing-down for failing to arrest a man facing charges of heading a group trying to illegally settle Bangladeshi nationals and Rohingya in India to create unrest in the country and not filing a chargesheet in the case.

Rejecting the anticipatory bail petition of the accused, Abdul Ghaffar, the court confronted the ATS investigating officer (IO), who was present in the court, why no serious efforts were made by him to apprehend him while his alleged activities endangering the country's security came to the agency's notice in 2021, even before the case was lodged in the matter in 2023.

Ghaffar is one of the 10 people the ATS had named as accused in the case registered on October 11, 2023, on charges of human trafficking, cheating, forgery and conspiracy of the Indian Penal Code and provisions of the Foreigners Act & Passport Act.

A division bench of Justices Pramod Kumar Srivastava and Rajesh Singh Chauhan said in its January 9 order,



related for committing cognizable offences but on account of those offences the security, peace and harmony of the country may likely be jeopardized, therefore, this fact must come to the notice of the Chief Secretary of the State of U.P., Additional Chief Secretary, Home, U.P., Principal Secretary/Secretary of the Chief Minister of U.P. and Director General of Police, U.P., Lucknow for information and appropriate action/orders."

## Another scam rocks Sabarimala: Rs 35 lakh fraud unearthed in 'Adiya Sishtam Ghee' sale at temple

**KOCHI.(Agency)**

Close on the heels of the sensational gold theft case, another major financial irregularity has now been unearthed - this time in the sale of Adiya Sishtam Ghee, a sacred offering to devotees. Preliminary findings reveal that within a short span of less than two months, an amount of approximately Rs 35 lakh was siphoned off exclusively from the sale of Adiya Sishtam Ghee. The proceeds from this offering form a crucial part of the Travancore Devaswom Board's revenue. Considering the report of the Sabarimala Special Commissioner, the Kerala High Court ordered a Vigilance probe after registering a case.

The court directed the Vigilance and Anti

upright and competent officers to probe the case. The chief vigilance and security officer of the Travancore Devaswom Board disclosed that the sale proceeds of 16,628 packets of ghee sold from the counter situated in the Maramath Building was not remitted to the deaswom account. The court pointed out that the Board had entrusted Preman, of Anugraha Veedu, Palakkad, with the task of filling "Adiya Sishtam Ghee" into packets for sale at various counters. The contractor is paid at the rate of Rs 0.20 per packet for the assigned work. Significantly, the entire infrastructure for packing, which includes the packing machine, packing materials, and the ghee itself, is provided by the Devaswom Board. There is a steel tank with a capacity of 700



litres into which ghee is filled using a motor. It is the duty of the contractor to fill each packet with 100 millilitres of ghee, which is thereafter sold to devotees at the counters for a sum of Rs 100 per packet. Similar packing arrangements are stated to exist for other articles of sale such as turmeric, kumkum, holy ash etc. The inspection revealed that

during the period from November 17, 2025, to December 26, 2025, the contractor had packed 3,52,050 packets of 100 ml each, and those packets were entrusted to the Temple Special Officer for the purpose of sale. Out of the 3,52,050 packets, about 89,300 packets were sold from the counter in the Maramath Building on various days. Out of the 89,300 packets, 143 packets were found damaged, and the total number of packets remaining in the counter as on December 27, 2025, was only 28. After deducting the damaged packets and the balance packets remaining in the counter, the sale proceeds corresponding to 89,129 packets ought to have been remitted to the Devaswom Board. However, the employees in charge of the counter deposited money only in respect.

## From New York to JNU via Caracas, skipping Dhaka

Despite teaching in Jawaharlal Nehru University (JNU) for nearly a quarter of a century—and voluntarily retiring in early 2024—I must confess that I remained somewhat of an alien in 'planet JNU'. Three recent events confirmed this sense of puzzlement mingled with pique. The first was the recent outbreak of 'anti-national' slogan-shouting of January 6-7 on campus to mark the 'anniversary' of the 2020 attack on JNU. I covered that event in my book titled JNU: Nationalism and India's Uncivil War. Many national leaders and cabinet ministers, including Union external affairs minister S Jaishankar and finance minister Nirmala Sitharaman, both distinguished JNU alums, deplored that attack. So did I. Letting loose thugs and vigilantes on campus to settle political scores is not desirable, especially on a thinking campus such as JNU, with a tradition of vibrant debate and dissent. One of my own former colleagues, who had stepped out of his house to see what was going on, was also injured, albeit not seriously. How can beating up a teacher, that too a bystander, be condoned? That the JNU Students' Union, still Leftist, would commemorate the 2020 campus invasion, combined with the US surgical strike in Caracas, is hardly surprising. But should the protesters also raise obnoxious slogans against our prime minister and home minister, as reported in the national media? No. Who raised such slogans and why? Were they JNU-ites or outsiders, infiltrating the campus to foment trouble? Only an impartial inquiry will answer such questions. The pro-government JNU administration is sure to take action if any students are found guilty. If no action is taken, we might assume that the perpetrators cannot be identified, whether deliberately or inexplicably. Politics is murky; JNU politics especially so. Speaking of which, let me come to the second of the three grounds of this column. Newly minted New York mayor Zohran Mamdani's meeting with Umar Khalid's parents and message of support to his partner, Banjojotsna Lohri. What is Mamdani's locus standi in the matter is a legitimate question that ruling party spokespersons have repeatedly asked in TV debates. That there is an Islamist-Leftist alliance is a plausible, even obvious, explanation. These alliances are not merely local but worldwide, and stand the test of further scrutiny. These groups are also well-funded and lubricated by global media networks. But does this mean 'jail, not bail', the reverse of what the Supreme Court advised? Why should some 'draconian' Acts hold an undtrial guilty until proven innocent? Why not a speedy sentencing or bail instead? These, to my mind, are equally legitimate questions. But speaking of Mamdani's intervention in the matter, if his heart bleeds for the Khalids and Imams of India, why not also for the many innocent lynched Hindus in Bangladesh? From Ananda Gopal Ganguly, the 70-year-old Hindu priest brutally murdered and decapitated in 2016, to Khokon Chandra Das, stabbed and hacked multiple times, then set on fire just a few days ago. What about the Hindu priest, Chinmoy Krishna Das, a conscientious objector against Islamist violence, arrested on sedition charges in November 2024 and released on bail only in April of the following year, after an international outrage? Mamdani has been consistently silent on such atrocities against Hindus, even though his mother, Mira Nair, is Hindu. What does that say about his credibility? Finally, former Venezuelan president Nicolás Maduro's kidnapping and arrest, along with his wife, by the US special forces on President Donald J Trump's orders. I remember Hugo Chávez's calling on JNU in March 2005, during his four-day official visit to India. What a hero's welcome he received! Outside his own country and barring, perhaps, Cuba, his reception in JNU must have been unprecedented in its enthusiasm. Chávez seized foreign assets, nationalised Venezuela's oil business, and, as with many other Communist dictatorships, arguably set his country's course to rack and ruin.

What would be the best way to mark the 60th anniversary of the formation of Haryana and the creation of Punjabi suba? I have a proposal. Let this historic occasion be used to resolve the water dispute between the states of Punjab and Haryana in an amicable way. It would be a tribute to the shared culture and history of both these states. It would also reinforce the unity of the farmers of Punjab and Haryana who witnessed the historic farmers' struggle. I can already see many sane heads nodding, but also raising a question: How is this possible? Isn't this a zero-sum game? Someone gains only when someone loses. Who would agree to be a loser? What kind of proposal would be acceptable to both sides, which are not willing to cede a drop of water? I believe this is not quite true. Over the last decade, I have repeatedly argued (including on the pages of *The Tribune*) that a resolution to the Punjab-Haryana SYL dispute is not as impossible as it is made out to be. It is difficult, as all complex disputes always are. But it is resolvable, provided we have the right frame of mind.

The right frame of mind requires acknowledging some uncomfortable truths. First, this dispute can be resolved only by a negotiated settlement, not by a court order, nor by passing laws. The current stalemate exists because Haryana has a court order in its favour, but Punjab has the possession. As any pragmatic farmer knows, possession is half ownership. It's time to acknowledge that the 25-year-old Supreme Court order cannot be enforced against the popular will of the sensitive border state of Punjab. The flip side of this point is to acknowledge that the state of Punjab cannot simply abrogate legally binding agreements or reverse land acquisition for the SYL canal. Such legal games from both sides can only sow the seeds of deep distrust, if not animosity, between the two neighbouring peoples in Punjab and Haryana. You can change everyone, but not your parents, not your neighbours. The second uncomfortable truth is that political leaders in both the states have been pretty irresponsible and have stoked this dispute. It is understandable that regional parties like the Akali Dal in Punjab and the Indian National Lok Dal in Haryana would wish to play it up for political gains,

while both their leaders have enjoyed excellent personal ties. The really shocking part is the role of 'national' political parties, which have shown complete disregard for national interest. First the Congress, then the BJP and now the Aam Aadmi Party—all have sanctified political doublespeak. The Punjab and Haryana units of the same party take exactly the opposite stands while the national leadership watches and winks. An ecologically uncomfortable truth: Both Punjab and Haryana are guilty of overstating their water requirements. The Green Revolution pushed the farmers in both the states into unsustainable water-use practices by growing

region face a drinking water crisis that needs addressing. Fortunately, the dispute is much smaller and clearly delimited than it is made out to be. There is no dispute about the internal allocation of the Sutlej waters, estimated to be 14.01 million acre feet (MAF). As per the original agreement, Punjab receives 8.15 MAF, while 4.4 MAF goes to Haryana and 1.46 MAF to Rajasthan. The dispute is about the remaining half, namely the sharing of the Ravi and Beas waters, estimated to be between 15.9 and 18.3 MAF. Here, the share of Punjab was first fixed at 22 per cent in an unfair deal by then Prime Minister Indira Gandhi in 1976. This was subsequently revised to 25 per cent by mutual agreement of all chief ministers in 1981 and then to 28 per cent by the Eradi Commission in 1987. At the most, the dispute is about 1 MAF of water, just about 3 per cent of the shared waters of the Sutlej-Ravi-Beas. Here is a five-point framework for a negotiated settlement.

One, the dispute about the quantum of water available should be settled immediately by allowing the Ravi and Beas Waters Tribunal (erstwhile Eradi Tribunal) to finalise its technical report. Two, the Central government must step in to plug the massive leakage of India's share of water to Pakistan so that the quantum of water to be shared increases.

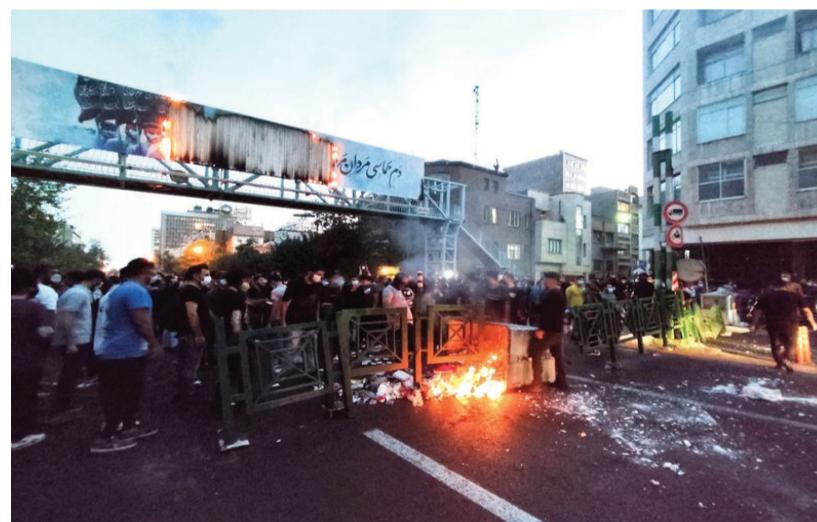
Three, Haryana and Rajasthan should agree to give up a slice of their previously agreed share of the Ravi-Beas waters to Punjab in recognition of the usage of that water by the farmers in the Malwa region of Punjab. Four, in return, Punjab should agree to an

assured time frame for the construction of the SYL canal and the unhindered passage of water through it thereafter. Five, the Centre should announce a special package for crop diversification in Punjab and Haryana, with a legal guarantee for remunerative returns for water-saving crops. This is just a broad framework which points to the possibility and feasibility of an agreement. The specifics have to be worked out by experts. The Supreme Court has already offered an opening by asking both the governments to come to a negotiated settlement.

Perhaps a start can be made in this direction by well-meaning public intellectuals and well-wishers of farmers on both sides coming together to evolve a common ground before this is given the shape of negotiated settlement.

## Iran unrest: Crackdowns deepen state-society gulf

The Tribune Editorial: The scale of the protests underscores a reality Tehran can no longer ignore.



point to a familiar script: an embattled regime seeking to crush dissent by fear rather than address its causes.

Economic hardship, international isolation, unemployment and curbs on personal freedoms have combined to produce a combustible mix.

For the global community, Iran's actions pose uncomfortable questions. Condemnation from Western capitals is routine, yet often selective, shaped more by geopolitics than principle. Sanctions and diplomatic isolation have failed to produce meaningful reform, while ordinary citizens continue to bear the brunt of economic and political hardship. India, which maintains a working relationship with Tehran, must strike a careful balance. This delicate navigation will be put to test as India engages with Iran's Foreign Minister Seyed Abbas Araghchi during his upcoming proposed visit. It is being projected as an outreach by Iran to deepen economic and strategic cooperation, particularly over the Chabahar port and shared regional interests.

## The shifting moral pendulum

We can't abandon pluralism as a value — the challenge is to retain its emancipatory potential



aside the principle under the given circumstances. Whether it is the influx of refugees escaping the autocratic regime in Venezuela or the need to protect American people/interests against, what some have called, narco-terrorism, it is these special circumstances that are said to justify setting aside the principle of non-aggression. The problem is that in international affairs, where national interest remains a driving force, situations that warrant deviation from even the most widely accepted norms are many and far too frequent, making any principle completely redundant. When it is coupled with a utilitarian ethic which privileges the interest of the many (often sacrificing the individual for the sake of perceived collective interest), we steadily move from one exception to the next. Principles are, by their very nature, abstract and formal. Applying them in a specific context requires reflection along with interpretation of what is entailed by the norm, or how one norm can be balanced with another: for example, telling the truth and preventing harm to a person. Situational ethics made us aware of these dilemmas and the unavoidability of interpretation. Today, when people say the situation warranted this action, the principle is all but forgotten. What we get is a means-end relationship where the end is defined by perceptions of one's interest rather than a shared moral norm. Actions are accordingly justified if they take us forward in pursuit of that self-stipulated goal. The question, therefore, is not of national

sovereignty, or what a government can do, or is free to do. Or, for that matter, what an individual is free to do. Whether it is individual interest, group interest or national interest, each gets revised and articulated afresh. Defining our ends with reference to what is so ephemeral and fluctuating can neither anchor freedom of the individual nor sustain social life or the international order. The present demands that we move to privilege the moral over the political; mutual recognition and respect over power and might; collective decision-making over violence; a shared set of principles over the pursuit of private interests. Without it we can neither be moral nor human.

ARE there any universal moral values? This is the question we need to confront in the second quarter of the 21st century. Although this doubt has been expressed even earlier, one can no longer shy away from it after the successful execution of Operation Absolute Resolve, wherein Venezuelan President Nicolás Maduro was captured and brought to the US. If much of the 20th century was devoted to creating space for pluralism — plural ways of life, plural knowledge systems, plural moral values, plural notions of development and progress — it is time to examine just why, and how, this emancipatory norm has been turned on its head, to rule out the possibility of any consensus around what is right, desirable and good. It appears that almost anything can be explained, justified, accepted and even applauded. Today, on most issues, public opinion is sharply divided and we have begun to accept that there can be no shared ground from which we can assess actions of individuals or states. Take the reactions of world leaders and opinion makers to the US action against Maduro. While some have condemned the action, calling it a violation of international law and national sovereignty, others have seen it as a much-needed intervention in the interest of the American people. A few feel that no tears need to be shed for the autocratic ruler.

These responses are significant as they highlight the gravity of the issue. If we have no shared norms to deal with extraordinary acts of aggression, then we can hardly expect them to surface in everyday life, where the stakes are not that high. This is the contemporary predicament; we must recognise it and reflect on how we reached this point. Only then can we hope to address it in any meaningful way.

There are no easy solutions available for us. It is no longer possible to turn the clock back and begin with some pre-

given universals or moral values. Historically, pluralism has been a liberating idea. It has been closely linked to the struggles for equality and freedom, respect and dignity. The colonised societies challenged the Western hegemony and its attempt to define the universal in its own image, by invoking value pluralism, and more specifically, plural world views, ways of thinking, living and organising institutions. Pluralism was not just an ally of the subjugated, excluded and marginalised. It was also instrumental in extending the sphere of individual freedom and choice. Endorsing plural notions of moral excellence along with ideas of good life prepared the ground for expanding choices and freedom to determine the life one wanted to lead. No longer could one say that a life devoted to reflection was superior to the one engaged in political action; or that the pursuit of reason was better than creative imagination.

Pluralism also sharpened our historical sensibilities. It made us realise that different values were pursued in different historical ages. If honour and social order were deeply valued in the mediaeval world, it's autonomy that has become the defining value of the modern world. We cannot, therefore, abandon or forsake pluralism as a value. The challenge is to retain its emancipatory potential while not sliding into an infinite regress where we are left only with subjective interests and preferences that are legitimised through some form of situational thinking. Those who have supported the US action have not questioned the principle of non-aggression. They have, however, justified the need to set

## Mumbai-Ahmedabad flight fails to land twice, returns after refueling in Jaipur



Rajkot .(Agency)

An Akasa Air flight from Mumbai failed to land at the Ahmedabad airport on two attempts and was diverted to Jaipur for refueling, before returning to the city in Gujarat. The third attempt was successful and a safe landing was achieved at 1:30 pm Tuesday.

Akasa Air flight QP 1781 took off from the Chhatrapati Shivaji Maharaj International Airport (CSMIA) in Mumbai at 9 am and was scheduled to land at the Sardar Vallabhbhai Patel International Airport (SVPIA) in Ahmedabad at 10 am.

Sources said that when the flight came in for landing, windy conditions led to an "unstable approach", prompting the pilot to abandon the attempt and was asked to "go around". The flight circled the airport for about 15-20 minutes as other scheduled flights were on approach at the airport, sources said, adding that the subsequent attempt at landing the Boeing 737 Max 8 passenger aircraft also ended in failure, leading the pilot to divert it to Jaipur. The aircraft was refueled at Jaipur airport, after which it returned to Ahmedabad and landed safely at about 1:30 pm.

## Hamamatsu, Gujarat Chambers of Commerce ink pact for economic cooperation

Ahmedabad.(Agency)

ON THE 50th Anniversary of the Indo-Japan Friendship association and the first anniversary of the friendship partnership between Shizuoka Prefecture and Gujarat State as Sister states and Ahmedabad and Hamamatsu as Sister Cities, the Hamamatsu Chamber of Commerce and Industry (HCCI) and the Gujarat Chamber of Commerce and Industry signed a Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) of Economic Cooperation on Tuesday to formalise and further the Sister City Partnership between Ahmedabad and Hamamatsu. The Japan delegation was led by Hiraki Sho, Vice Governor of Shizuoka Prefecture and Yusuke Nakano, Mayor of Hamamatsu City.

"The friendship agreement between Shizuoka Prefecture and Gujarat state was signed in December, 2024. Through this, we aim to foster exchanges in several fields including economic, tourism and culture," said Vice Governor Sho.

Former Ambassador of India to Japan Sujan Chinoy, Consul General in Mumbai Koji Yagi, Kaoru Saito, Chairman, The Hamamatsu Chamber of Commerce & Industry, Mukesh Patel, Honorary Consul of Japan in Ahmedabad, and other business leaders from Japan and Gujarat also attended the function.

## Sankranti rush leaves Hyderabad-Vijayawada highway choked

NALGONDA. (Agency)

A day ahead of Bhogi, National Highway (NH)-65, which connects Hyderabad to Vijayawada, turned into a slow-moving corridor as tens of thousands of people began their annual journey home. With cars packed with sweets and suitcases tied to rooftops, traffic surged on Tuesday as people headed to their native places in neighbouring Andhra Pradesh for Sankranti, which falls on Thursday. Compared to Monday, movement towards the Vijayawada side increased sharply, with vehicles crawling bumper to bumper for long stretches.

To ease congestion, special arrangements were made at the Panthangi toll plaza, where 10 additional counters were opened for vehicles heading towards Vijayawada. Handheld toll collection machines, supported by extra staff, were deployed to prevent vehicles from halting. Officials said over 50,000 vehicles crossed the Panthangi toll gate towards Vijayawada in the last 24 hours.

**Drones deployed for traffic management**  
Police teams have been pressed into service to regulate traffic, with drone cameras monitoring movement and helping clear congestion swiftly. The steady stream of traffic made it difficult even for pedestrians to cross the highway, adding to anxiety along roadside settlements. At identified black spots, movement slowed to a crawl, prompting police to caution motorists that even brief lapses could lead to accidents.

Advising caution during the festive rush, officials urged motorists to maintain speed limits and follow traffic rules.

## BMC elections: Fifteen 'friendly fights' leave voters scratching their head; seat-sharing disputes spark confusion

Mumbai. (Agency)

Despite the BJSena Mahayuti, Sena (UBT)MNS-NCP( SP) and CongressVBA alliances in the BMC polls, there are 15 friendly fights taking place. Political observers said that in an election where every seat matters, friendly fights could damage the prospects of the alliances.

While in some cases the friendly fights are a result of disagreements in seat sharing, in other cases these could also be part of a strategy to divide the opposition votes and make sure the preferred candidate wins.

Most of the friendly fights are in the Mahayuti — BJP vs Sena and BJP-Sena vs RPI (A). There is one Congress vs VBA contest in Bhandup.

As a result of the friendly fights despite the hammering together of alliances, there is an

atmosphere of confusion among the voters. Due to hard bargaining and negotiations between parties, alliance talks were not

able to file their nominations for four seats.

Later in some seats, multiple candidates from the same alliance filed nominations and many of them did not withdraw from the race. As a result there are 15 friendly fights," an observer said. Ramdas Athawale's RPI (A) is part of Mahayuti but his party has fielded official candidates in as many as 11 wards, five of them against the BJP and six against the Shiv Sena. Taking a dig at the Shiv Sena, assembly speaker and BJP MLA Rahul Narwekar said that the Shiv Sena candidate in Colaba's Ward No 225 will be defeated by more than 10,000 votes. From the ward, Rahul Narwekar's sister-in-law Harshita Narwekar and Shiv Sena's Sujata Sanap filed their

nominations. In Ward No. 226, where Rahul Narwekar's brother Makarand Narwekar is contesting the election, Shiv Sena's zonal office-bearer Deepak Pawar's wife Tejal has also filed her nomination as an independent.



## Thiruvananthapuram school takes up the 'Yakshagana' challenge

*Perhaps, due to the immense training it requires and the cost involved, schools in the capital have steered clear of the vibrant art form, a group item in state school arts festivals, since 2020.*

Thiruvananthapuram. (Agency)

Mastering Yakshagana is no joke. Featuring loud costumes and energetic steps, the dance drama from Karnataka, pitted as a distant cousin of Japanese Kabuki and Kerala's own folk arts, is more an emotion than an art form.

Perhaps, due to the immense training it requires and the cost involved, schools in the capital have steered clear of the vibrant art form, a group item in state school arts festivals, since 2020. That changes this year. One school from Thiruvananthapuram, the SKVHSS at Nanniyode in Palode, is sending a seven-member Yakshagana team for the 64th Kerala State School Arts Festival that begins in Thrissur on January 14. "Managing the expenses was hard," said Aneesh M S, a teacher who is coordinating the students' preparations for the festival with

the help of colleague Arjun M B. "The trainer was roped in from Kasaragod, and the costumes and other props cost us over 2 lakh. However, we wanted to do this. We wanted to send our kids for the event."

The school is also sending the maximum number of participants — 118 — to the fest. "That is twice the participants from last year," said Aneesh, on his way to Thrissur with the students. The Nanniyode school was in news last year for its steady resolve to make the arts fest accessible to its students, most of whom hail from economically-weaker families in the predominantly tribal belt of the

district. "Their guardians and parents work as farm hands in estates in and around Palode or go for MNREGA work. They can hardly afford the



children's studies, let alone the expenses of the highly-competitive school fest that requires skilled trainers and months of preparations," said Aneesh. Yet, the school has, for the past four

years, managed to students to the fest. Until last year, the onus of collecting funds fell on students too. "We used to hold events like scrap challenge and 'biriyani challenge' to raise funds. This time, we decided to let them concentrate just on training for the 27 events. It began in June under the supervision of some of the best trainers. The teachers raised '40 lakh; some contributed from their own pockets," said Aneesh.

At the district level, the school was top in almost all the events. "We have grown to be one of the best public schools in the district. This is a huge inspiration for the students who now feel they can dare to dream and explore their creative talents," said Aneesh.

## Process is in place for Senate elections, voter lists are being prepared: PU VC

Chandigarh. (Agency)

The year 2025 was an eventful one for Panjab University (PU), with several protests on campus, as well as the Panjab University Campus Students' Council (PUCSC) election in September, and several honours for the 143-year-old institution. With that behind, Prof Renu Vig, Vice-Chancellor, PU, in an informal interaction Tuesday, shared how

PU is looking forward to a year of academic excellence for its students, recruitment of new faculty, advanced facilities for its sports persons, and new courses for PU-affiliated colleges, opening of a multi-purpose hall on campus.

"Our focus is on strengthening academic quality and aligning with industry requirements. The mental health of our students is a priority, and we have several initiatives like a Thought Lab, a mentor and mentee programme etc on the cards," said Prof Vig. The Centre's October 28 notification restructuring Panjab University's Senate and Syndicate faced severe criticism and opposition from students and various political parties. The protest turned into an indefinite sit-in outside the VC Office, demanding the restoration of the 91-member Senate. On November 7, the union Ministry of Education



withdrew its notification to restructure the Senate and Syndicate. On November 9, PU initiated the process for Senate elections under the previous mode of Senate and submitted the detailed schedule for the forthcoming Senate elections to the Chancellor and Vice-President of India for approval.

"The process is clear and ongoing for the Senate elections, and notifications on it will be issued by the end of this month. We are preparing voter lists," said Prof Vig.

The budget for the elections is around three crore. The V-C said that PU's financial position is secure and there are no financial issues, with budgets sanctioned by both the Punjab government and the Central

government, with a post-matric scholarship of Rs 35 crore pending from the Punjab government.

Prof Vig expressed satisfaction with the implementation of the 7th Pay Commission and said that the issue of retirement age is pending with the High Court, with the retirement age of teachers in colleges being 65, and at PU it is 60. Prof Vig added that PU has adopted the UGC Regulation, 2018, in toto, and all affiliated colleges are legally bound to follow these regulations.

## Dalit farmer in UP beaten to death by neighbour, his relatives; police arrest 6

Lucknow. (Agency)

A 50-year-old Dalit farmer succumbed to injuries after he was allegedly assaulted by his neighbour and relatives in Uttar Pradesh's Kanpur Dehat district. Police said the neighbour, Govind Singh, and his wife are among six arrested. Police said the deceased, Devkinandan Paswan, passed away on Monday evening. His wife, Mamta, also sustained injuries during the altercation and is undergoing treatment.

Police said the incident took place in Malikpur village on Sunday evening when Singh allegedly came to the victim's house in an intoxicated state and started abusing him over a trivial issue. The victim and his wife objected, leading to a heated exchange between both sides, said police. Police said Singh's wife, who was also at the spot, then called her brother and other relatives from the neighbouring Kanpur district and they allegedly assaulted the victims, leaving them seriously injured.

When the deceased's daughter attempted to record the incident on her phone, police said the accused

allegedly snatched it and threw it. Upon receiving information about the incident, police personnel rushed to the spot and sent the injured victims to a nearby hospital for treatment. Given the seriousness of their injuries, doctors referred them to a hospital in Kanpur. Paswan's condition continued to deteriorate and he succumbed to his injuries, police said. Police said his daughter, Gomti, lodged a complaint at the Shivli police station against Singh, his wife, and some unidentified relatives and an FIR was registered on charges of physical assault among other sections.

After news of Paswan's death reached the village, the accused allegedly fled, said police, adding that raids are on to trace them. "We have arrested six persons in connection with the case, including the two persons named in the FIR and their relatives. Following the death of Paswan, the case has been converted into murder," said Praveen Kumar Singh, Station House Officer of Shivli police station. He added that all the arrested accused would be produced before the court on Tuesday.

## Minimum drops of 2.8 °C in Chandigarh | No Lohri respite for Tricity as temperatures dip further

Chandigarh .(Agency)

The day began under a thick blanket of dense fog across the Tricity on Tuesday, setting the tone for an intense cold spell a day after Chandigarh, Panchkula and Mohali shivered through a freezing Lohri night. Chandigarh recorded a minimum temperature of 2.8 degrees Celsius late on Tuesday — coldest of the season — dampening festive cheer despite blazing bonfires in neighbourhoods.

According to the Chandigarh Weather Observatory, the minimum temperature was four degrees below normal, while the maximum temperature during the day settled at 15.2 degrees Celsius,

three degrees below the seasonal average. High moisture levels in the air worsened the chill, with maximum relative humidity touching 94 per cent and minimum at 65 per cent, making the cold feel even more piercing. Dense fog engulfed the Tricity during early morning hours, drastically reducing visibility on major roads and highways. Meteorological officials reported very dense fog not only in Chandigarh but also in several parts of Punjab and Haryana. Commuters were seen driving cautiously, while early morning traffic moved at a slow pace due to poor visibility conditions.

While residents battled the biting cold, air quality also remained a concern. As per data released by the Central Pollution Control Board (CPCB) at 4 pm on January 13, Chandigarh recorded an Air Quality Index (AQI) of 234, placing it in the 'Poor' category. Panchkula fared even worse with an AQI of 284, also classified as 'Poor'. Experts attribute the poor air quality to prevailing winter conditions. As per weather department experts, low wind speed, temperature inversion and persistent fog trap

pollutants close to the surface, leading to a spike in pollution levels, especially during night and early morning hours. The weather department has also advised people, particularly children, senior citizens and those with respiratory ailments, to limit outdoor exposure and wear masks when stepping out. **Cold, foggy days ahead**

The India Meteorological Department (IMD) has forecast the continuation of cold and foggy conditions across the Tricity over the next five days. On January 14 and 15, the region is expected to witness mostly cloudy skies accompanied by dense fog, particularly during morning and night hours. The maximum temperature is likely to range between 14 degrees Celsius and 16 degrees Celsius, while the minimum temperature may hover between 5 degrees Celsius and 6 degrees Celsius.



# South Korea, Europe, US counter fog with tech, India does it with regrets

**Haryana's Nuh district on the Delhi-Mumbai Expressway saw multiple early-morning crashes linked to dense fog, killing several, including a security force member, and injuring others.**

**New Delhi.(Agency)**  
The National Capital Region (NCR) has benefitted greatly from the Centre's expressway push. It has got a network of high-speed road corridors. With the speed benefit has come the bane of road accidents in winter months.

Haryana's Nuh district on the Delhi-Mumbai Expressway saw multiple early-morning crashes linked to dense fog, killing several, including a security force member, and injuring others. Observers say that poor visibility and uncontrolled speeds have become primary factors for such crashes. Government data for 2022 and 2023 shows that foggy and misty conditions accounted for over 30,000 accidents each year, causing over 14,000 deaths.

Earlier, an official compilation under parliamentary queries noted that 2019 saw over 35,000 accidents, reflecting how deeply embedded the problem is in India's winter transport landscape. Data from 2021,



published by the Union Ministry of Road Transport, recorded over 13,000 fog-linked deaths and more than 25,000 injuries, affirming that the seasonal risk.

Despite the scale of the problem, experts point out that India's fog safety interventions remain limited. State authorities stick to just issuing advisories on reduced speed, use of

low-beam lights, hazard awareness, and clean windscreens. In contrast, several countries with frequent fog conditions have integrated technological systems that actively detect and mitigate low-visibility hazards. For instance, South Korea's Road Hazard Weather Information System links real-time fog density measurements to variable message signs, audio alerts, and LED warnings on major expressways.

They integrate meteorological data with navigation services to inform drivers ahead of hazardous conditions and automatically adjust advisories. Ongoing expansion of this network aims to cover more corridors by 2026.

In Europe and the US, infrared visibility meters, real-time fog detection systems, adaptive variable speed limits, and fog algorithm support traffic management software help reduce accident rates by triggering automated warnings and enforced speed reductions long before drivers enter danger zones.

**Cold conditions prevail in city; air quality very poor**

**New Delhi.(Agency)**  
Delhi reeled under intense cold conditions on Wednesday, with the city recording a minimum temperature of 3.8 degrees Celsius. Safdarjung, the city's primary observatory, recorded a minimum temperature of 3.8 degrees Celsius, 3.6 notches below normal, the India Meteorological Department (IMD) said. Palam recorded a minimum temperature of 4.4 degrees Celsius, 2.9 notches below normal, and Lodhi Road recorded a minimum temperature of 3.6 degrees Celsius, 2.4 notches below normal.

The Ridge recorded a low of 4.6 degrees Celsius, 3.5 notches below normal, and Ayanagar recorded a low of 4 degrees Celsius, 3.1 notches below normal. According to the IMD, cold wave conditions are declared when minimum

temperatures fall 4.5 to 6.4 degrees below normal.

The maximum temperature for the day is expected to settle around 20 degrees Celsius. Delhi's air quality deteriorated to the 'very poor' category with the Air Quality Index (AQI) settling at 354, according to Central Pollution Control Board (CPCB) data. The CPCB's SAMER app showed that 33 monitoring stations recorded air quality in the 'very poor' category, four in 'severe' and two in 'poor'.

Jahangirpuri recorded the worst air quality with an AQI of 420, falling in the 'severe' category. An AQI between zero and 50 is considered 'good', 51 to 100 'satisfactory', 101 to 200 'moderate', 201 to 300 'poor', 301 to 400 'very poor', and 401 to 500 'severe'.

**Atishi video row: Punjab cops get three days to file reply**

**Atishi and other leaders claimed that the video had been 'tampered with by the BJP'.**

**New Delhi.(Agency)**

Three Punjab Police officers who were issued notices by the Delhi Assembly over an FIR registered against Delhi minister Kapil Mishra for allegedly circulating a "doctored" video of AAP leader Atishi have sought 10 days to submit their replies, sources said. The notices were issued to Punjab DGP, special DGP (cybercrime) and Jalandhar police commissioner for "breach of Delhi Assembly's privileges".

Meanwhile, Assembly Speaker Vijender Gupta, in a press conference on Monday, said, "Punjab Police have replied asking for ten days' time, but looking at the seriousness of the matter, the Delhi Assembly Secretariat has given them only three days to submit the full report by January 15." As soon as the controversy emerged,

Atishi and other leaders claimed that the video had been "tampered with by the BJP. Gupta stated that while the Punjab Police claimed that FIR registration and forensic examination of the video clip were carried out within hours, they have sought 10 days to reply to the Assembly's notices.

"This raises serious questions about the independence and impartiality of the investigating agency," he remarked. He asserted that the matter relates directly to the jurisdiction of the Delhi Legislative Assembly and that all original videos and documents are the property of the Assembly.

He questioned how the Punjab government initiated a forensic examination without even contacting the Delhi Assembly to seek its permission to use the video recording clip.

That too, when already a forensic examination of the video clip was ordered by the Speaker on January 8, according to the demand of the Opposition AAP itself, he pointed out. Gupta stated that this sequence of events appears aimed not at clarification of facts but at "creating confusion and misleading the public", as sentiments were already hurt.

## Police Probe Extortion, Gang Link In 3 Firing Incidents In Delhi

**New Delhi.(Agency)**  
Three separate firing incidents, allegedly linked to gangsters, were reported from different parts of the national capital during the intervening night of Monday and Tuesday, police said.

The Delhi Police is investigating a possible common link between the attacks, which targeted a gym in Paschim Vihar, a residence in Vinod Nagar, and a house in Green Park Extension. The police are examining whether the same group of assailants or handlers were involved in the string of shootings.

These incidents come after a similar attack on January 2, where over 20 rounds were fired at a property dealer's car in northwest Delhi's Rohini. The case was linked to extortion threats from foreign-based gangster Himanshu Bhau. Police



sources said the sequence of events suggests a concerted effort to intimidate businessmen through coordinated gunfire and social media claims.

The first incident took place at a gym in outer Delhi's Paschim Vihar, where two motorcycle-borne men fired two rounds. While no injuries were reported, a social media post surfaced shortly after, claiming responsibility for the attack. The post, purportedly made in the name of the Lawrence

Bishnoi gang by an individual identified as Randeep Malik, suggested the gym was targeted because the owner ignored the gang's calls.

The post warned the owner of a fate similar to Nadir Shah, a gym co-owner who was shot dead in the Greater Kailash area in September 2024. Police recovered a live cartridge from the spot and have formed multiple teams to track the shooters. "We are verifying the authenticity of the social media post. At this stage, it is premature to comment on the involvement of any gang," a senior police officer said. A few hours later, around midnight, two men on a motorcycle fired three to four rounds in the air outside the residence of Jitender Gupta, a property dealer in east Delhi's Vinod Nagar. No injuries were reported.

## Rs 64 crore project to revamp Nangloi-Najafgarh road

**New Delhi.(Agency)**

To reduce traffic congestion and bring relief to commuters in West Delhi, the Delhi government will take up a road and drain repair project along the Nangloi-Najafgarh road, CM Rekha Gupta said on Tuesday. Lt Governor VK Saxena, along with Gupta, laid the foundation stone of a Rs 64.04 crore project under which new stormwater drains will be constructed and existing drains on the road will be upgraded. Saxena recalled that in September 2024 he had visited several areas, including Mundka, Nangloi, Kanjhawala, Phirni Road and Rohtak Road, where the situation was extremely dilapidated. "Sewage water was flowing on the roads, the roads were badly damaged and conditions were miserable due to potholes and filth. I had then directed the government to take immediate corrective action," the L-G said.



However, due to neglect by the previous government, the work could not progress, he added.

"The Delhi government is working on improving the city's entire drainage and stormwater management system using new and modern approaches. Once the project is completed, drainage across the entire corridor will improve, roads will be upgraded and commuters will get significant relief from traffic bottlenecks," the chief minister said.

In addition, the road is being strengthened and reconstructed, and crash barriers are being built in the central verge to ensure safe and effective drainage even during the monsoon season, she added.

**Govt is working on improving the city's entire drainage: CM**

Chief Minister Rekha Gupta said, "The Delhi government is working on improving the city's entire drainage and stormwater management system using new and modern approaches.

Once the project is completed, drainage across the entire corridor will improve, roads will be upgraded and commuters will get significant relief from traffic bottlenecks. Also, the road is being reconstructed."

## Residents across Delhi back Q-commerce decision

**New Delhi.(Agency)**

Residents across the national capital welcomed quick-commerce platform Blinkit's decision to remove its 10-minute delivery promise, calling it a necessary correction to a business model that many felt encouraged unsafe working conditions for delivery partners. The move came days after gig workers associated with the platform went on strike on December 31, demanding safer delivery timelines and fairer work conditions.

Several Delhi residents said the hyper-fast delivery promise had long been a source of discomfort, particularly given the city's congested roads, erratic traffic patterns and extreme weather conditions.



"You could sense the pressure delivery workers were under. Ten minutes in Delhi traffic is unrealistic and dangerous," said Aditya, a resident of

December 31 and achieved one of the key demands of that strike. The struggles like this teach the workers and prepare them for an even more resolute fight for their just demands in the future."

Meanwhile, AAP MP Raghav Chadha, a day after releasing a teaser on social media in which he was seen dressed as a Blinkit delivery agent, posted on X on Tuesday, "Satyamev Jayate. Together, we have won. I am deeply grateful to the Central Government for its timely, decisive and compassionate intervention in enforcing removal of the '10-minute delivery' branding from quick-commerce platforms. This is a

much-needed step because when '10 minutes' is printed on a rider's T-shirt, jacket or bag and a timer runs on the customer's screen, the pressure is real, constant and dangerous."

## Vande Mataram, Banda Bahadur: Dyal Singh College's long and uneasy battle over a name change

**New Delhi.(Agency)**

Delhi University is considering renaming Dyal Singh (Evening) College after Sikh warrior Banda Singh Bahadur, a move that has triggered sharp opposition from the college's staff association. The Indian Express has learnt. Faculty members The Indian Express spoke to said they learnt of the proposed renaming after it was publicly announced by Vice-Chancellor Yogesh Singh last month.

Speaking about the historical legacy of Banda Singh Bahadur, V-C Singh had said in his speech on the occasion of Vir Bal Diwas on December 26: "... Today, as Banda Singh Bahadur is being spoken about, although the decision is to be finalised... we wish to name Dyal Singh Evening College after Banda Singh Bahadur." Both the Dyal Singh (Morning) and Evening colleges run from the same building, even after the evening college became a day college in 2017. At the time,

previous attempts at renaming the college college," it added.

The Indian Express reached out to Deshbandhu and Ram Lal Anand colleges... They were both Morning and Evening." "We shouldn't have two colleges with the same name running as Day Colleges," he said.

At the centre of the dispute is Clause 12 of the transfer deed dated June 22, 1978, through which Dyal Singh College was taken over by DU. The clause reads: "It has been decided by the university that the college, after its takeover... will continue to be known as Dyal Singh College." In a letter sent to the V-C, members of the Executive Council, DU Teachers' Association, college staff association underlined that any violation of this clause could lead to withdrawal of land rights "thereby compelling the college to relocate from its present premises". It added that stakeholders "strongly oppose any such move."

Express, Registrar Vikas Gupta said, "The matter shall be placed before the Executive Council..." Stating that both Dyal Singh Morning and Evening colleges will function from the same building, Gupta added, "... It [name

## NEWS BOX

## After WPL snub, Australia captain Alyssa

New Delhi. (Agency)

Veteran PV Sindhu made a tremendous return from injury at the Malaysia Open. The ace shuttler, who was out of competition since October, raced to the semi-finals of the first competition of the year, showing that she was ready to go deep in this year's competitions. The shuttler spoke about her rehabilitation ahead of her first match at the India Open Super 750 and stated that she did not want to rush things this time around. The choice was perhaps the correct one, as the season runs deep, with the World Championships and the Asian Games set to be hosted in August and September in India and Japan respectively. Sindhu revealed that she had suffered a slight tear in her toe and wanted to ensure she returned at full fitness instead of rushing back at 50 percent. "In badminton, footwork is everything. You need to be quick on your toes, so it was important to address it properly before coming back," Sindhu told the media on Monday, January 12.

"I wanted to make sure I was completely injury-free and back to 100 percent before returning to competition. I felt that was a smarter decision than playing at 50 percent, going on court without confidence and risking things further," she added. Her rehabilitation process took her to the United



States, where she worked with Wayne Lombard, a figure she has trusted through Olympic cycles before. "I had worked with him earlier, before and during the Olympics, and we resumed training together around two months ago, soon after the injury. Things have been going well so far." "The focus has not been on one specific area but more on overall body management and recovery. What worked five or 10 years ago does not necessarily work now," she said.

"There are days when recovery is more important than pushing through a gym session. Understanding your body and managing it properly is crucial." Sindhu said she also spent some time in Atlanta during her rehabilitation.

## Henry Nicholls backs inexperienced New Zealand side to bounce back in Rajkot

NEW DELHI. (Agency)

New Zealand are eyeing an opportunity to put their learnings from the first ODI into practice as they aim to make a comeback in the second fixture of the three-match series on Wednesday, January 14, at the Niranjan Shah Stadium, Khandheri, Rajkot. The Kiwis lost the series opener by four wickets despite making India toil hard during their run chase in the second innings.

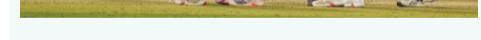
As New Zealand look to level the series in the second match, star batter Henry Nicholls acknowledged their inexperience on the bowling front and placed the onus on the batters to bat deep once they get their eye in. New Zealand got off to a great start in the first ODI, with the openers adding 117 runs for the first wicket, but they failed to capitalise on it during the death overs.

"From a batting point of view, we did a lot of



things pretty well and it's a case of us being able to do them for a bit longer. Devon and I (had a) partnership at the top—if one of us is able to bat for an extended period of time" Nicholls said during the pre-match press conference. "That's always the case in one-day cricket. If you're able to have wickets in hand and a set batter going through to the last 15 or 10 overs, then it certainly extends your death-overs period," he added. Nicholls also spoke about the challenges of bowling to stalwarts such as Rohit Sharma and Virat Kohli and backed their inexperienced bowling unit to find ways to put them under pressure.

"That's the challenge when you come over here, and certainly as a young group—even as an experienced group—when you play against players who have played that much cricket. But to see it firsthand in the first game, and the way the guys adapted, particularly from a bowling point of view, bowling to those guys and finding ways to try and put them under pressure, was encouraging," he said.



## Grace Hayden on her dad's gamble on Joe Root, India connection and foray into tennis

**Grace Hayden talks about her father Matthew Hayden's risky Joe Root bet, the overwhelming love she receives from Indian fans, and why she's excited to step beyond cricket and into the world of tennis broadcasting.**

New Delhi. (Agency)

Grace Hayden, daughter of former Australian cricketer Matthew Hayden, has quickly carved out her own space in the world of sports broadcasting. A familiar face in cricket coverage, she has built a strong connection with Indian audiences through her on-ground presence, candid interviews, and growing social media following. Known for her ease with top athletes and her natural on-camera confidence, Grace is now expanding her horizons beyond cricket. In this conversation on Sports Today, Grace opens up about her journey in sports presentation, her deepening



bond with India, and her excitement about stepping into the tennis world. From lessons learned from her legendary father and viral moments on social media to friendships, nerves behind the mic, and her love for Indian food and culture, Grace reflects on a career that continues to evolve—driven by curiosity, authenticity, and a genuine love for sport.

### FULL INTERVIEW

Interviewer: She's someone who's got great access as far as top athletes are concerned, the daughter of former Australian cricketer Matthew Hayden and now a very prominent

figure as far as sports presentation is concerned. Grace Hayden is joining us today on Sports Today. Grace, thank you so much for taking the time. How are you doing? Interviewer: No doubt about the fact that you're garnering a lot of love and attention here on Indian shores. How does that make you feel?

Grace Hayden: Oh, I feel so loved. Honestly, I've always had such a great friendship, and honestly, it feels like my second family now that I've spent so much time over in India—obviously in the cricket realm, but I'm moving into tennis now, which is really

really exciting. I've always been a lover of all sports. So to tap into the tennis side, I'm really pumped to be doing it. But yeah, I guess I am really lucky in the sense that I have such a great connection with the people of India, whether that be food, whether that be culture, whether that be cricket, and now it'll be tennis.

Interviewer: Yeah, you know, you've perfectly taken me into my second question because everyone, including myself, has seen you more on the cricket field, now onto the tennis court. How excited are you about the prospect? Grace Hayden: Oh, well, don't be worried now, I'll definitely still be in the cricket realm. But tennis is just a new challenge that I'll be adding to my little bow. But yeah, I think it'll be a great new challenge. Obviously, I love all sports, and tennis—especially the Australian Open—is such an exciting time of year for me. I mean, Melbourne just is perfection in January in terms of cricket, and then it's obviously got the Australian Open as well. So yeah, I guess to be really extending out into tennis, I'm really excited to take on the challenge. And being an athlete in the past myself, new challenges are always great motivation, and I love taking on new things.

## Tennis player forgets tie-break rules, celebrates early and suffers crushing loss

NEW DELHI. (Agency)

Sebastian Ofner's Australian Open qualifying campaign unravelled extraordinarily after a moment of confusion turned a winning position into a crushing defeat against Nishesh Basavareddy. The Austrian appeared firmly in control when he raced to a 6-1 lead in the deciding-set tiebreak against the 20-year-old American. When he moved further ahead at 7-1, Ofner mistakenly believed the match was over and began celebrating, striding toward the net. What Ofner seemed to forget was that final-set tiebreaks at the Australian Open are played to 10 points, not seven. The realisation came quickly, and the expression on his face said it all as he returned to the baseline to resume play. By then, the momentum had shifted. Basavareddy seized the opening and responded with remarkable composure, winning eight of the next nine points to flip the match on its head. He eventually closed out a dramatic 4-6, 6-4, 7-6 (13-11) victory, leaving Ofner stunned by the sudden collapse. Basavareddy celebrated the



turnaround with a pointed 'choking' gesture before raising his fist, while Ofner could only shake hands and reflect on a moment he will likely want to forget.

### WHO IS NISHESH BASAVAREDDY?

The win adds another chapter to Basavareddy's rapidly emerging story. Born in the United States to parents of Indian origin, the young American has been attracting attention for his fearless approach and rapid rise through the ranks. He first caught the spotlight at the Australian Open last year after receiving a wildcard into the main draw. On his Grand Slam debut, Basavareddy stunned spectators by taking the opening set off Novak Djokovic, showing no signs of being overawed by the occasion despite eventually losing the match. That performance earned praise from Djokovic himself and announced Basavareddy as a player to watch. Known for his aggressive baseline game and mental resilience, he has continued to build momentum through strong results and eye-catching displays.

## T20 World Cup: Visas denied to Pakistan-origin USA players. Here's the truth

New Delhi. (Agency)

The controversy surrounding the T20 World Cup 2026 shows no signs of easing, with reports emerging that USA players of Pakistani origin have been denied visas to travel to India for the tournament. The event is scheduled to begin on February 7 and will be jointly hosted by India and Sri Lanka.

The issue came to light after USA cricketer Ali Khan posted an Instagram story suggesting that his visa application for the tournament had been denied. Ali Khan shared a photograph of himself dining at a restaurant with a teammate, captioning it, "India visa denied but KFC for the win." However, according to a report by Cricbuzz, the visa clearance process remains ongoing and there has been no formal rejection. Officials

have indicated that the applications are still under review as part of established operating procedures. Four USA cricketers of Pakistani origin—Ali Khan, Shayan Jahangir, Mohammad Mohsin and Ehsan Adil—are currently awaiting visa confirmation after completing their appointments at the Indian

Embassy in Sri Lanka on Tuesday, January 13. The USA squad is presently in Sri Lanka as part of the final phase of their preparations for the tournament. The report further stated that visas were not issued at the appointment stage but have not been formally rejected either. The Indian Embassy has informed the USA team management that while some of the required documentation has been received, additional information is still awaited from the Ministry of External Affairs, following which the visa process will proceed further. Visa applications involving players of Pakistani origin have historically been subject to additional administrative scrutiny, irrespective of nationality or team representation.



have indicated that the applications are still under review as part of established operating procedures. Four USA cricketers of Pakistani origin—Ali Khan, Shayan Jahangir, Mohammad Mohsin and Ehsan Adil—are currently awaiting visa confirmation after completing their appointments at the Indian

## WPL 2026: Meg Lanning set for emotional reunion as Capitals, Warriorz seek redemption

NEW DELHI. (Agency)

January 14 promises to be an emotional occasion for Meg Lanning and the Delhi Capitals as former allies reunite when the Capitals take on the UP Warriorz in Navi Mumbai on Wednesday. The separation after last season has not been kind to either side, with both teams yet to open their account this campaign, having lost their first two matches. The split has offered little relief as both teams enter the clash desperate to halt their losing streaks. The Capitals began with a heavy 50-run defeat to the Mumbai Indians before suffering another setback, allowing the Gujarat Giants to snatch victory from the jaws of defeat despite Laura Wolvaardt appearing set to guide them home.

CAN WARRIORZ BOUNCE BACK? The Warriorz, meanwhile, have endured a torrid start, particularly with the ball. Their struggles were compounded by a fragile batting display against Royal Challengers Bengaluru, though Deepa Sharma and Deandra Dottin showed resilience to salvage

some pride. Lanning, too, has been unable to make a telling impact with the bat, managing a strike rate of just 91.66 so far. With the tournament quickly slipping away, the stakes could not be higher. Another defeat would severely dent their hopes of finishing in the top three. The Capitals currently carry a net run rate of -1.350, while the Warriorz are worse off at -2.443, underlining the urgency not just to win, but to win convincingly.

WPL 2026, DC-W vs UPW-W: Head-to-head

The Capitals have dominated the Warriorz, winning four of their six meetings so far. The two sides have faced each other only once at the DY Patil Stadium, where the Capitals secured a 42-run victory, driven by an all-round performance from Jess Jonassen. WPL 2026, DC-W vs UPW-W: Weather and pitch conditions

The Navi Mumbai pitch has been excellent for batting, with an average first-innings score of 184. Teams are likely to opt to field first, as the surface is expected to remain consistent and dew could play a role later in the evening. There is no forecast of rain, with temperatures hovering around the 28-degree Celsius mark.

WPL 2026, DC-W vs UPW-W: Predicted Playing XIs

Delhi Capitals Women (Playing XI): Lizelle Lee (wk), Shafali Verma, Laura Wolvaardt, Jemimah Rodrigues (c), Marizanne Kapp, Niki Prasad, Chinelle Henry, Sneha Rana, Minnu Mani, Nandini Sharma, Shree Charani Mumbai Indians Women (Playing XI): Amelia Kerr, G Kamalini (wk), Nat Sciver-Brunt, Harmanpreet Kaur (c), Nicola Carey, Sajeevan Sajana, Amanjot Kaur, Poonam Khemnar, Triveni Vasistha, Shabnim Ismail, Sanskriti Gupta

WPL 2026, DC-W vs UPW-W: Match Prediction

The Capitals will head into the contest as favourites, though only marginally so. Their bowlers were tested by Sophie Devine early on but recovered well in the latter stages, while the batters impressed against Gujarat despite stumbling in the final over.



## Muted start on Dalal Street as benchmark indices drift lower

New Delhi.(Agency)

Benchmark stock market indices opened lower on Wednesday, continuing their downturn due to lack of fresh positive triggers as weak global cues weighed in on investor sentiment.

The S&P BSE Sensex was up marginally by 15.58 points to 83,643.27, while the NSE Nifty50 added 7.95 points to 25,740.25 as of 9:23 am.

Dr. VK Vijayakumar, Chief Investment Strategist, Geojit Investments Limited, said that since the beginning of the year 2026 geopolitical events are dominating the global news. "Some of these events may have serious impact on the markets, but the markets have not been impacted significantly. Stock investment can be frustrating at times; it can disappoint for long. What smart investors should do in uncertain volatile times like now is to remain invested and continue investing in fairly-qualified quality growth stocks for the long-term," he added. Tata Steel was the top gainer in early trade, rising 1.62%, followed by Axis Bank, which gained 1.03%. NTPC moved up 0.96%, Bharat Electronics added 0.60%, and Mahindra and Mahindra was higher by 0.38%, supporting the indices at the open.

On the downside, pressure was seen in several stocks. TCS was the biggest loser, slipping 1.14%, followed by Sun Pharmaceutical Industries, which fell 0.99%. Asian Paints declined 0.97%, Kotak Mahindra Bank was down 0.75%, and Bajaj Finserv eased 0.62% in early trading. "President Trump's order imposing 25% tariffs on countries trading with Iran is unlikely to impact India significantly since India-Iran trade is small at around \$1.6 billion," said Vijayakumar.

"China will be impacted hugely. How the Iranian crisis will unfold and how the U.S. reacts to the developments in Iran remain to be seen. The use of tariffs as a weapon by Trump means the world is likely to suffer from a tariff-ridden trade system for sometime," he added.

## Indian IT companies raise fresher salaries for elite AI roles

New Delhi.(Agency)

Indian IT companies are finally breaking their long-standing fresher pay ceiling. After years of entry-level salaries stuck near Rs 8 lakh, top firms like Infosys and HCLTech are now offering Rs 20 lakh-plus packages for select graduates with AI, data and deep-tech skills. HCLTech has reworked its fresher compensation model. The company is offering Rs 18 lakh to Rs 22 lakh per annum to what it internally calls an "elite cadre" of engineers specialising in data and AI, digital engineering, cybersecurity and enterprise skills. Speaking at the company's December-quarter earnings call, HCLTech Chief People Officer Ram Sundararajan said: "Two quarters back, we did very proactively talk about the elite engineers. We had shared that our entry-level salaries will have the elite cadre earning 3X-4X of the regular hires anywhere between Rs 18 lakhs to 22 lakhs." Infosys also recently said that the entry-level compensation for specialised technology roles now goes up to Rs 21 lakh per annum. The company is launching off-campus hiring for 2025 engineering graduates, with roles such as Specialist Programmer and Digital Specialist Engineer offering packages ranging from Rs 7 lakh to Rs 21 lakh.

Only Few Qualify

Although industry experts said that only a small fraction of graduates qualify for these high-paying roles. "Very few, only close to 1-2% of freshers qualify for salaries over 20 lakh," Neeti Sharma, CEO of TeamLease Digital said. "Even within IITs and top engineering institutes, this applies to a very small subset." She added that advanced AI, cloud and data roles face a 70-80% skill gap.

## New record! China trade surplus hits \$1.2 trillion - what's the outlook for 2026

New Delhi.(Agency)

China registered a trade surplus of nearly \$1.2 trillion in 2025, the government reported on Wednesday. The record figure comes as strong exports to international markets offset slowing shipments to the United States.

According to customs data cited by AP, the country's exports rose 5.5% to \$3.77 trillion last year, while imports remained steady at \$2.58 trillion. The nation's trade surplus in 2024 had stood at \$992 billion. In December, exports rose 6.6% from the previous year in dollar terms, surpassing economists' expectations and improving on November's 5.9% year-on-year increase. At the same time, imports in the last month of 2025, rose 5.7% year-on-year, compared with a 1.9% increase in November. Though shipments to the United States have fallen drastically after President Donald Trump's return to office and his escalation of the trade war with China, the decline has been largely offset by exports to South America, Southeast Asia, Africa and Europe.

China's economic growth has maintained its annual rate close to the official target of about 5%, thanks to strong exports. Other countries, meanwhile, are facing concerns about the impact of cheap imports on local industries. Last month, the head of the International Monetary Fund urged China to address economic imbalances and accelerate its shift away from export dependence by boosting domestic demand and investment. Meanwhile, a prolonged downturn in the property sector, triggered by the authorities' crackdown on excessive borrowing and subsequent developer defaults, continues to weigh on consumer confidence and domestic spending.

## Budget 2026: Apparel sector seeks higher interest subvention rate; focused market scheme

**Apparel exporters have written to the Ministry of Finance seeking measures for the sector that could help them navigate through the challenges**

New Delhi.(Agency)

The apparel sector, which is one of the worst hit due to the US tariff, expects the upcoming Budget 2026 to introduce a Focus Market Scheme (FMS) primarily for exports to the US, a higher interest subvention under Export Promotion Mission (EPM) and also a reduction in GST on textile and apparel machinery from 18% to 5%.

Apparel exporters have also written to the Ministry of Finance seeking measures for the sector that could help them navigate



through the challenges. "The apparel sector is not seeking blanket support, but targeted, temporary, and growth-oriented interventions that address extraordinary external shocks, safeguard employment, and strengthen India's position as a reliable global sourcing hub," said A Sakthivel, Chairman, Apparel Export Promotion Council (AEP). With the US imposing a 50% tariff on textile and apparel exports the cost competitiveness of the Indian exporters has been severely

affected. ICRA expects the revenues of apparel exporters to decline by 6-9% in FY2026. Thus, AEP recommended the introduction of a Focus Market Scheme specifically for apparel exports to the US. "Under the proposed scheme, exporters should be provided freely transferable incentive scrips equivalent to 20% of the FOB value of exports, aligned with the period for which the additional U.S. tariff remains in force. This would directly offset the tariff burden, ease liquidity

pressures, and help Indian exporters retain market share," stated AEP.

Additionally, apparel exporters seek for higher interest subvention under Export Promotion Mission (EPM). Under the EPM, an interest subvention of 2.75% with a cap of Rs 50 lakh per year is currently available to the exporters. However, they flagged that it is not sufficient and requested an increase in the interest subvention rate to 5%, along with relaxation of the Rs 50 lakh annual cap, to meaningfully support MSME exporters.

Budget 2026 should revise interest support for exporters to lower borrowing costs considering moratorium for MSMEs in tariff-hit sectors, expand credit guarantees to encourage bank lending, and widen ECGC cover to protect against payment risks," said Krishan Arora, Partner and Indirect Tax Leader, Grant Thornton Bharat. Exporters also advocated for reintroducing the 15% Concessional Tax Rate under Section 115BAB, which was discontinued in March 2024.

## BCCL IPO allotment out: Check your status, listing date, and GMP

New Delhi.(Agency)

The first IPO of 2026 has set the primary market ablaze with massive investor demand, and attention has now shifted to allotment as Bharat Coking Coal IPO allotment has been finalised, with investors eagerly checking whether they have received shares in one of the most heavily subscribed issues seen in recent times.

With subscriptions running into triple digits and the grey market premium, or GMP, remaining strong, expectations around listing gains continue to stay high. Gaurav Garg, Research Analyst at Lemmon Markets Desk, said, "The strong response to the Bharat Coking Coal IPO underscores investor confidence in the company's monopolistic position in India's coking coal segment and its long-term demand visibility." The anchor book was fully subscribed at 1x, with 11.88 crore shares allotted, raising Rs 273.13 crore, providing early



means more control over savings and potentially more certainty in post-retirement income. NPS remains a long-term product, but it is no longer as inflexible as before.

### WHAT HAS CHANGED IN EPF

and other genuine needs. Claim processing has been streamlined, cutting paperwork and reducing delays. For salaried employees, this shifts EPF from being only a retirement pool to also serving as a temporary financial buffer during job loss, medical emergencies, or major life expenses, without fully dismantling long-term savings.

### WHY THIS MATTERS

Taken together, these changes signal a broader policy shift. Retirement savings are no longer entirely untouchable, but they remain protected from unrestricted use. The intent is controlled access with flexibility when required and discipline when necessary.

The Employees' Provident Fund is becoming easier to access, especially during periods of financial stress. The Employees' Provident Fund Organisation (EPFO) has simplified withdrawal processes, expanded digital services, and allowed higher access to funds during unemployment

However, it is important to note that easier withdrawals can help in difficult times, but frequent or poorly planned access can weaken retirement security. Understanding the revised rules is now as important as monitoring the balance itself.



institutional validation to the issue," he added.

**FINAL SUBSCRIPTION NUMBERS**  
Bharat Coking Coal IPO saw extraordinary demand across all investor categories by the time bidding closed on January 13, 2026. BCCL IPO was subscribed 143.85 times overall.

Retail investors subscribed the issue 49.37 times, qualified institutional buyers (QIB) subscribed it 310.81 times, excluding anchor investors, and non-institutional investors (NII) subscribed the issue 240.49 times. The sharp jump in QIB and NII participation on the final day highlighted aggressive bidding as investors rushed to secure allotment.

**HOW TO CHECK ALLOTMENT STATUS**  
Investors who applied for BCCL IPO can check their allotment status online through the Bombay Stock Exchange (BSE) website or the portal of KFin Technologies Limited, which is the official registrar for the issue.

## Dalal Street's worst new year in a decade. Should investors worry

New Delhi.(Agency)

Dalal Street has started 2026 on a weak note, extending the pressure seen through much of last year. After being among the worst-performing major global markets in 2025, Dalal Street has continued to lag peers at the start of the new year, weighed down by global uncertainty and cautious investor sentiment. Data from the National Stock Exchange and the Bombay Stock Exchange show that the Nifty 50 has declined around 2.5% in the first eight trading sessions of 2026, while the Sensex has fallen about 1.93% between January 1 and January 10. This marks the worst start to a calendar year since 2016, when the Sensex had dropped 4.53% amid concerns over a slowdown in China and broader global growth worries. From the January 2 peak, BSE-listed companies have lost nearly Rs 20

lakh crore in market capitalisation. FIIs have also been on a selling spree, having offloaded shares worth \$1.72 billion in January so far after a record \$19 billion outflow in 2025. GLOBAL UNCERTAINTY DRIVES THE SELLOFFMarket experts say the current fall is largely driven by global developments rather than a breakdown in India's domestic fundamentals. Indian markets' weak start to 2026 should be seen more as a sharp correction driven by sentiment and global factors, rather than a sign of a deep structural problem," said Pravesh Gour, Senior Technical Analyst at Swastika Investmart Ltd. He added that the fall has come after a strong run-up, and it coincides with global risk aversion due to geopolitical tensions, uncertain interest-rate paths, and foreign investor selling across

emerging markets."Gour however said that India's core fundamentals remain stable. "India's domestic fundamentals like growth prospects, government capex, and corporate balance sheets have not suddenly broken. This correction is also a healthy reminder that valuations, especially in mid and small caps, had become stretched."

Trivesh D, COO of Tradejini, however, warned that the situation could worsen if global risks do not ease. The way we see it, this phase can turn structural if global uncertainty lingers. Indian markets were not cheap to begin with, and valuations need either strong earnings growth or time to cool off," he said.

### ROLE OF GLOBAL CUES AND CAPITAL FLOWS

Experts said global risk aversion has played a key role in recent market weakness.

## Gold and silver prices continue to rally: Buy now or wait for a dip

**With gold and silver near record highs, investors face a choice between chasing momentum or waiting for pullbacks. Price levels, support zones, and timing will decide near-term returns for portfolios.**

New Delhi.(Agency)

Gold and silver prices continue to trade near record levels across domestic and global markets, keeping investors cautious. After a sharp rally over the past few months, the key question is whether prices still offer an entry opportunity or whether waiting for a correction makes more sense. Market experts say the broader trend remains bullish, but timing has become critical.

### GOLD NEAR RECORD LEVELS

MCX Gold is trading close to its recent high of Rs 1,43,173 and continues to show strong positive momentum. The price structure remains firmly bullish, supported by higher highs and higher lows. Commenting on the domestic market, Ponmudi R, CEO of Enrich

Money, said MCX Gold remains firmly placed within an uptrend despite elevated levels. "MCX Gold is trading close to the recent session high and continues to display strong positive momentum. The structure remains firmly bullish, with a clear higher-high and higher-low formation within a rising channel," he said. According to Ponmudi, a breakout above the Rs 1,43,000 mark could extend the rally further. "A breakout above Rs 1,43,000 could push prices toward Rs 1,45,000-Rs 1,48,000 in the near term," he added. However, he cautioned against chasing prices. "The preferred strategy remains buy-on-dips in the Rs 1,38,000-Rs 1,40,000 zone. As long as this support holds, the broader bullish view remains intact," Ponmudi said.

### GLOBAL CUES KEEP GOLD TREND SUPPORTIVE

On the global front, COMEX Gold is consolidating near \$4,628 after marking successive lifetime highs. Prices remain well above key technical supports, including the rising trendline and the 20-day exponential moving average around \$4,500-\$4,587. The earlier resistance zone of \$4,500-\$4,550 has now turned into a strong support base.

Ponmudi said the current pause should not be mistaken for weakness. "This consolidation appears to be healthy profit-taking within a powerful uptrend, rather than any sign of trend exhaustion," he

**With gold and silver near record highs, investors face a choice between chasing momentum or waiting for pullbacks. Price levels, support zones, and timing will decide near-term returns for portfolios.**

### SILVER OUTPERFORMS IN DOMESTIC MARKETS

Silver continues to outperform gold, particularly in the domestic market. MCX Silver is trading around Rs 2,86,000 and

remains deeply embedded in a strong bullish channel. Ponmudi said silver is emerging as a high-beta outperformer. "Persistent buying on dips highlights robust demand and positions silver as a strong outperformer within the precious metals space," he said. According to him, the upside remains open as long as key levels hold. "Sustained strength above Rs 2,85,000 keeps the upside bias intact, with potential breakout targets at Rs 2,90,000-Rs 3,00,000 and higher," Ponmudi said. On the downside, he expects buying interest to emerge on corrections. "A dip below Rs 2,70,000 could test the Rs 2,65,000-Rs 2,48,000 zone, where fresh accumulation is likely to emerge," he added.

### GLOBAL SILVER RALLY BACKED BY INDUSTRIAL DEMAND

COMEX Silver is trading near \$89.60 and continues to register fresh higher highs. Prices remain decisively above short- and medium-term averages following a strong breakout. Ponmudi said the global silver rally is being driven by fundamentals. "The move is supported by strong industrial demand from sectors such as solar, electric vehicles, AI, and electronics, along with safe-haven flows and tightening supply conditions."



said. He added that global fundamentals remain supportive. "A sustained move above \$4,650 could accelerate the next leg higher toward \$4,750-\$5,000 in the coming months, supported by central bank buying, safe-haven flows, and expectations of a more accommodative global policy environment," Ponmudi said.

### SILVER OUTPERFORMS IN DOMESTIC MARKETS

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Sleek Layers To Muted Tones

# Rubina Dilaik

## Slays Winter Fashion

**R**ubina Dilaik's fashion game is impeccable. The actress effortlessly pulls off every aesthetic, and her recent post is yet another reminder of her versatility. Sharing glimpses from her Japan getaway, Rubina dropped a series of stunning pictures where her winter fashion clearly stole the spotlight. If you're looking for some winter fashion inspiration, Rubina's latest post is definitely worth taking notes from.

### Winter Fashion Done Right

Rubina shared a series of pictures from Japan on her Instagram, serving major winter fashion inspiration. In the effortlessly stylish shots, the actress is seen wearing a grey high-neck top paired with khaki trousers and a dark brown overcoat. The muted tones complemented each other beautifully, keeping the look minimal yet well put together.

She styled her hair in a sleek bun and accessorised the outfit with oversized goggles and a black handbag, subtle additions that elevated the entire look. Rubina's caption on the post read, "Love the way you look at me." The pictures were clicked by her husband, Abhinav Shukla, whom she credited in the post.

A user commented on Rubina's stylish pictures, "Looking like a Hollywood actress." Another one added, "Looking so gorgeous." Someone wrote, "Wow, stunning!" An individual remarked, "Japanese fashion suits you so well." Someone commented, "Quiet confidence looks good on you." "Your fashion sense is just too good," added another user.

### Rubina's Fashion Aesthetic Is Always On Fleek

It wasn't the first time Rubina shared her winter wardrobe online. In December, the actress posted more pictures from Japan, where she turned heads with her stylish winter looks. In one outfit, Rubina opted for a stunning white long top paired with matching trousers. She styled the look with a rouge-coloured scarf that complemented the ensemble beautifully.

In another post, Rubina chose a simple white top and paired it with a grey mini skirt, dark brown wool stockings, and a white puffer jacket. The layering was absolutely on point, proving once again that her winter fashion game is strong. Not just winter fashion, Rubina can effortlessly slay a saree or a gown as well. Her versatility and elegance across styles truly set her apart, proving that Rubina is indeed a fashion icon.



## Raashii Khanna's Airport Stop Has The Cutest Twist, Thanks To Shraddha Kapoor

**R**aashii Khanna proved once again why she is loved not just for her on-screen presence but also for her off-screen warmth. The actress was spotted at the airport today, and what could have been a routine paparazzi moment turned into a wholesome interaction that instantly made everyone smile.

As Raashii arrived at the terminal, she greeted the paparazzi with her signature charm. Dressed in a chic yet comfortable travel outfit, she happily paused for a quick photo session before heading towards the security check, striking effortless poses.

Midway through posing, Raashii noticed something that caught her attention. She saw a wallpaper on the phone of one of the photographers, and with genuine curiosity, she asked him, "Who is it?" referring to the wallpaper on his screen. The photographer smiled and replied, "Shraddha Kapoor." Moved by his response, she asked him again, "Aap unke fan ho?" To this, he replied in "Yes."

### Raashii Khanna's Outfit For The Day

After wrapping up the impromptu chat, Raashii thanked the paparazzi and waved goodbye. Smiling, she made her way to the terminal, instantly lighting up the atmosphere with her candid nature. Her outfit also caught equal attention as she kept it comfortable and chic in a

yellow top paired with white pants, looking like a ray of sunshine.

### Raashii Khanna In Akshay Kumar's Next

Beyond her humble demeanour and airport glam, Raashii Khanna is also making headlines for her role in Akshay Kumar's next, which will be directed by Anees Bazmee. According to the reports, the film is currently in the early stages of



development. Notably, no official confirmation about her casting has been made yet. A source recently told Hindustan Times, "The makers had been deliberating a good choice, and the search ended with Raashii. Her choices- be it an impactful role in 120 Bahadur, or The Sabarmati Report impressed the team. She has signed on the dotted line."

**Nupur Sanon And Stebin Ben Groove To THIS Salman Khan Song At Their Sangeet Ceremony**



**N**upur Sanon and singer Stebin Ben got married in Udaipur, and their wedding photos are going viral on social media. Recently, a video from their sangeet ceremony surfaced online, showing the duo grooving together to a popular Salman Khan song, and it has quickly caught the attention of fans on social media.

In the video, shared by Instant Bollywood, we can see Nupur Sanon and Stebin Ben dancing on Salman Khan's Janam Samjha Karo song. The video has been going viral, giving fans a glimpse into their sangeet ceremony. Fans reacted with heart emojis. One of the fans wrote, "Most loving Couple finally got married... Very happy for both of them." Another wrote, "Beautiful couple".

### Nupur Sanon And Stebin Ben Get Married In Hindu Ceremony Following White Wedding

After tying the knot in a beautiful white wedding, Nupur Sanon and Stebin Ben got married in a stunning Hindu wedding in Udaipur. The first video from the Hindu wedding ceremony has surfaced on social media, and it looked nothing short of a fairytale. Nupur Sanon looked stunning in a heavily embroidered red and orange lehenga, while Stebin Ben complemented her in a light beige sherwani. The video shows them beaming with joy and smiling ear to ear as they celebrate their union.

Taking to her Instagram, both Stebin and Nupur shared the first picture after their wedding ceremony concluded. In the first pic, Stebin and Nupur were seen sharing a sweet kiss after the wedding. While sharing the picture, Stebin captioned the post, "I did. I do. I will. Always & forever...". As soon as the couple dropped the pictures, friends from the industry started congratulating them. However, it was Kriti who took to her Instagram Stories and shared the cutest wish for her baby sister. Kriti reshared the post on her Instagram Stories and wrote, "My heart is full! Love, happiness, blessings. #StebinNupur."

### About the Ceremony

Kriti Sanon was present throughout the celebrations, standing by her sister's side. Also spotted in Udaipur was Kriti's rumoured boyfriend, Kabir Bahiya, who joined the family for the wedding events. Adding to the buzz were close friends of the bride, including actors Disha Patani and Mouni Roy, both of whom were seen attending the celebrations.

## Urmila Matondkar Looks Like A Queen In Green Overcoat, Brown Boots



**U**rmila Matondkar still holds a special place in the hearts of her fans in Bollywood. Matondkar, who rose to fame with her performance in the 1983 film *Masoom*, continues to drop jaws with her ageless beauty. In a recent video, Matondkar awed her admirers while stepping into her vehicle. The 51-year-old actress and politician looked like a queen in her green overcoat.

**Urmila Matondkar dazzles fans in her green attire**  
Instant Bollywood uploaded a brief clip of Urmila Matondkar on Instagram. Adorned with grace, Matondkar looks stunning in a green overcoat and ankle-high boots. She carries a light brown crossbody bag. In the video, the *Judaai* actress also appears to keep her long hair beautifully untied.

"Gorgeous," a fan wrote in the comment section of the post. Meanwhile, another called her "Amazing". Another said she looked as beautiful as she did in the '90s.

### Has Urmila Matondkar quit Bollywood?

Urmila Matondkar has not been in a movie since the 2018 film *Blackmail*. She appeared as a judge on *DID Super Moms Season 3* in 2022. In a recent interview with *Hindustan Times*, Matondkar confirmed that she has not quit Bollywood yet. "When it comes to my work, I have always been selective. I can't blame anybody if they thought that maybe I'm not doing movies or something. But that never was the case," she said.

"I'm definitely at this moment all ready to get back onto the silver screen," she added. Matondkar said she was more interested in roles she has "not done before, especially on OTT". "There is just so much that is happening on OTT, which has opened a different gamut of genres, characters and emotions, which were unexplored earlier," the *Rangeela* actress added.

Matondkar also informed that she just wrapped up one show. "I have already finished one show, and hopefully that should come sometime next year," she said.

The 51-year-old added that she wanted something "challenging enough as an actor". She said she is craving "something new". Matondkar assured that it would not be long before she returned to the silver screen and started "rocking again".



# Kids who walk early likely to have Stronger Bones

Kids, especially boys, who start walking, running and jumping early at 18 months of age are more likely to have stronger bones later in adulthood, a study has found.

These movements in toddlers place a stress on the bones, causing them to become wider and thicker, thereby making them stronger than those in children who may not be moving as much, the study said.

The findings from the study may help to identify who is at a greater risk of osteoporosis and bone fractures in later life.

"The findings are intriguing as they provide a link which wasn't previously understood, primarily that how we move as a young child can have ramifications for our bone strength even 16 years later," said

lead researcher Alex Ireland from Manchester Metropolitan University in Britain.

"Being more active gives you stronger muscles which can then apply bigger forces to the bones as we walk, run or jump, helping to strengthen bones as we grow older," he added in the paper published in the Journal of Bone and Mineral Research.

The team analysed 2,327 participants from children born in the early 1990s.

Their movement was assessed at 18 months, and hip and shin bone size, shape and mineral density was measured at 17 years of age for both males and females, by scanning with X-ray absorptiometry and peripheral computed tomography.

The findings showed the effect was more

pronounced in males than in females, suggesting early movement plays less of a role in female bone strength.

"Importantly, the results could have implications for later life by helping medical practitioners to anticipate and detect those who are at a greater risk of osteoporosis or fractures, thus helping them to devise prevention and coping strategies," Ireland stated.

# Handling adult sibling Rivalry

Screaming, sulking, pillow fights and contemplating strangulation - your sibling can elicit many adverse reactions when you're growing up. As adults, life events like weddings, careers and more, change you, your sibling and your relationship - sometimes not for the better. Bury the hatchet, the knife, the machete and the hammer, along with sibling animosity, with three steps.

#### Get rid of Baggage

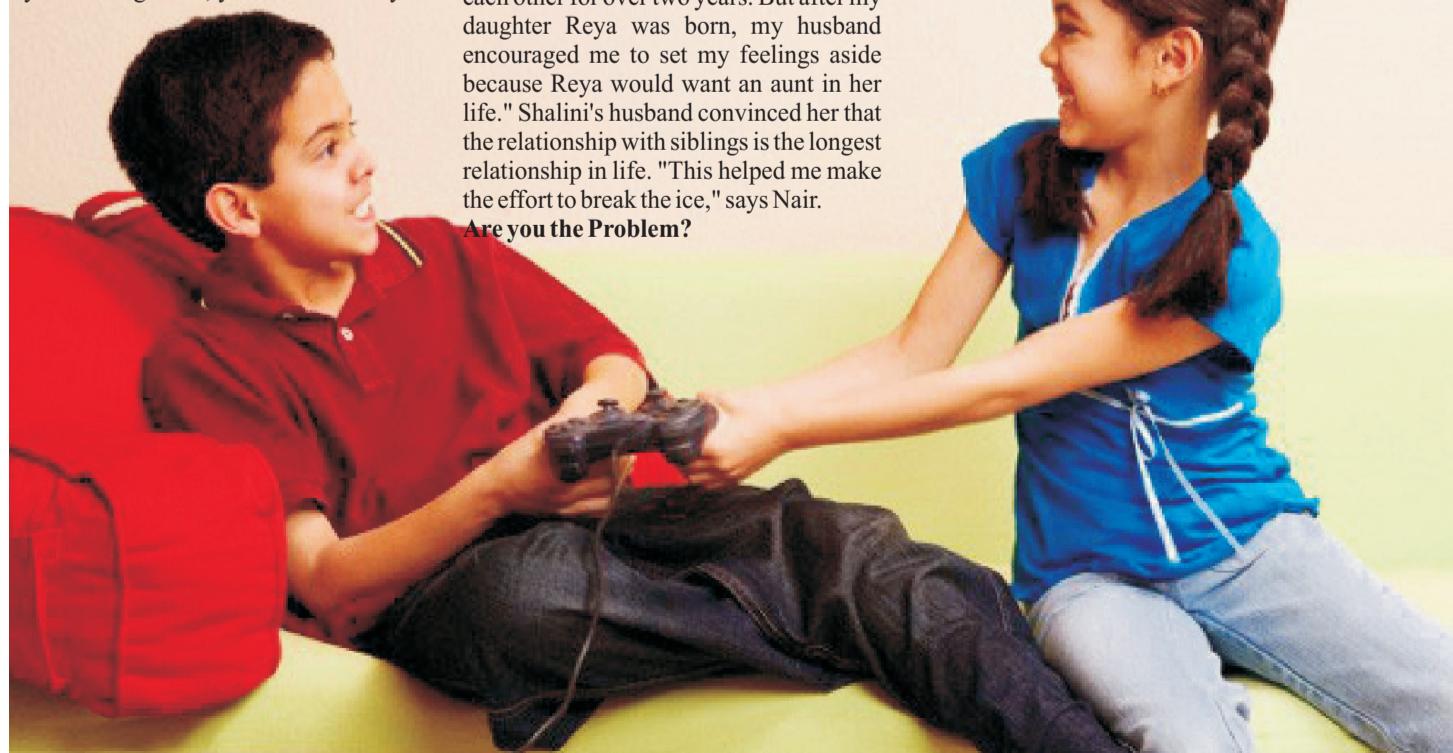
The first step is to discard any tension and judgment your parents may have unknowingly created between the two of you. "To make your relationship with your sibling work, you have to edit your

parents out," says psychologist Melisha Kar. We often carry a lot of what we have learned through our families with us, even down to identifying ourselves as the good or bad child or the favourite child or the successful one; this can spill over into adulthood. "Starting with a clean slate allows you to see your siblings in a new and, hopefully, more positive light," adds Kar.

#### Break the ice

"If you aren't talking to a sibling, start now," says graphic designer Shalini Nair, 36. "My sister and I stopped talking to each other for over two years. But after my daughter Reya was born, my husband encouraged me to set my feelings aside because Reya would want an aunt in her life." Shalini's husband convinced her that the relationship with siblings is the longest relationship in life. "This helped me make the effort to break the ice," says Nair.

#### Are you the Problem?



# Ways to parent an introvert child



According to child therapist Jayashree Nair, it is extremely necessary for parents to ensure that their children voice out their thoughts and opinions from a young age. She says, "Even though schools do encourage children to speak up in class and let their teachers know what they think, I believe parents should also do the same at home. It is only when they start talking and expressing their concerns will they become confident in life."

However, if your child is shy or feels intimidated by the thought of opening up, here are a few ways you can make the process easy for him/her.

Know there is nothing unusual about being an introvert.

There are many children who find it extremely difficult to open up not only to their teachers and friends at school but also to their parents. And there is absolutely nothing wrong with that. As a parent, the least you can do is understand what your child is trying to communicate with you without speaking much.

#### Introduce your child to new people and surroundings gradually

Do not rush into anything. Take your time to acclimatise your child to new situations

and people. Make sure that you even communicate this with those who are meeting your kid for the first time. You don't want your child growing up feeling awkward and hesitant while meeting others.

#### Help your child cultivate his/her passion

The only way a child can start socialising is when he/she moves out of the four walls of the house and makes new friends. This can either happen in school or in hobby classes. Make sure that your child is participating in extra-curricular activities and takes up a hobby. Apart from keeping your child busy through the day, it will also ensure that he/she is mixing around with other kids in the class.

Point out when they starts enjoying what they were initially scared of. To make sure that your child feels confident about himself/herself, point out whenever he/she starts doing something that they were previously scared of. This could be anything — from starting a conversation with a neighbour to playing outdoors with friends.