

## Simran Bala, 26-year-old Assistant Commandant, to lead all-male contingent at Republic Day parade

**Simran Bala is the first woman from her district to join the CRPF as an officer — an achievement that carries special significance in a region closely linked with national security and service.**

New Delhi.(Agency) Simran Bala, a 26-year-old Assistant Commandant from Jammu and Kashmir, is all set to make history as she will lead an all-male CRPF contingent at the Republic Day parade at Kartavya Path in Delhi on January 26 in 2026. This will be a historic moment, as it will be the first time a woman officer leads a CRPF male contingent in the Republic Day parade. She will command a contingent of more than 140 male personnel at this national event. Hailing from Nowshera, a small town in Jammu and Kashmir's Rajouri district, Simran Bala's journey has been marked by determination and quiet resilience. Significantly, she is the first woman from her district to join the CRPF as an officer — an achievement that carries special significance in a region closely linked with national security and service.

### Simran Bala to lead contingent of 140 male personnel

While there have been instances when women Central Reserve Police Force (CRPF) officers commanded various Republic Day contingents, this is the first time that a lady officer will command a party of more than 140 male personnel during the annual national event, the officials told PTI. Bala hails from Rajouri in Jammu and Kashmir and is the first female from the district to join the country's largest paramilitary force in the officer rank. About 3.25 lakh personnel-strong CRPF is the country's top internal security force, with its three main theatres of combat being anti-Naxal operations, counter-terrorist offensives in Jammu and Kashmir, and counter-



insurgency duties in the Northeast.

Simran Bala is a graduate in political science. Bala is a graduate in political science from the Government College for Women in Jammu's Gandhinagar, officials said. She was commissioned into the force in April 2025 and her first posting was in the 'Bastariya'

battalion in Chattisgarh, tasked to undertake anti-Naxal operations, they said. She was accorded the award for the best officer in training and public speaking subjects during her skilling at the CRPF academy in Gurugram after she qualified the CAPF Assistant Commandants exam conducted by the UPSC.

### Republic Day parade showcases India's military power

The annual Republic Day parade showcases India's military power and cultural diversity as it ambles down the Kartavya Path from Raisina Hill to Red Fort via India Gate on January 26. A joint team of women 'dare devils' from the CRPF and Sashastra Seema Bal (SSB), riding Enfield Bullet bikes, will also be part of the parade.

## Team Shinde Alleges "International Conspiracy" In Maharashtra Civic Body Polls

**With the mayoral lottery scheduled for tomorrow, Sanjay Nirupam's comments have set a tense stage for the formation of the new civic body.**

**Mumbai.**(Agency) Sanjay Nirupam, a senior leader of Maharashtra Deputy Chief Minister Eknath Shinde-led Shiv Sena, has called for a high-level investigation into an alleged "international conspiracy" following the Maharashtra municipal corporation poll results. Speaking to media on Wednesday, Nirupam alleged that a massive consolidation of Muslim voters, which he termed as the creation of "Muslim Islands", was a strategic move to undermine the ruling Mahayuti alliance.

**"Green" Battle For Mumbai**  
Nirupam's address focused on Mumbai, where Hyderabad MP Asaduddin Owaisi's AIMIM secured six seats.

Nirupam claimed that calls to "paint Mumbai green" were being made openly, posing a direct challenge to the state's security. "MIM is a party of rioters. In Mumbai, they are dreaming of a 'green' enclave," Nirupam remarked sharply.

**'Count now 70': Congress slams PM after Trump repeats his 'India-Pakistan' mediation claim**

**New Delhi . (Agency)**  
The Congress on Wednesday slammed Prime Minister Narendra Modi after the US President Donald Trump once again claimed credit for ending hostilities between India and Pakistan last year, saying the number of times Trump has made the assertion has now reached 70.

The opposition party's reaction followed Trump's remarks at a press conference in Washington, where he listed ending what he described as "unendable wars", including between India and Pakistan, among the achievements of the first year of his second term.

In a post on X, Congress general secretary (communications) Jairam Ramesh said that until recently the count stood at 68, but had risen to 70 after Trump repeated the claim twice on Tuesday, once in his opening statement and again during a question-and-answer session.

Ramesh said these were the number of occasions on which the Prime Minister's "good friend" had claimed responsibility for the "sudden and unexpected halt" of Operation Sindoos on May 10, 2025.

At the press conference, Trump said that India and Pakistan were "really going at it" and that, in his view, the conflict could have escalated into a nuclear exchange. He claimed that his intervention saved millions of lives, adding that he had brought an end to "eight unendable wars" in 10 months.

Later, responding to a question on the Nobel Peace Prize, Trump said that preventing escalation between India and Pakistan alone may have saved 10 to 20 million lives. He reiterated similar claims with respect to other conflicts across the world. Trump has repeatedly asserted that the United States mediated a ceasefire between India and Pakistan, announcing on social media on May 10 last year that the two countries had agreed to an immediate halt to hostilities following talks facilitated by Washington.

"These are small-time players. I warn them: do not issue such challenges, or you will find it impossible to even contest the next election."

The response from the AIMIM camp was swift and unapologetic. Sahar Yunus

Mumba saffron. This isn't about religion; it's about our identity as a political organisation."

### Allegations Of "Voter Profiling", Conspiracies

Nirupam did not stop at Mumbai. He alleged that in 17 specific seats in Mumbai, the Mahayuti candidates were defeated solely due to "unanimous" voting by Muslim pockets. He targeted the victories of AIMIM in Nagpur and a newly formed "Islam Party" in Malegaon, claiming the winners included individuals with criminal backgrounds related to past riots and blasts.

"We need to check the backgrounds of those who won and, more importantly, those who voted for them in those pockets," Nirupam demanded. "Is there an international conspiracy behind this sudden shift? The Mumbai and Maharashtra Police must conduct special profiling of these 'Muslim Islands' to ensure the state's safety."



Shaikh, a newly elected AIMIM corporator, dismissed the communal colouring of her party's victory. "Our party's colour is green, so naturally, we speak of painting Mumbai green with our work and our presence," Shaikh retorted. "If my party's colour were saffron, I would have said we will paint

## Uttar Pradesh Diwas 2026 to be celebrated on a grand scale with wide public participation

### The Sikh Times

Lucknow, January 21: With active participation from every district, Uttar Pradesh Diwas 2026 will be celebrated as a grand public festival, reflecting the state's rich cultural diversity and collective commitment to development. Scheduled from January 24 to 26, 2026, the event will bring together Uttar Pradesh's culture, crafts, cuisine, and development journey on a single platform through widespread public engagement. While reviewing the preparations on Wednesday, Chief Minister Yogi Adityanath said, "Uttar Pradesh Diwas is not merely a ceremonial event, but a powerful opportunity to present the state's identity, achievements, and future potential with the cooperation of the people." He directed that the celebrations be organized as a true public festival, embodying the spirit of Uttar Pradesh at every level. The Chief Minister noted that the presence of Hon'ble Union Home and Cooperation Minister Amit Shah as the

chief guest will lend the event a distinct national stature. He

instructed officials to ensure that all arrangements are carried out with dignity, discipline, and punctuality. The main ceremony will be held at Rashtriya Prerna Sthal in Lucknow

and will be telecast live across all districts, enabling people throughout the state to participate in the celebrations simultaneously. A special exhibition and craft fair themed 'Viksit Bharat – Viksit Uttar Pradesh' will be organized, highlighting the state's development journey, innovations, infrastructure growth, industrial and agricultural progress, women empowerment, and strides toward self-reliance. This year's key attraction will be 'One District–One Cuisine', under which traditional and signature dishes from every district will be showcased at a single venue, offering visitors a unique opportunity to experience the diverse flavors, culinary heritage, and local identities of Uttar Pradesh. The Chief Minister further directed that cultural programs proposed under the Sanskriti Utsav 2025–26 be seamlessly integrated with Uttar Pradesh Diwas. Emphasizing the theme 'Our Culture – Our Identity', he said, "Folk, classical, and contemporary art forms should be prominently featured, with proper facilities ensured for both artists and visitors."

## "India Will Never Allow Illegal Immigrants To Loot Its People": PM Modi

### New Delhi . (Agency)

Prime Minister Narendra Modi on Tuesday flagged illegal immigration as a major threat to national security, asserting that such people must be identified and sent back to their respective countries. The prime minister, addressing a gathering at the BJP headquarters after 45-year-old Nitin Nohar was declared elected as the national president of the party, also cited urban Naxals and population imbalance as significant challenges before the nation. Modi said some wealthy and powerful nations, who consider themselves lords of the world, too, were identifying and deporting illegal immigrants, and



nobody was questioning their actions. "These countries are known to wave the flag of democracy and consider themselves as lords of the world. Nobody, world over, accepts illegal immigrants. It is necessary to identify

them and send them back to their countries," the prime minister said. "India will never allow illegal immigrants to loot its people and the services that belong to the poor," Modi said.

The prime minister accused some political parties of shielding illegal immigrants in the interest of votebank politics and giving them cover. "We have to unmask them and expose them in front of the people."

Another major challenge is that of urban Naxals who are expanding their influence globally," Modi said. He claimed that individuals who speak positively about him or the government, even occasionally, are targeted and

silenced. "If they tweet something positive about Modi even once or twice a year, or say something positive on TV, or write something positive in a newspaper, some journalists humiliate them so much that they are hounded and made untouchable... This is the style of urban Naxals," the prime minister said. Modi said for years the BJP was isolated and treated as untouchable, but claimed the country is now recognizing these tactics. "Urban Naxals are continuously working to harm India. We have to defeat this nexus through the strength of our organization and ideology," the prime minister said.

## News box

**Man poses as govt official and cheats senior citizen of Rs 10L, nabbed****Gurgaon.(Agency)**

A 65-year-old man was allegedly cheated of Rs 10 lakh by a person posing as an official from the senior citizen cell, govt of India, and luring the victim with promises of high returns on an investment opportunity. The accused has been arrested. Police said an elderly man approached the cyber crime police on Sept 17, 2025, alleging that he received a phone call from a person claiming to be a govt official. "The caller convinced him that the Centre launched a special policy for senior citizens offering attractive returns and persuaded him to transfer money," a police officer said. The accused was identified as 33-year-old Harivansh, a resident of Sultanpur district of Uttar Pradesh. A team led by cyber crime (south) SHO Naveen Kumar tracked the accused and arrested him from UP on Jan 19. "Harivansh confessed that the cheated amount was transferred to his own bank accounts. He told investigators that he came in contact with cyber fraudsters in Sultanpur who frequently targeted elderly people by posing as govt officials. Influenced by their methods, he decided to carry out the fraud on his own," the officer added.

Police said the victim was made to transfer Rs 5 lakh twice to 2 bank accounts controlled by the accused after being assured of high returns under a fake govt scheme.

Harivansh was produced before a local court on Tuesday and sent to judicial custody. Police said further investigation is underway to identify other individuals linked to the fraud network.

**Olympic body seeks crackdown on 'doping' at Faridabad stadium after TOI report****Gurgaon.(Agency)**

A day after TOI's report on used syringes and drug packs found strewn across washrooms at the govt sports stadium in Faridabad, Haryana Olympic Association (HOA) wrote to the district administration, asking for urgent corrective action.

In a letter addressed to Faridabad deputy commissioner (DC) Ayush Sinha, HOA president Capt Jasvinder Meenu Beniwal and secretary general Krishan Lal Panwar expressed serious concern over the "used syringes and suspected banned substances", which indicate doping by athletes practising at the indoor stadium. Calling for immediate and coordinated action, the association asked the DC to issue strict directions to the departments of sports, education and panchayat to "curb the menace". Copies of the letter were also sent to the chief minister and the principal secretary of the sports department. The association said the objective of its move is not punitive alone, but to protect athlete welfare and "restore the credibility" of sports in Faridabad. Among the interventions it has sought are prominent display of information boards at stadiums, sports complexes and university campuses detailing banned substances and the penalties for their use, along with regular awareness drives. HOA also stressed the need for preventive measures such as mandatory counselling sessions for athletes, coaches and support staff, besides "random and surprise inspections of sports facilities to deter misuse". The association said unchecked presence of injectable drugs and anabolic agents within public sports premises "poses a grave threat" to young and aspiring athletes and reflects poorly on the enforcement of clean-sports norms. Referring to substances such as opioids and erythropoietin analogues, the HOA underlined that their use is a clear violation of National Anti-Doping Agency rules and carries severe health risks, including long-term organ damage, hormonal imbalance and psychological dependence. The association warned that easy access to such drugs could permanently derail the careers and well-being of budding sportspersons. During a visit to the facility in Sector 12 on Monday, this correspondent found syringes and drugs — such as darbepoetin alfa, anabolic steroids and morphine sulphate — that are strictly prohibited under anti-doping regulations, as they artificially enhance stamina, suppress pain and accelerate recovery while posing severe health risks.

**Part of Sports City, realtors planned entertainment complex on Noida plot****Noida.(Agency)**

Noida Authority had in 2022 rejected a revised layout submitted by Wiztown Planners for the flooded Sector 150 plot where a 27-year-old software engineer drowned on Saturday night, saying that the plan violated the integrated Sports City scheme and appeared more like a commercial complex than sports-led development.

The 27,185sqm plot, SC-02/A3, is part of the Sports City project in Sector 150 — one of four such schemes conceived over a decade ago to create integrated districts anchored in sports infrastructure. According to the plan, sports and recreation are supposed to dominate 70% of land use, while residential and commercial components are allowed only in limited proportions to support sports facilities. While rejecting Wiztown's revised layout, the Authority pointed out that only 5,136sqm of commercial floor area ratio (FAR) was permissible on the Sector 150 plot, but the revised plan proposed 26,189sqm for pro-shops and food-and-beverage (F&B) facilities, besides cinema screens. Officials also noted that the approved Sports City layout already earmarked a separate, clearly defined commercial block for such activity.

The problem, the Authority said, was not merely the quantum but the way the commercial element was being introduced. Wiztown's revised plan did not keep the commercial block separate, instead mixing commercial activity with pro-shops and F&B uses across the same plot. "Commercial planning must be clearly segregated so that it does not overlap with facilities meant to support sports," an official said. After examining the drawings, the Authority concluded the proposal "resembled a commercial complex" rather than sports infrastructure. It clarified that pro-shops and F&B outlets are intended as ancillary amenities — typically placed alongside individual sports facilities such as a golf course or tennis centre. Concentrating them at one location, the officials insisted, defeated the Sports City's design.

**Haryana's industry and commerce minister Rao Narbir Singh clears multiple road, drainage plans in review meeting in Gurgaon****Gurgaon.(Agency)**

Haryana's industry and commerce minister Rao Narbir Singh on Tuesday reviewed key infrastructure projects, directing officials to expedite road, drainage and sewerage works to address long-standing civic issues and support the city's rapid growth. The review meeting held in the presence of MCG commissioner Pradeep Dahiyat focused on the condition of major city roads, waterlogging-prone areas and proposed development works.

Officials said a proposal worth Rs 6.8 crore had been prepared for the construction of an 18-metre-wide road in Sector 46 and was awaiting approval. They added that repaving work on 12-metre-wide roads in the sector, costing Rs 2.4 crore, was already approved, and a separate proposal of Rs 29 lakh for cleaning the stormwater drain along the 18-metre road in Sector 46 was also under consideration. About the Gadoli road project, officials said the stretch from Pataudi Chowk to Umang Bhardwaj Chowk will be developed by



the corporation, while the stretch from Umang Bhardwaj Chowk to the Dwarka Expressway will be constructed by the Haryana State Industrial and Infrastructure Development Corporation (HSIIDC). The project also includes drainage, sewerage and

footpath construction and will be completed within a year.

Addressing the meeting, Narbir said, "Strengthening the city's infrastructure is a top priority for the state govt. Officials should ensure that all development works are completed

within stipulated timelines and maintain quality standards." He stressed that drainage and sewerage repairs should be completed before undertaking road construction and instructed the removal of electricity and streetlight poles obstructing development works.

Officials said a detailed project report of Rs 10 crore is being prepared for the development of Sector 46 market. The plan includes strengthening of market roads, traffic management measures and creation of adequate parking facilities. The meeting reviewed coordinated efforts to resolve chronic waterlogging in Narsinghpur. Officials said HSIIDC will construct a drain in the area, while the National Highways Authority of India will build a culvert. Sewerage issues in Begampur Khatola, problems related to Tikli Road and the road leading to the Gadoli cremation ground were also discussed. Additionally, four locations will be identified within the corporation's area for vegetable vendors.

**Driver dozes off, bus flips on Delhi-Mumbai Expressway, 16 injured****Gurgaon.(Agency)**

At least 16 passengers were injured after a private bus travelling from Delhi to Bhilwara overturned on the Delhi-Mumbai Expressway late on Monday night. Police said the bus allegedly overturned after the driver dozed off at the wheel. The accident occurred near Bhakroji village in Nuh district, close to the Rajasthan border, at chainage number 73.5 on the expressway. The bus, carrying over 50 passengers, was travelling at a high speed when it lost balance and overturned onto the roadside.

Eyewitnesses said the vehicle swerved sharply before overturning, trapping several passengers and triggering panic. Residents from nearby villages rushed to the spot and helped rescue the injured.



Some arranged private vehicles to take them to hospitals, while others informed the police and emergency services.

Police said seven injured passengers were admitted to Mandi Kheda Hospital, another seven were taken to a private hospital in Bora, and two were shifted to

Mission Hospital in Nuh. "All the injured are in stable condition. Most sustained fractures, head injuries and bruises. Their identities are yet to be verified," a police officer said. The officer added that CCTV footage from the area was being examined. "If a complaint is received, a case will be registered," he said. A police team reached the spot soon after receiving information, cordoned off the area and regulated traffic, which had slowed due to the accident. The bus was later removed using cranes, and traffic was restored. A senior officer said the driver had been driving for several hours without adequate rest. "The driver is being questioned to ascertain whether safety norms were violated, and further action will be taken accordingly," he said.

**GRAP-4 revoked, Gurgaon air in 'very poor' zone for 6 days****Gurgaon.(Agency)**

For the sixth consecutive day, the city's air quality remained in the "very poor" category, with Tuesday's AQI at 394. The Commission for Air Quality Management (CAQM) revoked GRAP Stage-IV measures across Delhi and NCR. Among the three active monitoring stations, Vikas Sadan recorded the worst air quality with an AQI of 420 (severe). It was followed by Sector 51 at 407 and Gwalpahari at 351.

The AQI calendar for Jan indicated sustained high PM2.5 levels through the month, with multiple days in the very poor and severe range. PM2.5 readings stayed above 300 on several days and breached 370 on Jan 9, 13, 18 and 19, suggesting prolonged exposure risk for residents.

Mohammad Rafiuddin, programme lead, Council on Energy, Environment and Water, said, "Delhi's AQI was in the 'severe' category for the last 2 days. It is expected to be 'very poor' or worse for the

next 2 to 3 days due to unfavourable meteorological conditions. The average wind speed is expected to be below 10 kmph, and the minimum temperature is between 6 and 8 degrees Celsius. While emergency response measures like GRAP



trigger health complications in sensitive individuals. Doctors and air quality experts repeatedly warned that prolonged exposure to such pollution levels can aggravate respiratory illness, trigger asthma attacks and cause breathing discomfort, particularly among children, the elderly and those with existing lung and heart conditions. Authorities attributed Gurgaon's winter pollution to a mix of vehicular emissions, road dust and construction activity, compounded by unfavourable weather conditions such as low wind speed and temperature inversion.

With air quality continuing in the red zone, residents were advised to limit outdoor activity, avoid morning walks in high-traffic zones and use masks where exposure was unavoidable.

The CPCB categorises AQI levels between 0 and 50 as 'good', 51 to 100 as 'satisfactory', 101 to 200 as 'moderate', 201 to 300 as 'poor', 301 to 400 as 'very poor', and 401 to 500 as 'severe'.

**Design flaws to rule violations: NHAI rejects Gurgaon's plan to build culvert and drain on Nh8****Gurgaon.(Agency)**

National Highways Authority of India (NHAI) has rejected GMDA's proposal to construct a stormwater drain and a culvert crossing on NH8. The rejection, citing serious design flaws and failure to meet mandatory road and safety guidelines, early this month put the project on hold until revised drawings and cost estimates are submitted for fresh approval. One of the biggest concerns raised was the method suggested to build the culvert across NH8. "GMDA submitted the plan to lay three piped culverts across the highway. The plan involved digging up a portion of the busy highway. This is not possible, as it could severely disrupt traffic, increase the risk of accidents and create long jams," an NHAI official said. A GMDA official said, "We shared our proposed plan with NHAI, which has some observations. The construction of the culvert falls under NHAI's scope. We are going forward with the construction of the stormwater drain, while NHAI can redesign the culvert as per its assessment and requirement." The proposal was meant to carry rainwater from Delhi-Gurgaon Expressway to the Badshapur drain through the service road near Narsinghpur and across NH8. However, NHAI said the plan could not be approved in its present form, as it did not comply with MoRTH (ministry of road transport and highways) and IRC (Indian Roads Congress) norms. According to NHAI officials, the proposal was turned down after independent experts found that important details were missing or unclear in the drawings submitted by GMDA. The plan, officials said, did not clearly show how much water the RCC box-type drain could safely carry, how deep or high the structure would be, or how it would be maintained in the future. Instead of building a new crossing, NHAI's experts suggested that rainwater could be redirected into an already existing culvert on NH8 and then discharged into the Badshapur drain.

**Stadium space for athletes taken up by EVMs in Faridabad****Ghaziabad.(Agency)**

Athletes are fighting for space at a govt-run sports facility that has shrunk over the years. "We train for years to reach competitions, but here we don't even have a proper place to practise. Many times we are forced to wait for our turn," an athlete told TOI on Tuesday, while referring to the storage of electronic voting machines (EVMS) inside Faridabad's Sector 12 stadium, which is badly affecting sporting activities. Many athletes said their "focus and morale have gone down".

For six years, EVMS have occupied crucial rooms at the stadium — built in 2002 — which was envisioned as a comprehensive sports complex capable of running 26 different sports disciplines. Stadium authorities say they have "no control" over the situation. While rooms are officially sealed, the impact on daily sports activity has been "severe".

Coaches are worried. "These sports need dedicated rooms for mats and specialised equipment. When everything is pushed into one hall, injuries increase and training quality drops," said a coach.

Deputy commissioner Ayush Sinha told TOI, "Faridabad district currently doesn't have a dedicated EVM warehouse, which is why the machines are being stored at the govt-run sports complex."

At least two big halls — one each on the ground floor and the first floor — have remained under lock and key for nearly four years, while several other rooms — out of total 12 — were taken over in recent months following fresh directions from the district administration. Coaches said four to five activities can be held in one big hall, adding, furniture and other articles have been kept in several small rooms across three floors. Many sports facility staffers have been shifted to other areas

across the campus. "Prolonged administrative decisions" have left athletes and coaches struggling for basic space to train, sources said. The situation becomes worse during major tournaments like Khel Mahakumbh and Haryana Olympic Association events. With rooms blocked by EVMS, organisers are forced to house athletes in nearby schools, dharamshalas and private halls, creating logistical chaos. Officials admit that female athletes are often shifted outside the stadium due to safety concerns and lack of space. "If these rooms were vacated, we could easily host our athletes here itself," said a stadium staff member. Judo and gymnastics coaches said their training schedules have been disrupted, forcing them to conduct technical sessions in overcrowded indoor halls. The DC added, "The district administration is in the process of identifying suitable land to

establish an exclusive EVM warehouse. Until then, the machines will continue to occupy space inside the stadium. EVM warehouses require the highest level of security and the Election Commission officials conduct inspections every four months. CCTV cameras have also been installed near the rooms, where the EVMS are stored, to ensure safety." The stadium currently has coaches for only 11 disciplines, including shooting, volleyball and hockey. The sports department has formally demanded the appointment of nine additional coaches, including for swimming, wrestling, table tennis and handball. Adding to the resentment, several portions of land inside the stadium have been given on lease to private parties to run grounds, including a badminton facility.

With no clear timeline for removal of EVMS, questions have been raised by athletes as

well as coaches about the "priority" being given to sports infrastructure in the district.

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## NEWS BOX

**Sunita Williams retires after record-breaking space career****CAPE CANAVERAL. (Agency)**

NASA's Sunita Williams — one of two astronauts stuck for months at the International Space Station — has retired. The space agency announced the news Tuesday, saying her retirement took effect at the end of December. Williams' crewmate on Boeing's ill-fated capsule test flight, Butch Wilmore, left NASA last summer.

The pair launched to the space station in 2024, the first people to fly Boeing's new Starliner crew capsule. Their mission should have lasted just a week, but stretched to more than nine months because of Starliner trouble. In the end, they caught a ride home last March with SpaceX. Boeing's next Starliner mission will carry cargo — not people — to the space station. NASA wants to make sure all of the capsule's thruster and other issues are solved before putting anyone on board. The trial run will take place later this year. Williams, 60, a former Navy captain, spent more than 27 years at NASA, logging 608 days in space over three station missions. She also set a record for the most spacewalking time by a woman: 62 hours during nine excursions. NASA's new administrator Jared Isaacman called her "a trailblazer in human spaceflight."

**Man Who Assassinated Former Japanese PM Shinzo Abe Gets Life Sentence****Tokyo. (Agency)**

A Japanese court sentenced a man who admitted to assassinating former Japanese Prime Minister Shinzo Abe to life imprisonment on Wednesday, according to NHK public television. The case has revealed decades of cozy ties between Japan's governing party and a controversial South Korean church. Tetsuya Yamagami, 45, earlier pleaded guilty to killing Abe in July 2022 during his election campaign speech in the western city of Nara.

Abe, one of Japan's most influential politicians, was serving as a regular lawmaker after leaving the prime minister's job when he was killed in 2022 while campaigning in the western city of Nara. It shocked a nation with strict gun control. Tetsuya Yamagami, 45, pleaded guilty to murder in the trial that started in October. The Nara District Court confirmed the verdict and sentenced Yamagami to life in prison, as prosecutors requested. Yamagami said he killed Abe after seeing a video message the former leader sent to a group affiliated with the Unification Church. He added that his goal was to hurt the church, which he hated, and expose its ties with Abe. Prosecutors demanded life imprisonment for Yamagami, while his lawyers sought a sentence of no more than 20 years, citing his troubles as the child of a church adherent. Japanese law authorizes the death penalty in murder cases, but prosecutors do not usually request it unless at least two people are killed.

The revelation of close ties between the ruling Liberal Democratic Party and the church caused the party to pull back from the church. It also prompted investigations that ended with the church's Japanese branch being stripped of its tax-exempt religious status and ordered dissolved.

The killing has also led to officials working to increase police protection of dignitaries. Abe was shot on July 8, 2022, while giving a speech outside a train station in Nara. In footage captured by television cameras, two gunshots ring out as the politician raises his fist. He collapses holding his chest, his shirt smeared with blood. Officials say Abe died almost instantly.

**Egyptian Archaeologist Claims He Is "Close" To Finding Legendary Queen Nefertiti's Tomb****world. (Agency)**

Famed Egyptian archaeologist and former Minister of Antiquities Dr. Zahi Hawass announced that he is "close" to discovering the long-lost tomb of Queen Nefertiti. According to LiveScience, Hawass and his team are currently excavating in the eastern Valley of the Kings, specifically in an area near the tomb of the female pharaoh Hatshepsut. Hawass said that he doesn't have evidence to support this theory, but has a feeling it could be there. "If I made this discovery, I think I would be happy to end my career with the most important discovery of the most important queen of Egypt — Queen Nefertiti. This will lead us to the greatest discovery of the century," Zahi Hawass said in "The Man with the Hat," a new documentary about his life and career. While Hawass admits he does not yet have definitive proof, he has narrowed down the search area based on years of mapping the valley and current excavations that have reached significant depths near solid rock. Apart from the tomb search, Hawass has also been conducting DNA and CT scans on unidentified mummies to determine if they are the remains of the queen. Historical Significance:

Discovering Nefertiti's tomb would resolve long-standing debates, such as whether she ruled as a pharaoh under the name Neferneferuaten after the death of her husband, Akhenaten. Ancient depictions show her doing typically pharaonic stuff, like smiting enemies. Despite this, her tomb remains a mystery, leaving her role in Egypt's turbulent religious history a burning topic. Despite Hawass's optimism, other experts remain sceptical. Past theories, such as those by British archaeologist Nicholas Reeves suggesting Nefertiti was hidden behind a wall in King Tutankhamun's tomb, were largely dismissed after radar scans in 2018 found no such chambers. Who was Queen Nefertiti? Queen Nefertiti was the powerful Great Royal Wife of Pharaoh Akhenaten during Egypt's 18th Dynasty, famous for her beauty and influence. Unlike many queens, she was depicted alongside her husband in prominent roles, sometimes leading worship or in military scenes, showing her significant political and religious authority.

**North produces enough nuclear material a year for 10-20 weapons: South Korea president**

**A pragmatic attitude was needed in addressing North Korea's nuclear issue, the president said, adding the "Trump-style approach" could help in communicating with Pyongyang.**

**SEOUL. (Agency)**

North Korea is producing enough nuclear material a year for up to 20 weapons, the South's President Lee Jae Myung said on Wednesday, warning that Pyongyang's ambitions could pose a global danger. The North carried out its first atomic test in 2006 in violation of UN resolutions and is now believed to possess dozens of nuclear warheads. "Even now, nuclear materials sufficient to produce 10 to 20 nuclear weapons a year are still being produced" in North Korea, Lee told reporters at a New Year news conference. At the same time, the North is continuing to improve its long-range ballistic missile technology aimed at

striking the US mainland, Lee added. "At some point, North Korea will have secured the nuclear arsenal it believes it needs to sustain the regime, along with ICBM capabilities capable of threatening not only the United States but the wider world," he said, referring to intercontinental ballistic missiles. "And once there is excess, it will go abroad -- beyond its borders. A global danger will then emerge," he said. Pyongyang has for decades justified its nuclear and missile programmes as a deterrent against alleged regime change efforts by Washington and its allies. A pragmatic attitude was needed in addressing North Korea's nuclear issue, Lee said, adding the "Trump-style approach" could help in communicating with Pyongyang. "The suspension of nuclear material production and ICBM development, as well as a halt to overseas exports, would also be a gain," he said.

"It would be a gain for everyone," he added, noting that he had laid out the argument to both US President Donald Trump and his

Chinese counterpart Xi Jinping. Since his inauguration in June, Lee has pushed for dialogue with the North without preconditions, a stark departure from the



awkward approach of his predecessor. Trump-style approach While Pyongyang has snubbed Seoul's dialogue offers, Lee said Trump could pave the way forward with North Korean leader Kim Jong Un -- with whom the US leader has expressed his affinity over the years. "President Trump is a somewhat unique figure, but I think that very trait can at times

**Trump's Davos-bound plane returns to air base after 'minor' electrical issue: White House****World. (Agency)**

US President Donald Trump's plane was forced to return to an air base late Tuesday due to a "minor electrical issue" shortly after departing for Switzerland, the White House said.

Air Force One returned to Joint Base Andrews out of an abundance of caution, Press Secretary Karoline Leavitt said. It landed shortly after 11:00 pm (0400 GMT). Journalists traveling with Trump reported that lights in the cabin went out briefly after takeoff. Trump and his entourage will switch to another plane and continue the trip to the World Economic Forum in Davos, where the US president was expected to face off



with European leaders over his bid to seize Greenland. With its classic blue and white livery, Air Force One is arguably the world's most iconic plane and an instantly recognizable symbol of the US presidency. Trump has long been unhappy with the current Air Force One jets -- two highly

customized Boeing 747-200B series aircraft that entered service in 1990 under president George H.W. Bush.

Last year, Trump said his administration was "looking at alternatives" to Boeing following delays in the delivery of two new 747-8 aircraft. In May, Pentagon chief Pete Hegseth accepted a Boeing 747 that the Gulf emirate of Qatar offered to Trump for use as Air Force One. The jet -- worth hundreds of millions of dollars -- has raised huge constitutional and ethical questions, as well as security concerns about using an aircraft donated by a foreign power for use as the ultra-sensitive presidential plane.

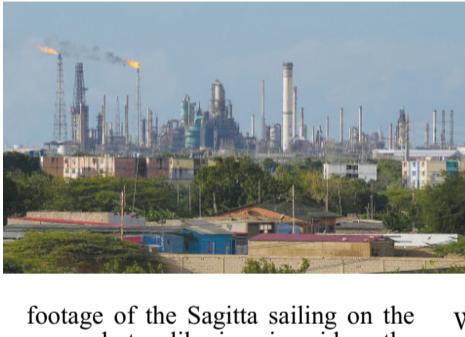
**US forces seize seventh sanctioned tanker linked to Venezuela in Trump's effort to control its oil****WASHINGTON. (Agency)**

U.S. military forces boarded and took control of a seventh oil tanker connected with Venezuela on Tuesday as part of the Trump administration's broader efforts to take control of the South American country's oil. U.S. Southern Command said in a social media post that U.S. forces apprehended the Motor Vessel Sagitta "without incident" and that the tanker was operating in defiance of President Donald Trump's "established quarantine of sanctioned vessels in the Caribbean." The military command did not say whether the U.S. Coast Guard took control of the tanker as has been the case in prior seizures. Both the Pentagon and Southern Command said they had nothing to add when asked for more details. The Sagitta is a Liberian-flagged tanker and its registration says it is owned and managed by a company in Hong Kong. The ship last transmitted its location more than two months ago when exiting the Baltic Sea in northern Europe. The tanker was sanctioned by the U.S. Treasury Department under an executive order related to Russia's invasion of Ukraine in 2022. The post from U.S. Southern Command indicated the ship had taken oil from

Venezuela. It said the capture of the tanker "demonstrates our resolve to ensure that the only oil leaving Venezuela will be oil that is co-ordinated properly and lawfully." The military command posted what appeared to be aerial

footage of the Sagitta sailing on the ocean, but unlike in prior videos the clip did not show U.S. forces flying toward it in helicopters or landing on the deck of the ship.

Since the U.S. ouster of Venezuela President Nicolás Maduro in a surprise nighttime raid on Jan. 3, the Trump administration has set out to control the production, refining and global distribution of Venezuela's oil products. Officials in Trump's Republican administration have made it clear they see seizing the tankers as a way to generate cash as they seek to rebuild Venezuela's battered oil industry and restore its economy. Trump met with executives from oil companies nearly two weeks ago to discuss his goal of investing \$100 billion in Venezuela to repair and upgrade its oil production and distribution. He said at the time that the U.S. expected to sell at least 30 million to 50 million barrels of Venezuelan oil. Trump told reporters on Tuesday that the U.S. already has taken 50 million barrels of oil out of Venezuela. "We've got millions of barrels of oil left," he said at the White House. "We're selling it on the open market. We're bringing down oil prices incredibly." The first tanker was seized off the coast of Venezuela on Dec. 10. Most of the other tankers also have been captured in the waters near Venezuela, with the exception of the Bella 1, which was captured in the North Atlantic. The Bella 1 had been cruising across the Atlantic and nearing the Caribbean when on Dec. 15 it abruptly turned and headed north, toward Europe. The ship was ultimately captured on Jan. 7.



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**World order in 'midst of a rupture': Mark Carney tells Davos****World. (Agency)**

Canadian Prime Minister Mark Carney said Tuesday that the US-led global system of governance is enduring a "rupture," defined by great power competition and a "fading" rules-based order. Carney delivered his stirring speech to political and financial elites at the World Economic Forum, a day before US President Donald Trump was set to address the gathering in Davos, Switzerland.

Since entering Canadian politics last year, Carney has repeatedly warned that the world was not going to return to a pre-Trump normal. He re-affirmed that message on Tuesday, in a speech that did not name Trump but offered an analysis of the president's impact on global affairs. "We are in the midst of a rupture, not a transition," Carney said.

He noted that Canada had benefited from the old "rules-based international order," including from "American hegemony" that "helped provide public goods: open sea lanes, a stable financial system, collective security, and support for frameworks for resolving disputes."

A new reality has set in, Carney said.

"Call it what it is: a system of intensifying great power rivalry where the most powerful pursue their interests using economic integration as coercion." On the menu: In an apparent warning against efforts to appease major powers, Carney said countries like Canada can no longer hope that "compliance will buy safety."

"It won't," he said.

"The question for middle powers, like Canada, is not whether to adapt to this new reality. We must. The question is whether we adapt by simply building higher walls -- or whether we can do something more ambitious." "Middle powers must act together, because if we're not at the table, we're on the menu," Carney said. Great powers can afford for now to go it alone. They have the market size, the military capacity, and the leverage to dictate terms. Middle powers do not. Carney delivered his Davos speech after Canada's Globe and Mail newspaper reported that the Canadian military has developed a model response to a US invasion. Citing two unnamed senior government officials, the paper said the Canadian response model centers on insurgency-style tactics, like those used in Afghanistan by fighters who resisted Soviet and later US forces.

After Trump's 2024 election and in the early months of his new term, he repeatedly referred to the US's northern neighbour as the 51st state and said a merger would benefit Canada. Trump's annexation talk has eased in recent months, but overnight he posted an image on his social media platform of a map showing Canada and Venezuela covered in the US flag, implying a full American takeover of both countries.

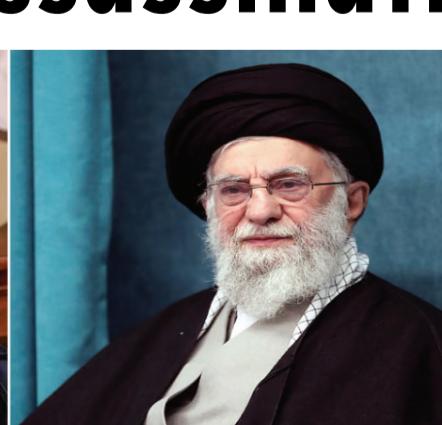
**Trump says Iran would be 'wiped off the earth' over assassination plot****WASHINGTON. (Agency)**

President Donald Trump on Tuesday reiterated a warning that Iran would be wiped "off the face of this earth" if Tehran ever succeeded in assassinating the US leader. In a heated exchange of threats, Iran and the United States both threatened broadscale wars if the leaders of either country are assassinated.

"I have very firm instructions. Anything happens, they're going to wipe them off the face of this earth," Trump said in a News Nation interview that aired Tuesday, in response to a question on Iran's threats on the 79-year-old's life. Earlier Tuesday, in response to any threats facing Ayatollah Ali Khamenei, Iranian General Abolfazl Shekarchi was quoted as saying Trump already knew Tehran would not hold back if the tables were turned. "Trump knows that if a hand of aggression is extended toward our leader, we will not only sever that hand, and this is not a mere slogan," Shekarchi



was quoted as telling Iranian state media. "But we will set their world on fire and leave them no safe haven in the region." Trump issued a similar warning to Iran a year ago, shortly after returning to the White House, when he told reporters "if they do it, they get obliterated." Iran is still reeling



from violence unleashed during some of the biggest anti-government protests since the Islamic revolution in 1979. Human rights groups are working to confirm the number of people killed during the protests, with the Human Rights Activists News Agency reporting more than 4,000

confirmed deaths. The Norway-based Iran Human Rights NGO has said verification of deaths in the crackdown remains severely hampered due to the communication restrictions, but noted on Monday that available information "indicates that the number of protesters killed may exceed even the highest media estimates", which reach 20,000. Iranians began holding mass demonstrations to call for relief from economic woes in December, when the country's currency hit a new low under the leadership of the 86-year-old ayatollah, who has resisted democratic reform for decades. Many in Iran's global diaspora, including exiled Nobel Peace Prize winner Shirin Ebadi, have called for US intervention against the ruling apparatus in Tehran. Ebadi urged "highly targeted actions" against Iran's supreme leader and commanders of his Islamic Revolutionary Guard Corps.

## Leopard attacks sheep in Maharashtra's Deola; 4 killed, 5 injured, villagers demand action

Deola.(Agency)

In Kharde (Taluka Deola), a leopard attacked a flock of sheep around 10 pm on Monday, killing four sheep and seriously injuring five others. The incident, which occurred in a field very close to the village, has created panic among livestock owners and villagers. They have demanded that the forest department install a cage to capture the leopard.

Ravindra Vasudev, a shepherd from Kharde village, a remote village in Deola taluka, had set up his sheep pen in a field near the Indira Gandhi School, where onions had recently been harvested. Around 10 pm on Monday, a leopard attacked the flock of sheep in the pen. The leopard killed four sheep and seriously injured four to five others.

The incident has caused significant financial loss to shepherd Vasudev. The shepherd was sleeping near the pen when the leopard attacked the sheep. Within moments, the leopard fled the scene. Eyewitnesses initially reported seeing two to three leopards in the area. This incident has created an atmosphere of fear among livestock owners and farmers living in the area. Forest department officials visited the spot and surveyed the dead and injured sheep.

Citizens have demanded immediate compensation and the installation of a cage to control the leopard. Residents of Kharde and the surrounding areas, including Kankapur, Kanchane, Sheri, Warshi, Hanumant Pada, and Mulukh Wadi, have complained of an increase in leopard sightings. Vijay Jagtap has demanded that the forest department take notice of this and provide relief to the citizens.

## Rescued long-billed vulture released at Maharashtra's Anjaneri

Nashik.(Agency)

The long-billed white-backed vulture (ID: J132), which had become exhausted and underweight after travelling from Pench Tiger Reserve (Nagpur) to Anjaneri in Maharashtra, was successfully released into its natural habitat at the Anjaneri Vulture Conservation Reserve after completing treatment and recovery at the Wildlife Treatment Centre (TTC), Mhasrul.

The vulture was rescued on December 29, 2025, in a weak condition, suffering from anaemia and low body weight, through a joint effort of officials and staff from the East Nashik Forest Division and the organisation AREAs. It remained under medical care at the Mhasrul facility until its release.

The release operation was carried out jointly by officials and staff of the Nashik Forest Range, the ResQ Nashik Division team, and the Bombay Natural History Society (BNHS). BNHS will continue to monitor the vulture's future movements using a tracking chip.

The operation was conducted under the guidance of Shri Siddhesh Savardekar, Deputy Conservator of Forests, West Nashik Division; Shri Prashant Khairnar, Assistant Conservator of Forests, West Nashik Division; and Shri Sumit Nirmal, Range Forest Officer, Nashik, along with Forest Guards Shri Vijay Patil and Shri Sharad Thorat, and driver Shri Darshan Deore.

The ResQ Nashik Division team included Shri Vaibhav Bhogle, Honorary Wildlife Warden, and Dr. Hemraj Sukhwani, Wildlife Veterinarian, along with their team.

## Inter-caste couple alleges ostracisation by villagers in Tiruvallur district



CHENNAI. (Agency)

An inter-caste couple, both belonging to the MBC community, from Periya Obulapuram village near Gummidi poondi has approached the Tiruvallur district administration alleging continued harassment and social ostracisation by villagers following their marriage.

On Tuesday, Prem (30) and his wife Banumathi (28) met Tiruvallur collector Prathap seeking intervention. The couple alleged they were forced to live outside the village for nearly a year citing safety concerns after their inter-caste marriage. The couple, who have two children, decided to return to the village a year ago but continued to face harassment, they said. According to them, the villagers imposed a social boycott, barring their participation in temple festivals, funerals, religious gatherings and other public events. Prem alleged they were verbally abused, threatened and physically attacked on several occasions. They also complained that unidentified people damaged household items, including doors and cots. Following this, they lodged a complaint with the Arambakkam police and alleged that some villagers later threatened them with dire consequences if they did not withdraw the complaint. Responding to the complaint, Gummidi poondi DSP said a case had been registered and that the issue appeared to stem from previous enmity with certain villagers.

## Maharashtra begins data collation to assess impact of retrospective TET Mandate

**Education department seeks age and appointment wise details of in service teachers as state weighs consequences of Supreme Court ruling on Teachers Eligibility Test implementation**

Mumbai. (Agency)

Amid continuing confusion over the retrospective implementation of the Teachers Eligibility Test (TET) mandate following a Supreme Court directive, Maharashtra's school education department has begun the process of collating data on in-service teachers. The exercise aims to assess the potential impact of enforcing TET retrospectively before the state takes a final decision.

The data collection involves categorising teachers from Classes 1 to 8 based on age, year of appointment, TET qualification status at the time of appointment and thereafter, as well as those exempted from the TET requirement. According to the state government, this information will help gauge the extent of impact of the Supreme Court ruling.

The Directorate of Primary Education has issued a letter directing education officers to submit verified data from all government and aided schools. In the letter, Director of Primary

Education Sharad Gosavi, referring to the Supreme Court ruling that made TET mandatory, stated that information has been sought in three separate formats through

introduced by the National Council for Teacher Education (NCTE). The data is being collected separately for teachers handling Classes 1 to 5 and Classes 6 to 8 under the directorate of primary education.

The third format seeks general information on the status of TET implementation in the state, including the total number of teachers, those appointed before and after 2011, teachers who have cleared TET since its introduction, and those who are exempted from the requirement.

As per the Supreme Court ruling, TET is mandatory not only for new appointments but also for in-service teachers who have more than five years of service remaining.

The ruling states that such teachers must clear the TET within two years or face compulsory retirement. This has raised concerns about potential job losses and its impact on staffing levels in government-run and aided schools, which are already facing a shortage of teachers.



education officers at various levels. These formats include age-wise categorisation of teachers along with their TET status in relation to their year of appointment—specifically distinguishing between those appointed before and after 2011, the year in which TET was

## Chennai's Madhya Kailash junction flyover to open in first week of February

CHENNAI. (Agency)

The construction of the 'L'-shaped flyover connecting Sardar Patel Road with Rajiv Gandhi Salai is nearing completion, with about 95% of the work finished. The flyover is scheduled to be inaugurated in the first week of February. The final 35-metre-long deck slab box structure is currently under construction and is expected to be completed within a week, officials from the State Highways said.

Once opened, the flyover is expected to significantly ease traffic congestion along the IIT Madras-Adyar Cancer Institute stretch, including the busy Madhya Kailash junction. However, officials cautioned that traffic congestion may increase at the Tidel Park junction for vehicles travelling from Adyar towards Thiruvanmiyur.

Following the inauguration, the State Highways and traffic police plan to make changes in traffic circulation to decongest all three roads—Sardar Patel Road, Gandhi Mandapam Salai, and Rajiv Gandhi Salai.

"Once the flyover is inaugurated, vehicles coming from Gandhi Mandapam Road (Kotturpuram) towards Guindy will be diverted to the left to make a U-turn beneath

unidirectional, three-lane flyover is designed to allow seamless movement from Sardar Patel Road to Rajiv Gandhi Salai, bypassing the congested Madhya Kailash junction.

Once the flyover is inaugurated, vehicles coming from Gandhi Mandapam Road (Kotturpuram) towards Guindy will be diverted to the left to make a U-turn beneath

the new flyover. Vehicles coming from Adyar/Thiruvanmiyur that are heading towards Kotturpuram will have signal-free right turn beneath the Adyar flyover," an official said.

At present, vehicles from Sardar Patel Road (Anna University side) heading towards Kotturpuram can take a free left turn, while those bound for Adyar and Thiruvanmiyur must use the Adyar flyover, the official added.

The 652-metre-long flyover, constructed at a cost of Rs 70 crore, begins about 350 metres from the existing flyover near the Cancer Institute-IIT Madras junction and ends at Rajiv Gandhi Salai. The flyover is 7.5 metres

(26 feet) wide. "Sardar Patel Road faces heavy congestion for nearly one kilometre from Anna University to the Madhya Kailash junction. The high volume of vehicular movement also restricts construction working hours," the official added.

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## Growth plan: Capex, jobs, social spend

Domestic and international observers acknowledge India's medium-term economic prospects. FY27 is shaping up to be one of the strongest years for economic activity since FY19, at least according to high-frequency data. Policy actions during FY26 have driven this momentum and laid a foundation for growth. An illustration is public capital expenditure. After a slowdown in FY25, government capex rebounded in FY26. Year-to-date, capital expenditure is 25 percent higher than the period last year, while revenue expenditure has grown by less than 2 percent. This divergence highlights the government's preference for investment-led growth, prioritising projects with financial returns, such as urban mobility, highways, airports, shipyards, and port infrastructure. The expansion of operational metro rail networks, the pace of highway construction, capacity additions at airports, and improvements in turnaround times at major seaports are documented. In contrast, revenue expenditure—comprising subsidies and welfare spending—has been restrained. While such spending delivers societal returns, these benefits materialise over a longer horizon. For now, the government prioritises the creation of return-generating assets to revive economic momentum, even if early gains accrue unevenly across sections of the population. It's a bet. India's growth strategy needs a 'dual engine' approach—capex for immediate momentum, social investment for long-term inclusivity. The external environment and India's capital supply make this challenging. Elevated interest rates and interest payments could burden the exchequer, manifesting in vicious cycles that impact growth. Yet this shift may be pragmatic, but only if it is paired with an assurance. Societal and developmental expenditure must scale up once global conditions stabilise and fiscal space improves for a government operating under a perennial deficit. There is a risk of entrenching a K-shaped growth trajectory. Large sections of the population—particularly in Aspirational Districts and parts of eastern India—may remain excluded from the gains of growth. A comparative assessment of macroeconomic indicators over the past year underscores the economy's resilience. Retail inflation has declined by 390 basis points, driven by a correction in food prices, which have fallen by over 1,000 basis points since December 2024. This moderation has not come at the expense of farm incomes, as prices had risen from an exceptionally high base; annualised price growth for farm output has remained buoyant at 5 percent or higher. Urban consumption sentiment has staged a recovery after a prolonged slowdown. The downturn began even before the pandemic in 2019. The Reserve Bank of India's Consumer Confidence Index—which captures households' willingness to spend—is now at a six-year high. This improvement is reflected in indicators of discretionary spending, such as passenger vehicle sales. Demand for entry-level cars has revived, and Bollywood box-office collections have reached a three-year high so far in FY26. Consumption remains a pillar of India's growth model, accounting for 60 percent of the national income. India's domestic consumption base has historically acted as an economic 'iron dome' during global stress. This resilience was seen during the Asian Financial Crisis, the Global Financial Crisis or the taper tantrum. That buffer appears active again, even as global trade dynamics shift. The blemish in an otherwise resilient macro backdrop has been the depreciation of the Indian rupee against the US dollar. This has occurred despite record-high foreign exchange reserves and a comfortable current account position. At this point, geopolitical considerations seem to drive the rupee's weakness more than economic fundamentals.

MUMBAI's municipal elections were held four years late. That delay, amounting to constitutional breach, says much about Indian democracy. India's richest municipality was kept in administrative suspension, without elected representatives and without consequences, indicating a deeper comfort with democratic deferral. Remember that constitutional self-government at the third tier is not optional. The BJP has improved its seat tally compared to 2017 and emerged as the largest party, aided by the split in the Shiv Sena that had once anchored the alliance. Across Maharashtra, the BJP-led alliance has dominated civic bodies, winning most municipal corporations where elections were held. Yet Mumbai's result refuses to yield a single neat political interpretation. That is because Mumbai is not merely a city, but more like a city state. Its budget dwarfs those of many Indian states, and its economic weight is large enough to become a meaningful share of national output and taxes. It is India's financial capital, Bollywood's stage, the country's biggest labour magnet, a playground for creative artistes and hence a cultural engine whose pluralism and a cosmopolitan nature are as valuable as its money. And yet this Maximum City is embarrassed by minimum accountability. Its governance is famously complex, a "spaghetti bowl" of agencies like the BMC (civic body), MMRDA (regional planning), BEST (transport), MHADA (housing), SRA (slum rehab), MSRDC, railways and more, each with partial responsibility, overlapping jurisdiction and carefully designed escape routes from blame. Planning is separated from execution, transport from land use, housing from connectivity, and accountability from everything. When the city fails, no single institution can be held answerable. The electoral contest for the BMC was about control over patronage, planning, land, permissions, contracts and the right to shape India's most valuable urban geography. There is a striking paradox. Mumbai generates extraordinary wealth, and yet its residents experience extraordinary fragility. Mumbai's real estate is as valuable as gold, and a gateway to power. Yet an enormous share of the population lives in slums with minimal civic promises fulfilled. In the same city that hosts the country's richest households and its most expensive square foot, ordinary life is spent navigating broken footpaths, overcrowded trains, unreliable drainage and the annual monsoon lottery of whether water will enter your home. This is why Mumbai's ambitions have often collapsed. Consider the great promise made in 2006 when the then Prime Minister announced an ambitious plan to turn

## The meaning of Mumbai's vote for BJP

The city that voted for stability should now demand fulfilment of its aspiration

Mumbai into an international financial centre (IFC). Mumbai had the financial institutions, the human capital, the depth of markets and the global visibility. If any Indian city could compete with Singapore, Dubai, Hong Kong or London in financial services, it had to be Mumbai. Plans were drafted, committees were formed, reports were published, and the story was told with conviction. Two decades later, Mumbai is still not an international financial centre. It remains India's financial capital—a domestic title—but the global destination status never arrived. The IFC plan did not fail because of lack of bankers, entrepreneurs, lawyers or capital. Mumbai failed because it lacked what global cities require: coherent governance and high-quality infrastructure delivered at scale. This is where Gujarat's

it was reported that Mumbai had an inventory of more than two lakh unsold flats. The issue of affordable housing was hardly headlined in the manifestos. Nor was flood control, solid waste management or road repair. The BMC elections brought freebie theatre to civic polls. Manifestos promised rebates, concessions, free bus rides and cash transfers, with no mention of from where the finances would come. In this competitive welfarism, the voters are treated as beneficiaries rather than citizens who have rights. Civic accountability cannot be replaced by a relationship of gratitude from beneficiaries. The government closest to people's lives is the civic administration, but civic politics is behaving like state politics. The mandate for a triple engine again, like in 2017, signals that voters have chosen stability in a fragmented field, and remain committed to cosmopolitanism. The Opposition failed to offer a credible civic vision beyond anti-incumbency. The bogey of a threat to Marathi Asmita did not work. But the deeper message is that Mumbai has started voting with low expectations. The city has become habituated to dysfunction, not outraged by it. This is a dangerous normalisation.

Mumbai's central problem is not only who rules; it is what powers the city-government actually has. Indian public finance and governance still treat cities as administrative appendages of state governments, not as economic engines that require autonomy, capacity and long-horizon planning. The Chief Minister holding the urban development portfolio has become predictable precisely because that department controls the golden goose: land, permissions, development control, and the levers through which politics can monetise urban growth.

If Mumbai is serious about being a world-class city, it needs structural change. It needs single-point accountability for metropolitan outcomes; de-fragmentation of agencies; fiscal autonomy that does not reduce the municipality to an accountant at someone else's mercy; a predictable rule-of-law permissions regime; and a civic compact that treats public goods as non-negotiable. Most importantly, it needs citizens who do not outsource disappointment. Mumbai has always been a city that contains multitudes: dreams and despair, wealth and vulnerability, glamour and grime, cosmopolitanism and cruelty. But it cannot remain, indefinitely, a city that funds the nation while failing itself. Mumbai voted for stability. But now it must demand fulfilment of its aspiration. The city of dreams can no longer afford the governance of drift.



GIFT City managed to steal a march—not because it possessed Mumbai's cultural or market depth, but because it offered policy alignment, friendly regulation, fiscal incentives and administrative push from the top. Mumbai remained trapped in the politics of discretion. Mumbai's financial autonomy is limited since even the property tax rates are determined by the state government. The impressive coastal road project needed funding from the Centre or other sources. The metro network depends much on an external purse. Mumbaikars, apart from their financial orphanhood, also pay a hidden tax, which is in terms of numerous permissions, for building, redevelopment or utilities. The compliance cost is unpredictable, and consumes time. The delays impose a cost and become translated as higher real estate prices and eventually worsen inequality. There is a strange and perpetually large mismatch between excess stock of luxury supply and unmet demand for affordable housing. A few years ago,

## Bouquet culture: All-pervasive ritual needs a recall

The Tribune Editorial: Wasteful expenditure becomes an established norm, with no questions asked. It also sends a message of misplaced priorities.

THE customary image follows a set pattern—a Chief Minister calling on a Central minister with an impressive bouquet of flowers or a rich state-specific art or craft item. Any visiting dignitary, too, is bombarded with offerings. There is logic in the argument that these are tokens of respect and that such gestures matter. What's problematic is how the culture of indulgence percolates down the line. Government funds are similarly put to use at just about every meeting or event, even ironically if the purpose of the discussion is shortage of funds and seeking additional financial help. At public functions, the stage is filled with a tasteless display. Huge amounts are spent on gaudy souvenirs and unnecessary takeaways. Wasteful expenditure then becomes an established norm, with no questions asked. It also sends a message of misplaced priorities—that



money is never an issue for governments, where and how to spend it certainly is. The unending love for flowers—

even if at public expense—is heartwarming, but why is a warm greeting not enough? If the uplifting presence of flowers helps in arriving at decisions that can uplift the lot of the swarming millions, the practice should be passionately followed. If it helps in having a more civilised political discourse, absolutely go for it. There is no evidence to support these claims. It's not simply a call for austerity and putting an end to meaningless rituals. It's a plea for a more responsible and measured way of functioning.

A bouquet represents warmth and hope on behalf of the people, but it's been reduced to a mandatory accompaniment and handout meant for the camera. It's sadly now a metaphor for lazy and costly government habits that serve little purpose. May better sense prevail.

## RIP Angel Chakma. More stories from the North-East

As a visual and installation storyteller, Dhiraj's powerful work is an attempt to address his pain.

News from across India and the world has overwhelmed the media—and an incident from December has quietly vanished from the headlines. Barely a month back, a young man from Tripura, Angel Chakma died as a result of wounds he suffered during an attack by thugs in Dehradun, putting the focus back on the discrimination that many from the North-East continue to face whenever they step out of their safe spaces, be it at home or in the areas where they now happen to live. Yet, in this short space of time—the Trumpian threat to Greenland, a Canadian Premier building a strategic partnership with China, the strange spectacle of the legal struggle of stray dogs in India and one of their own, the peace dog Aloka trotting with Buddhist monks in the US—all these incidents have taken over the front pages, headlines and social media reels that inform and define us these days. But apart from the angry and anguished calls for justice, the rage that pours from newspaper columns and studio discussions, which seem to have limited impact on people going about their daily lives (not to speak of governments), there are different responses shared by people from the region on a daily basis. Many of them have either embedded themselves in other states and also are seen or heard on a regular basis. They are visible because they are good at what they do in their chosen professions. They include teachers and sportspersons, singers and artists, chefs, actors, film directors and writers. I think of two here who are making a mark. They don't have to self-advertise or hit the streets, because their chosen works are statements in themselves. I met Dhiraj Rabha from Assam's Goalpara district, just 30, with a smiling countenance and a relaxed air. Behind that exterior, lies a complex story, rooted in a troubled past that is

reflective of the challenges that Assam itself faced in the 1990s and 2002. In the past years, Dhiraj has made a mark at Goa's Serendipity Festival, in the Bengal Biennale, in an intense workshop held in Guwahati on a boat on the Brahmaputra and on land. Most recently, we met at the Kochi Biennale which draws artists from across the world, not just India or South Asia, over a three-month period. Lakhs of visitors including artists, art connoisseurs and tourists, meet, mingle and share experiences as they converse and learn from each other. Dhiraj's father Dhananjay Rabha was a member of the United Liberation Front of Assam (ULFA), the group that espoused separation from India and was subsequently banned by the Central government. After 14 years or so in ULFA, with both of his children having been born in exile, Dhananjay returned in a wave of surrenders by former rebels. He and his family were given space in a camp set up in rural Goalpara. They never received any financial compensation and it is the only home that Dhiraj has known and which has shaped his life and thinking.

Most of his experiences that have translated into art have been influenced both by the suffering that his mother, Kausalya, went through and the 25 years that he's been based in the camp. She was the one who fled from home to home, from one hiding space to another, protecting her small children when the security forces came hunting for them. Dhiraj says, with a gentle laugh, that his elder sister is affectionately called Army buri (old woman) because she was born during such a time of flight and fear. Their living place is simply known locally as the SULFA (Surrendered ULFA) camp. On a whim, Dhiraj, who was always interested in drawing, applied at the Santiniketan in West Bengal and got admission to a four-year undergraduate course

followed by two years in a master's programme. He made friends, honed in-born talent and learned new skills. As he developed the idea of an installation based on his life experience, he decided to hold the first exhibition in the camp among the people who were his neighbours and friends. People from the village, who often wondered what lay behind those walls, and former



camp inmates came to watch. The audience was captivated, deeply moved. In the early years, he says, there were some 400 people in that camp, today there are barely four families.

As he researched the project, poetically called The Quiet Weight of Shadows, he extensively interviewed former militants to understand their lives and found that their stories were a resistance to and a contradiction of imposed narratives by the State and the establishment

media. "Many left to join (ULFA) at the time out of emotion, they had no idea about the ideology, they left because others were going and risking their lives, they had no political convictions," he remarked, acknowledging that those who took up arms "at times went out of control." As a visual and installation storyteller, Dhiraj's powerful work is not just a reflection on the past but a multi-layered effort to address the trauma of those times. A field of glowing, speaking, carnivorous flowers shares history and underlines the point that revolutions and states devour their own while a broken and burnt house could be representative of the loss of memory and the harm.

"I wanted to collect stories, I did not try to apportion blame or say what is right and wrong—there are enough people doing that." He is now thinking about a new project—he does not want to be stuck with a "ULFA" artist tag—and is looking at how greedy corporate and political forces have cast covetous eyes on the rich natural resources (especially minerals) of the North-East.

Others too are making different statements. In Goa, there's Monalisa Baruah and her husband Saurav, whose restaurant Soul Chef—which serves North-East cuisine—has been a runaway hit for over a decade. Through nuanced and, at times, spicy entrees and dishes that include black sesame chicken, the beloved masor tenga (Assamese sour fish in a tomato gravy), the smoked pork with bamboo shoots, the savoury Shillong pork noodles and the aromatic joha rice of Assam, Monalisa has brought the region on a platter to Goa.

## NEWS BOX

**Jairam Thakur lambasted Sukhu govt for delay in Panchayat elections**

**Dharamshala. (Agency)**

Himachal Pradesh Leader of Opposition Jairam Thakur on Tuesday launched a sharp attack on the state government over the delay in Panchayat elections, alleging that the polls were being postponed under the pretext of the Disaster Management Act.

Talking to media persons at Kangra airport on his arrival for a three-day tour, Thakur said Panchayat elections are the most vital democratic process, giving villagers the right to elect their representatives. He alleged that the government was creating obstacles and weakening democracy by delaying elections, which, he said, should be held on time and in a fair manner.

Accusing the government of misusing the Disaster Act to defer elections, the Leader of the Opposition said this was not only a misuse of law but also a deliberate attempt to undermine democratic institutions. He stressed that elected Panchayat representatives should be empowered with stronger authority to accelerate rural development and public participation.

Sharing details of his tour, Thakur said he would attend party meetings and programmes at Nagrota Bagwan, Dharamshala, Central University campus, Fatehpur, Jammu and Mandi, among other places, adding that the visit was crucial for organisational strengthening and future electoral strategy. He also congratulated the BJP's newly appointed national president Nitin Navin, expressing confidence that under his leadership the party would gain new direction and energy and play an active role in the development of the state and the country.

**Seven chitta addicts cum sellers arrested in Himachal's Hamirpur**

**Hamirpur(HP). (Agency)**

The Hamirpur police is actively doing its best to nab the drug addicts, and in this connection, it has arrested seven persons, including a girl, during the last twenty-four hours. SP, Hamirpur, Balbir Singh Thakur said that in significant operation, Sadar Police, acting on credible inputs, recovered 39.78 grams of chitta from Ward No. 3, Pratapnagar. The accused, namely Rajesh Kumar, Lalit Thakur, Naresh Kumar, Aditya Pandit, and Anu Kumari, have been arrested.

The police have registered an FIR No. 24/2026 dated 20-01-2026 under Sections 21 and 29 of the NDPS Act at Police Station Sadar, Hamirpur.

Similarly, as part of its sustained drive against drug trafficking, Hamirpur Police achieved another breakthrough, and a vigilant team of Police Station Sadar, Hamirpur, recovered 13.83 grams of heroin (chitta) from Sukhwinder Singh S/o Ramesh Chand, resident of Gondpur, Tehsil Haroli, District Una, and Sahil S/o Banku Ram, resident of Pathialyar, Tehsil Barsar, District Hamirpur, who were riding a motorcycle in the Kanauj/Bhota area. Another FIR No. 27/2026 under Sections 21 & 29 of the NDPS Act has been registered, and further investigation is underway.

**Free eye safety screening camp organised at Himachal's Civil hospital**

**Thural, (Kangra). (Agency)**

Under the Road Safety Campaign, a free eye safety screening camp was organised at Government Civil Hospital Thural under the chairmanship of BMO Dr. Anita Kumari, Dr. Anjan Balia, and Superintendent Raman Kumar Sharma from the Regional Transport Office (RTO), Kangra, Dharamshala.

About 52 drivers, including members of taxi unions of Thural block, government and private school bus drivers, and private truck union drivers, participated in the camp. Free eye check-ups were conducted, and those found with weak eyesight were encouraged to use spectacles. This initiative is expected to help reduce road accidents in the future.

Under the road safety campaign, people were also made aware of the need to strictly follow Motor Vehicle Act rules, with warnings that violators would face action under the Act.

Information was also provided about the Hit and Run Scheme and the Rahgir Scheme-2022. Citizens were informed that they can now assist road accident victims without fear of legal consequences. A provision of an incentive amount of Rs 25,000 has been made for those who help save the life of a seriously injured accident victim, and this incentive can be availed up to five times if assistance is provided on multiple occasions.

## Manikarnika ghat controversy: Pal community demands action, Sends memorandum to PM

**The Sikh Times**

**Manoj Pal**

Muzaffarnagar: Anger is growing within the Pal community over allegations of tampering with the temple, idols, and religious structures built by Rajmata Ahilyabai Holkar at Manikarnika Ghat in Varanasi. In protest, hundreds of people from the Pal community demonstrated at the Collectorate premises on Wednesday and submitted a memorandum to Prime Minister Narendra Modi demanding justice. The protesters said that the religious and historical heritage associated with Ahilyabai Holkar at Manikarnika Ghat is a symbol of Sanatan Dharma (Hinduism). Therefore, any kind of vandalism or alteration of the temple, idols, and religious symbols is unacceptable. The community members demanded that the temple and structures be preserved in their original form and that any kind of alteration be immediately stopped. The protesters alleged that when devotees and members of the Pal community arrived to peacefully register their protest in accordance with

their religious sentiments, the police lathi-charged them. Several young people were also booked under various charges. The community members expressed their

the religious heritage and strict action against the culprits. Furthermore, it demanded that all cases filed against the devotees and young people of the Pal com-



anger over the police action, stating that treating devotees like criminals and filing cases against them instead of listening to their concerns is unjust. This has hurt the sentiments of the community. The memorandum demanded that the temple and structures built by Rajmata Ahilyabai Holkar at Manikarnika Ghat be preserved as they are. It demanded an immediate halt to any kind of tampering, vandalism, or alteration of the temple, idols, and religious symbols. It also demanded an impartial investigation into those who damaged

community who participated in the protest be immediately withdrawn, and that departmental and legal action be taken against the officers responsible for the lathi-charge. After the demonstration at the Collectorate premises, the Pal community members submitted the memorandum to Judicial SDM Krishnakant. Following this, a five-member delegation met with District Magistrate Umesh Mishra at his residence and apprised him of the entire matter. The delegation stated that the District Magistrate, after taking note of the

memorandum, assured them that the demands had been forwarded to the government level and that appropriate action would be taken according to the law. Present on the occasion were representatives from various organizations, including Shivkumar Pal District President of the All India Pal Mahasabha; Sunil Kumar Pal City President, Satyendra Pal State Vice President of the Samajwadi Party Teachers' Association, Pushpankar Pal senior BSP leader and former District President, the Divisional President of the Pal Brotherhood Committee Jagdish Pal from the Azad Samaj Party, Mohan Prajapati President of Bharatiya Ati Pichhdha Varg Morcha, Ramesh Pal District President, Harendra Pal State President of the Social Justice Forum Rashtriya Lok Dal and many others. Senior Samajwadi Party leader Deepi Pal, Monu Pal RLD District General Secretary, Gulzari Lal, Sandeep Pal, Pawan Pal, Ankit Chandek, Gullu Pradhan, Munna Pal, Vijaypal, Sumit Pal, Deshpal, Pankaj Pal, and hundreds of others participated in the protest.

**Kangra DC launches 'Gau Seva Narayan Seva Portal' for better management of cow shelters**

**Dharamshala. (Agency)**

Kangra Deputy Commissioner Hemraj Bawra on Tuesday formally launched the Gau Seva Narayan Seva Portal at the DC Office auditorium to ensure greater public participation in the efficient management of cow shelters (gaushalas).

Launching the portal, the DC said that 24 gaushalas and four cow sanctuaries are currently being operated in Kangra district, providing shelter to around 1,802 stray cattle. He said the portal would enable members of the public to make voluntary financial contributions for the upkeep of gaushalas, while ensuring transparency through the mandatory disclosure of an annual detailed account of expenditure of the funds received through the portal.

Bairwa urged the general public to actively contribute through the portal so that the expansion of gaushalas in the district could also be ensured. He described the problem of abandoning cattle as a serious social issue and said the government was taking effective steps to address it, with public cooperation being equally important.

The DC said that under the Gaupayojana of the State Gauseva Commission, the monthly incentive amount provided per cattle has been increased from Rs 700 to Rs 1,200. He added that work is underway to establish new gaushalas and cow sanctuaries in Kangra district.

He further informed that a decision has been taken to install biogas plants in gaushalas and cow sanctuaries with the assistance of the Agriculture Department.

Directions have also been issued to the Animal Husbandry Department to ensure regular veterinary services and proper record maintenance in all gaushalas and sanctuaries. The Deputy Commissioner said police authorities have been instructed to take strict action in cases of cattle smuggling and abandonment of animals from neighbouring states.

Earlier, officials and staff of the Animal Husbandry Department were given detailed training on the portal. Officials from the Animal Husbandry Department and NIC were present on the occasion.

## With water supply enlisted and outsourcing employees' organizations Deputy Commissioner Sangrur issues letter

**The Sikh Times**  
**Malagar khamano**

Fatehgarh Sahib, January 21 State Press Secretary of Water Supply and Sanitation Workers Union Punjab Reg 26 Davinder Singh Nabha, Outsourcing Water Supply Workers Union and State President Sarabjit Singh Bhullar while giving information to the press said that on January 21, 2026, thousands of enlisted and outsourcing workers of the water supply department were to protest in front of the residence of the Punjab Chief Minister in Sangrur by holding a dharna regarding their demands such as making them permanent in the department, increasing their salaries, cancelling the policy of panchayati-

zation of water supply schemes, the district administration, by the Deputy Commissioner Sangrur. A written assurance was given of a meeting with the sub-committee, on which the leaders of the organization held an online meeting and the protest demonstration in front of the Chief Minister's residence has been postponed until the meeting. They said that the meeting with the sub-committee will be followed by a meeting of the state committee and the next fierce struggles will be announced. These leaders expressed special gratitude to the organizations of regular employees working in the department for supporting the struggle.



implementing the rule of equal work equal pay, stopping the technology that destroys employment, etc. Due to which,

while talking to the leaders, formed the organization under the leadership of Finance Minister Harpal Singh Cheema

## Racket selling expired imported items busted, 7 land in police net

New Delhi: The crime branch of Delhi Police has busted a racket involved in illegally importing expired international food products, altering their manufacturing and expiry dates, affixing them with fake barcodes, and repackaging them for sale across the country, said officials on Tuesday. Acting on specific intelligence, the cyber cell of the crime branch raided multiple locations in the congested wholesale markets of Pahari Dheeraj and Faiz Ganj in north Delhi's Sadar Bazar area. The investigators uncovered a full-fledged underground "factory" dedicated to giving expired food a second illegal life. Seven accused, including the venture's mastermind, were arrested.

The racket was the brainchild of 54-year-old Atal Jaiswal, who allegedly sourced near-expiry and expired international food con-

signments at throwaway prices from wholesalers in Mumbai. The consignments originated from countries like the UK, USA and Dubai. When they reached India, they were already unfit for human consumption. Instead of being destroyed,

as mandated by law, the products were systematically "re-manufactured" — their dates changed, labels altered, fake bar-

codes pasted, and packaging redone to make them appear

freshly imported, the DCP added. Police recovered over 43,700 kg of food items and more than 14,600 litres of beverages. From popular biscuits to sauces, and from energy drinks to condiments, the list reads like a brand catalogue of a global supermarket. Products from Oreo, Biscoff, Nutella, Pringles, Heinz, Lindt, Coca-Cola, Mountain Dew, Starbucks and imported baby food items and snacks were part of the seized stock. Officials said the repackaged goods were repackaged in bulk to major retail chains

**NAME CHANGE**  
I, VIPIN S/O DEVENDER SINGH R/O A-16, Gali No-1, Pookel-5, Sonia Vihar, Karawal Nagar, North East Delhi-110094, hereby undertake that I VIPIN want to change my name KHUSHI and gender as FEMALE. I VIPIN henceforth be known as KHUSHI DO DEVENDER SINGH.

The above statement made by me is true & correct to the best of my knowledge and belief. If any legal issue arises in this regard at any stage, I will be personally responsible for the same and the Department of Publication will not be liable for any consequences arising therefrom.

**NAME CHANGE**  
I, NIKITA WO KUSHAL PAL R/O 295, MALPURADHARUHARA, REWA, R/HARYANA-123110, HAVE CHANGED MY NAME TO NIKITA RATHI FOR ALL FUTURE PURPOSE.

**NAME CHANGE**  
I, hitherto known as PREETI POLIWAR DO SUBHASH KUMAR POLIWAR R/o C 31 Third Floor, Dugal Colony Devi Kharan, New Delhi, South Delhi, Delhi-110062, have changed my name and shall hereafter be known as PREETI POLIWAR, for all future purposes.

**NAME CHANGE**  
I, SANIA NAA wife of LATE MOHD NAZIM declare as under that I disowned my son's MOHD NAFLI from my all movable/immovable/Patrick properties/assets for his wrong behaviour. I shall not be held responsible for any kind of acts done by him in money or transactions or police cases and criminal activity illegal/legal and property purposes in the future. That he debarred from entering my premises situated at H NO-2825, BULBUL KHANA, GUL REHMAN, TURKMAN GATE, DELHI-110006.

**NAME CHANGE**  
I, SHAILA DEVI is legally mother of No. 15717764N Rank- HAV Name SANYOG KUMAR presently residing at VILL-KATAUNA, THANAKATRISARAI, KATAUNA (PARTIN GIRAIK), NALANDA, (BIHAR)-805130, have changed my name from SHAILA DEVI to SUMITRI DEVI for all future purposes. Vide Affidavit Dated 21/01/2026 before Notary Public New Delhi.

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I, SHAILA DEVI is legally mother of No. 15717764N Rank- HAV Name SANYOG KUMAR presently residing at VILL-KATAUNA, THANAKATRISARAI, KATAUNA (PARTIN GIRAIK), NALANDA, (BIHAR)-805130, have changed my name from SHAILA DEVI to SUMITRI DEVI for all future purposes. Vide Affidavit Dated 21/01/2026 before Notary Public New Delhi.

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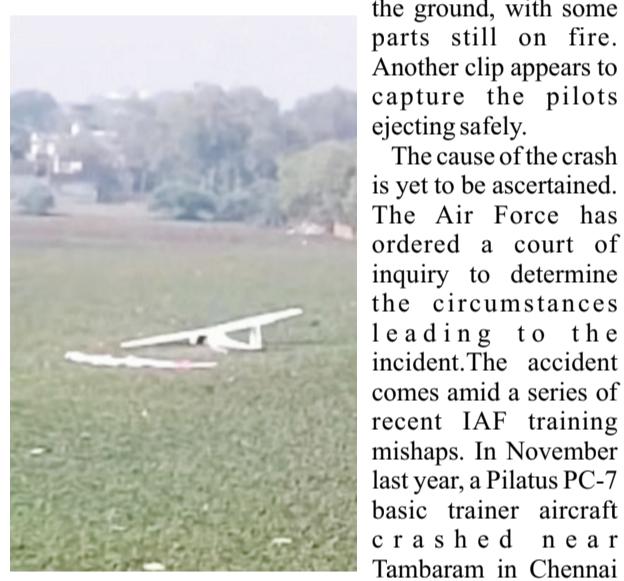
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# Kitna sukhaoge Sukhna Lake ko? Supreme Court's sharp words during Aravalli hearing

**While hearing the Aravalli Hills case, the Supreme Court raised the issue of illegal construction to flag the condition of Chandigarh's Sukhna Lake, one of the city's iconic tourist hotspots.**

**Air Force's microlight aircraft crashes in UP during training sortie, pilots safe**

**New Delhi.(Agency)**  
An Indian Air Force (IAF) microlight aircraft crashed in Uttar Pradesh's Prayagraj on Tuesday during a routine training sortie. Both pilots on board ejected safely and were later recovered, the Air Force said. The crash occurred during a routine flying exercise. No civilian casualties or damage to property on the ground were reported. Videos from the site show the aircraft's wreckage scattered across



training mission, with the pilot ejecting safely.

In another incident in March last year, an IAF Jaguar fighter jet crashed near Panchkula in Haryana due to a technical malfunction; the pilot steered the aircraft away from populated areas before ejecting safely.

**Delhi govt to refab Zakhira, Seelampur flyovers**

**New Delhi.(Agency)**

The Delhi government has cleared three major projects concerning busy city flyovers. On Tuesday, it approved a new flyover on Pankha Road in the Janakpuri area and ordered comprehensive repair of Zakhira and Seelampur flyovers, both of which are critical, high-load structures.

Public Works Department (PWD) Minister Parvesh Sahib Singh said the approvals reflect the government's balanced infrastructure strategy by creating new capacity where congestion is growing, while undertaking scientific and technology-driven repairs of ageing flyovers. To address persistent traffic congestion in west Delhi, the government has approved the engagement of a consultant to conduct a feasibility study and prepare a detailed project report for the proposed flyover on Pankha Road from DESU Colony to D-Block of Janakpuri.

The project report will examine traffic volume, road geometry, land availability, engineering feasibility, and future mobility requirements in the area.

"We are planning ahead where congestion is rising. Janakpuri needs a permanent, well-designed solution, and this is the first step towards that," Singh said. Alongside, the department has sanctioned '20.18 crore for the repair and rehabilitation of Zakhira flyover, which is one of Delhi's busiest passages for traffic moving towards Rohtak in Haryana. This flyover the Anand Parbat area, which lies on its eastern side, is a waterlogging-prone location. Due to its proximity with an industrial area, this flyover carries heavy traffic and has faced structural stress over the years. The new plan will fix these issues, the PWD said.

The approved works will include repair of spalled and honeycomb concrete, replacement of expansion joints, replacement of elastomeric bearings, and strengthening of girders using carbon fibre wrapping.

The government has also approved '17.85 crore for repair and rehabilitation of Seelampur flyover, a vital arterial structure in east Delhi.

"Delhi's flyovers must be safe not just today, but for decades ahead. That is why we are using modern engineering technologies, enforcing strict timelines and fixing accountability at every level," Singh said.

**New Delhi.(Agency)**  
The Supreme Court on Wednesday expressed concerns over the drying up of Chandigarh's iconic Sukhna Lake to raise the issue of illegal construction while hearing the Aravalli Hills case. While warning the Haryana government against repeating past mistakes, a Supreme Court bench led by Chief Justice of India Surya Kant said the Sukhna Lake had been "completely damaged" due to the connivance of officials and the builder mafia.

"Kitna sukhaoge Sukhna Lake ko (How much will you dry up Sukhna Lake) due to connivance of state officials, builder mafia is operating... You have damaged the lake completely," the CJI-led bench said.

The rain-fed Sukhna Lake, one of Chandigarh's iconic tourist hotspots, has long been plagued by dipping water levels. In fact, the lake has become a far cry from



the picturesque water body that used to attract thousands of people every day. The Supreme Court's sharp remarks came while it was hearing the case on the new definition of the Aravalli range. Amid

widespread outrage over the new definition, the court paused its own order last year and set up an expert committee (CEC) to undertake an exhaustive examination of the issue.

Previously, the top court had accepted the definition of the Aravallis proposed by the government—hills with a 100-metre height would be considered as 'Aravalli hills'. Two or more such hills within 500 metres of each other, along with the land between them, will be considered an Aravalli range. On Wednesday, the CJI asked the amicus curiae, senior advocate K Parameshwar, who is assisting the court, to file a detailed note within four weeks by incorporating suggestions from all parties and stakeholders.

The top court made it clear that the definition of "forests" and "Aravallis" would be kept separate in its new order. "What defines a forest will be examined separately. We will consider it as a wider term. The Aravalli issue will be kept narrower," the Supreme Court said. It also directed the Rajasthan government to ensure that illegal mining is stopped "immediately".

**Amid Fury Over Techie Drowning, Delhi Accident Data Exposes Urban Safety Gaps**

**New Delhi.(Agency)**

The death of a young software engineer who drowned in a waterlogged pit in Noida has once again raised alarm over urban safety in the national capital region. Even as the incident occurred nearly 40 km away from Delhi, data from the Delhi Assembly reveals that between January 2024 and December 2025, 239 people lost their lives to accidents and natural disasters in the capital, with drowning emerging as the deadliest threat. Of the 239 deaths, 89 were due to drowning—more than any other single accidental cause. These fatalities were rarely in deep rivers; instead, they occurred in everyday urban spaces turned into death traps by poor drainage.

Many deaths occurred in underpasses,

"adequate" number of pilots on its rolls to meet operational requirements under the new FDTL rules, which provide for more rest time to pilots.

The IndiGo management said that it

and no flight cancellations after February 10, 2026, based on the current approved network," the regulator stated on Tuesday.

The DGCA has imposed a fine of 22.20 crore rupees on IndiGo following

large-scale delays and cancellations by the airline in early December last year. During the three days of 3rd and 5th December, the airline cancelled 2,507 flights and delayed 1,852 flights caused inconvenience to over three lakh passengers stranded at various airports. The fine was imposed following a detailed inquiry conducted by a four-member Committee constituted by the DGCA to undertake a comprehensive review and assessment of the circumstances leading to the operational disruptions of IndiGo.

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## NEWS BOX

## T20 World Cup defence first, verdict on Gautam Gambhir can wait

New Delhi. (Agency)

Indian cricket has a long memory when it comes to controversial coaches, and few names evoke as much unease as Greg Chappell. Two decades on, his tenure remains a cautionary tale of how swiftly a coach can be vilified, isolated and ultimately consumed by public and internal dissent. In recent weeks, Gautam Gambhir has found himself drifting into similarly charged territory — a comparison that feels both premature and deeply unfair. The knives have been out in the immediate aftermath of India's historic 1-2 ODI series loss to New Zealand — their first bilateral defeat to the Black Caps on home soil since 1988. Social media, the modern-day Colosseum, was awash with demands for Gambhir's head. To the reactionary observer, the defeat in Indore was one of the final straws in a coaching tenure that has already seen stumbles in the Border-Gavaskar Trophy and home Test whitewashes. But football-style scapegoating — fire the



coach — misses how deep and structural some of the issues truly are. In fact, Gambhir himself reminded many after the series defeat in Australia that there was no room for hollow satisfaction, despite Virat Kohli and Rohit Sharma's success in the Sydney finale. "Yes, I can be very happy with the individual performances, yes. And I will always remain happy with individual performances. But ultimately, we lost the ODI series. That's the bottom line. And I can never celebrate a series loss as a coach," Gambhir had said. To now blame Gambhir for everything that is going wrong is both simplistic and unfair. Yes, his tenure in Test cricket has been deeply disappointing and accountability must be sought. But even in red-ball cricket — a format clearly in transition — the holes are many and systemic, stretching beyond one individual. Yes, India lost the recent ODI series to a second-string New Zealand side that rested several first-choice players in the lead-up to the T20 World Cup starting February 7. But the same caveat applies to India, who were without Jasprit Bumrah, Axar Patel, Hardik Pandya and Varun Chakravarthy — four players who form the spine of India's white-ball plans.

### Sanjay Manjrekar defends Gill, Gambhir after NZ loss: Only World Cup matters in ODIs

NEW DELHI. (Agency)

Former India cricketer-turned-commentator Sanjay Manjrekar has come out in defence of Shubman Gill and Co. following their series loss against New Zealand on home soil. India suffered their maiden ODI series defeat against the Kiwis at home after 37 years, going down 1-2 in the series.

Following the loss, Manjrekar urged fans not to go overboard with criticism of the team, stating that bilateral series hardly matter in this day and age. He asked fans to look at the bigger picture, asserting that only the World Cup truly matters in world cricket, and not even the Champions Trophy. Honestly, in 50-over cricket today, what really matters are the World Cups and not even the



Champions Trophy. If you try and remember the last three Champions Trophy winners, you'll struggle to recall those. But the 50-over World Cup, you'll remember each winner from the time the World Cup started," said Manjrekar in a video shared on his Instagram account. Manjrekar added that setbacks in smaller series should not cause panic. In fact, he believes such losses can sometimes help teams reset and improve ahead of bigger events. So, yes, if you want to have your setbacks and poor performances, get them out of the system now, in time for the next World Cup. These bilateral series are scheduled, but they are mostly warm-up games and one shouldn't read too much into them. In fact, the importance of these bilateral series has become such that, two weeks later, no cricket fan even remembers the result of what happened in that bilateral ODI series," he added. Ever since India's dream run in the ODI World Cup 2023, which was brought to an end by a crushing defeat to Australia in the final, India's performance in the 50-over format has been on a downward curve. In the 26 matches played since then, India have won 12, lost 12, tied one, while two have ended with no result. Since 2024, the Men in Blue have lost series against Sri Lanka, Australia and New Zealand.

# Bodo/Glimt 3-1 Man City: Champions League shocker in Norway piles pressure on Pep

Champions League: Manchester City suffered one of their worst European nights as they went down 3-1 to Norwegian minnows Bodo/Glimt. Shaky results since the turn of the New Year have led to rumours that Pep Guardiola could exit the Premier League club before the end of his current contract.

NEW DELHI. (Agency)

Pep Guardiola's Manchester City were left reeling on Tuesday night after one of the most shocking results in recent European football history, a 3-1 defeat to Norwegian minnows Bodo/Glimt in the UEFA Champions League at the Aspmyra Stadion. The loss has intensified scrutiny on the City manager's future amid a growing crisis of form that has enveloped the defending Premier League champions since the turn of



the year. The Norwegian side, playing in the Champions League group stage for the first time, delivered a near-perfect performance against the star-studded English giants. Kasper Hauge struck twice in quick succession before halftime, exploiting defensive lapses to give Bodo/Glimt a stunning 2-0 advantage. Jens Petter Hauge added a third early in the second half, curling a superb effort past City keeper Gianluigi Donnarumma, before Rayan Cherki pulled one back for the visitors. City's hopes of a comeback were effectively

ended when Rodri was sent off after two yellow cards in the space of a minute, leaving Guardiola's side with ten men and struggling to exert control. The defeat not only stunned the small Arctic club — a team ranked well outside the European elite — but also dealt a heavy blow to City's hopes of automatic qualification for the last 16. For Bodo/Glimt, the victory was historic. The club, based in a town of around 55,000 people and playing in Europe's top competition for the first time, secured their first-ever Champions League win and one of the biggest upsets in the

tournament's history. Their tactical discipline, intense pressing and lethal counter-attacks were a stark contrast to City's disjointed performance.

### EVERYTHING IS GOING WRONG: GUARDIOLA

Guardiola stressed he did not underestimate Bodo, but he left out a few of their best players, fielding their youngest-ever starting XI in a Champions League match.

"We have to come back to the feeling that the results since 2025 have not been good — in terms of the Premier League, and now today — but we move forward to Wolves and Galatasaray. We see what happens. Today was an incredible opportunity for us," he said. "Everything is — the feeling that it's going wrong, it's going against in many details — you have to try to change it."

The result deepens problems for Manchester City, who have struggled for consistency since the start of 2026. After a goalless draw at Sunderland on New Year's Day, City were held 1-1 by Chelsea and later by Brighton, dropping further ground in the Premier League title race. A 2-0 derby defeat to Manchester United last weekend added to the misery and sparked fresh rumours of Guardiola's departure.

### Virat Kohli scores and returns to London, doesn't need domestic cricket: Former batter

CHRISTCHURCH. (Agency)

Former India cricketer turned commentator Mohammad Kaif has said that Virat Kohli no longer needs to play domestic cricket, as his hunger and passion to represent the country remain unmatched. Kohli continued his rich vein of form in the recent three-match series against New Zealand, scoring 240 runs from three innings. He played a splendid knock of 124 off 108 balls, laced with ten fours and three sixes, during the third ODI, albeit in a losing cause as India fell short of the 337-run target. Following yet another prolific series, Mohammad Kaif praised the batting stalwart for maintaining remarkable consistency despite not playing regularly. "Virat has become that player who is seen once in a while now. But he comes, scores runs, and then goes back to London. It has become like that. He comes, scores, and goes. It is not easy to score



## IND vs NZ: Pressure on Suryakumar as India enter home stretch of T20 World Cup prep

NEW DELHI. (Agency)

India captain Suryakumar Yadav will be keen to put his batting struggles behind him and sharpen his leadership skills as the hosts step into their final dress rehearsal ahead of their T20 World Cup title defense.

The five-match T20I series against New Zealand, beginning in less than a month, serves as the last major checkpoint before the global showpiece gets underway on February 7. While India boast a winning percentage of over 72 under Suryakumar's captaincy, the skipper's own returns with the bat have left much to be desired. Despite a few injury setbacks, the core of India's squad appears largely settled. The first T20I will be streamed live on the JioHotstar app and website, while the match will also be telecast on the Star Sports network from 7.00 PM IST on Wednesday. As many as seven spots in the playing XI pick themselves, eight, if Tilak Varma regains full fitness — with only one position likely to be debated depending on conditions: an additional fast bowler or wrist-spinner, Kuldeep Yadav. CAN KIWIS CONQUER T20Is TOO?

New Zealand have already rewritten history in India, securing their maiden Test and ODI series victories on Indian soil in the space of just over a year. The next frontier is

T20Is. Can the Blackcaps pull off a first-ever series win in the format, discounting the solitary match they won in 2012?

They have come close before, in 2017 and 2023, with both three-match series going

down to the wire, only for India to prevail 2-1 on each occasion. That context alone adds edge to this five-match contest, which also doubles up as the final dress rehearsal for both sides ahead of the T20 World Cup. India enter the series on a roll, having won eight consecutive bilateral T20I series since lifting the world title in June 2024. But they have not faced their perennial bogey team in the format for nearly two years, and New Zealand rarely come empty-handed when taking on India.

The hosts have won 18 of their last 25 T20Is, driven by the explosive starts of Abhishek Sharma and the guile of Varun Chakravarthy in the middle overs. New Zealand, though, are no pushovers, winning 13 of their 21 matches since the last World Cup. With Devon Conway, skipper Mitchell Santner, pace spearhead Jacob Duffy and in-form batters Daryl Mitchell and Glenn Phillips, the Blackcaps shape up as stern opponents in what promises to be a high-stakes series.

### SURYAKUMAR MUST SORT HIS FORM

Once an undisputed World No.1 in T20Is, Suryakumar Yadav has suffered his worst run with the bat in 2025. The Indian captain has gone 22 T20I innings without a single fifty and has scored just 218 runs at a worrying average of 12.84. The decision to promote Tilak Varma to No.3 and drop himself down to No.4 has helped the team, but his own batting has now emerged as the weakest link. Suryakumar has struggled against pace, particularly against straight deliveries bowled at hard lengths. The idea of a non-performing captain leading India's T20 World Cup title defence at home does little to inspire confidence.

## PCB tells ICC it backs Bangladesh's refusal to play T20 World Cup matches in India: Report

New Delhi. (Agency)

The Pakistan Cricket Board has reportedly backed Bangladesh's stance of refusing to play its T20 World Cup matches in India due to "security concerns" in a communication to the ICC. The ICC Board is scheduled to meet on Wednesday to take a final call on Bangladesh's participation in the T20 World Cup, including whether the team will travel to India for the tournament starting February 7. Bangladesh are slated to play all four of their group-stage matches in India, with the first three scheduled in Kolkata and the remaining one in Mumbai. However, the Bangladesh Cricket Board, supported by its government, has remained adamant and sought a shift of its matches to co-hosts Sri Lanka. On the eve of the ICC meeting, the PCB wrote to the global body stating that it supports the BCB's stance, citing political



instability in the region and has copied all ICC Board members on the letter, according to 'ESPNcricinfo'. The ICC and the BCB have held multiple discussions on the issue, including a meeting in Dhaka last weekend, but neither side has changed its position. While the ICC has insisted that the

tournament be held as per schedule, the BCB has maintained that it cannot send their team to India. The PCB has not made any public comment on the matter although Board sources have said that the Bangladesh government had contacted Pakistan for support in the ICC. Pakistan will be playing all their matches in Sri Lanka under a hybrid model agreement with the BCCI and ICC till 2027. The crisis related to Bangladesh began after Kolkata Knight Riders released pacer Mustafizur Rahman following a directive from the BCCI, which referred to "recent developments all around". Subsequently, the Bangladesh government banned the broadcast of the IPL, and the BCB formally informed the ICC of its decision of not playing World Cup matches in India.

## After beating India in Tests, ODIs can New Zealand complete trifecta in T20I series

New Delhi. (Agency)

When New Zealand arrived in India for the Test series in 2024, the hosts were enjoying a fresh phase under Gautam Gambhir, playing fearless cricket with renewed confidence. Few gave the Blackcaps any chance on Indian soil. Yet, despite missing several big names, New Zealand stunned India with a historic 3-0 whitewash. Fast forward to 2026, and the script did not look very different during the ODI series. India fielded a full-strength side, while New Zealand were without captain Mitchell Santner. The visitors were packed with youngsters, and after losing the opening match in Vadodara, expectations were minimal. However, fuelled by Daryl Mitchell's purple patch, New Zealand once again shocked the hosts with back-to-back wins in Rajkot and Indore to claim their first-ever ODI series victory in India. Now, attention shifts to the T20I series, and the pressure is back on India. New Zealand enter the contest with little expectation, while the hosts have never lost a



Foukles, Daryl Mitchell, James Neesham, Glenn Phillips, Rachin Ravindra, Kyle Jamieson, Jacob Duffy, Matt Henry, Ish Sodhi. **Batting prowess in plenty** The only potential concern in New Zealand's batting lineup is the lack of explosive firepower at the top. Finn Allen and Tim Seifert, both part of the T20 World Cup squad, are currently tied up with Big Bash League commitments. As a result, Devon

Conway and Tim Robinson are expected to open the innings. While Conway is a familiar name for Indian fans, Robinson has been making headlines with his consistency. In 15 T20Is last year, he scored a hundred and a fifty, amassing 402 runs at an average of 44.66 and a strike rate of 144.6.

Add to that the presence of Daryl Mitchell, on whom Santner will be banking to replicate his ODI heroics. Although Mitchell's T20I record against India is modest — 241 runs in 14 matches — his understanding of Indian conditions makes him a dangerous prospect. Mark Chapman and Glenn Phillips provide solidity and acceleration in the middle order, capable of shifting gears at any stage. Santner himself has evolved into a finisher over the past year, striking at an impressive rate of over 187.67. With clearly defined roles and a line-up stacked with power hitters, New Zealand will look to match India's firepower across the five-match series.

## We are on the cusp of a historic trade agreement: EU President on FTA with India

New Delhi.(Agency)

European Commission President Ursula von der Leyen confirmed that India and the EU are moving towards the conclusion of the Free Trade Agreement (FTA) negotiations soon and called it a 'historic trade agreement'. During her address at the World Economic Forum (WEF) in Davos on Tuesday, the European Commission President said, "The next weekend, I will travel to India. There's still work to do, but we are on the cusp of a historic trade agreement, indeed some call it the mother of all deals- one that would create a market of 2 billion people, accounting for almost a quarter of global GDP." India officially began its negotiations for an FTA with the EU back in 2007. However, due to significant differences over market access, tariffs, and regulatory frameworks, the talks were suspended in 2013. Commerce Minister Piyush Goyal has called the FTA as the 'mother of all deal' recently. "I have done seven deals so far- all with developed economies. This one will be the mother of all," Goyal said during a media briefing last week. India and EU are likely to conclude their long-pending FTA talks at the 16th India-EU Summit in New Delhi, as negotiations move into the final phase after nearly 18 years. President Ursula von der Leyen and President of the European Council Antonio Costa will be visiting India from January 25 to 27 as chief guests at the Republic Day celebrations. During the visit, leaders from both sides will hold summit-level discussions with Prime Minister Narendra Modi. A formal signing of the trade pact is expected around January 26-27. Currently, the EU accounts for more than 17% of India's total share of exports in 2024-25, with total exports touching \$75.85 billion. However, the imports from the EU stood at \$60.68 billion in the same year. While both sides have confirmed the conclusion of the deal at the earliest, sensitive sectors of both India and the European Union have been kept out of the deal, the Ministry of Commerce has said. Once finalised, this FTA will be India's largest trade deal - as Indian exporters will have access to 27 countries in the EU.

## Markets Open Lower Over Weak Global Cues, FII Selling; Sensex Down 168 Points

New Delhi.(Agency)

The Indian benchmark indices continued their losses on Wednesday, tracking persistent global risk-off sentiment, continued foreign fund outflows and mixed earnings cues. As of 9.30 am, the Sensex lost 168 points, or 0.20 per cent to reach 82,012 and the Nifty declined 28 points, or 0.11 per cent to 25,204. Main broadcap indices performed in line with benchmark indices, with the Nifty Midcap 100 losing 0.18 per cent, and the Nifty Smallcap 100 easing 0.11 per cent. Sectorally, indices were trading mixed, with Nifty metal and pharma being the notable gainers -- up 0.83 per cent and 0.86 per cent, respectively. IT and chemicals were among major losers, down 0.81 per cent and 1.21 per cent, respectively.

Immediate support lies at 25,050-25,100 zone, while resistance is now anchored near 25,350-25,400 zone, market watchers said. US President Donald Trump threatened to impose 200 per cent tariffs on French wine and Champagne, said Vikram Kasat, Head Advisory, PL Capital. Analysts said the stock selloff in US markets amid Trump's renewed Greenland-related threats makes sense if investors are adopting a risk-off approach. "If investors were simply moving to safer assets, bond prices would have increased. Instead, they also fell on Tuesday, sending yields to their highest value since August," Kasat pointed out. Greenland Prime Minister Jens-Frederik Nielsen on Tuesday asked residents to start preparing for a possible military invasion from the US, however adding that such a scenario is unlikely. Another analyst noted that if the threatened tariffs come into effect, Europe could retaliate leading to a trade war negatively impacting global trade, resulting in further selling in stock markets.

## Our refineries are robust!: India can process Venezuelan crude oil when available; here's what IOCL chairman said

New Delhi.(Agency)

Indian Oil Corporation Ltd (IOCL) said that the country's refineries are capable of processing Venezuelan crude if supplies resume. "If at all things start settling down, if at all a lot of crude starts coming out of Venezuela, then can't we import oil from Venezuela?" he said. The executive further added that the company, used to process Venezuelan crude a decade back and can do so again. "Venezuelan crude earlier when it was available, like 10 years back or eight years back when it used to be there in the market," Sahney said at the World Economic Forum (WEF) in Davos. Speaking about the capabilities of the refineries, the chairman highlighted that they are strong and can process the supplies. "So our refineries are varied, our refineries are robust. They can process in an admixed manner, but we can process Venezuelan crude if and when it is made available." The remarks follow the US's capture of ousted Venezuelan President Nicolas Maduro in a military operation and an agreement to send 50 million barrels of oil, worth \$5.2 billion, to the interim Venezuelan government. Sahney also highlighted India's favourable economic and energy landscape. "India is growing at a phenomenal rate, and everybody is interested in talking about doing business with India," he said. Commenting on global crude prices, he noted, "Crude has been trading in the range of \$60-65 per barrel over the past several months. For the better part of the last six months, they were at \$60 or below.

# Rupee slides past 91 per US dollar: What is driving the fall

**The sharp slide came as global uncertainty rose once again. Investors worldwide have been shifting money toward safer assets, which has strengthened the US dollar and put pressure on emerging market currencies.**

New Delhi.(Agency)

The rupee weakened sharply on Wednesday, slipping beyond 91 per US dollar and touching fresh record lows in early trade. The currency briefly hit 91.38 before stabilising slightly, but the move signalled deepening stress in global and domestic financial markets. The sharp slide came as global uncertainty rose once again. Investors worldwide have been shifting money toward safer assets, which has strengthened the US dollar and put pressure on emerging market currencies.

**GEOPOLITICAL AND TARIFF TENSIONS** Renewed tensions between the United States and Europe, along with concerns surrounding trade and geopolitical developments, have pushed global markets into a risk-off mood. Analysts say this shift has been a major driver in the rupee's fall, especially as global equity markets weaken and investors seek the safety of the dollar. Foreign investor behaviour has also played a significant role. Persistent outflows from Indian equities and bonds have reduced dollar supply in the domestic market, pushing the rupee lower.

### FII SELLING BACK TO HAUNT

After record foreign selling through 2025, outflows have continued in early 2026, keeping the currency on the back foot. When foreign funds pull money out, they typically convert rupees into dollars, and this process increases demand for the US currency. Strong demand for dollars from importers has added more pressure. India

depends heavily on imported commodities, and the combination of higher global prices and a weakening rupee has encouraged companies to hedge aggressively. This hedging behaviour increases dollar purchases, which puts additional strain on the local currency.



Traders say importers have been far more active than exporters, reflecting concerns that the rupee may weaken further.

### RBI MONITORING SITUATION

The Reserve Bank of India (RBI) has taken a measured approach to the currency movement. Market participants believe the central bank has been intervening occasionally through state-run banks to prevent disorderly volatility but has allowed the rupee to adjust to global conditions. Rather than defending a particular level, the RBI appears comfortable with a gradual, flowing depreciation. Economists say the central bank may step in more forcefully only if speculative attacks or panic-driven moves begin to emerge.

### WHAT RUPEE'S FALL MEANS FOR YOU

A rupee beyond 91 per dollar carries consequences for the broader economy. Higher import costs could show up in fuel, electronics, and industrial inputs, which may eventually feed into inflation. Overseas travel and foreign education become more expensive, while currency weakness can add to volatility in stock markets. Exporters, on the other hand, may benefit from the improved value of foreign earnings.

## Gold at record highs, silver inching closer to Rs 3.5 lakh: Should you buy now

New Delhi.(Agency)

Gold and silver extended their blistering rally on Wednesday, with gold inching toward Rs 1.6 lakh on MCX and silver pushing closer to Rs 3.5 lakh. The surge has left investors wondering whether this is the moment to buy or the moment to hold back. A mix of global uncertainty, rising geopolitical tension and a sharply weaker rupee has turned bullion into the market's preferred safe haven, triggering aggressive buying across the board.

### GOLD SURGES TOWARD NEW RECORDS

COMEX gold traded near 4,840 dollars after hitting lifetime high of 4,849 dollars earlier in the day. Analysts say the trend remains decisively bullish, supported by safe-haven demand and strong technical momentum. Ponnudi R, CEO of Enrich Money, said gold is comfortably trading above all major support zones, including the rising channel and the 20-day EMA near 4,769 dollars. He believes the next big trigger is clear. A sustained move above 4,900 dollars can quickly propel prices toward 5,000 to 5,050 dollars," he said.

In India, the rupee's fall beyond 91 per dollar has intensified the rally. MCX gold continues to hold above the Rs 1,49,300 to Rs 1,50,300 support zone, with buyers stepping in at every dip.

According to Ponnudi, a breakout above



Rs 1,58,000 to Rs 1,59,000 could open the path toward Rs 1,62,000 to Rs 1,65,000 in the near term.

### SILVER'S RALLY LOOKS EVEN MORE POWERFUL

Silver has been matching gold's pace and, at times, outshining it. On COMEX, the metal is consolidating between 92.57 and 95.73 dollars, but the breakout above the crucial 90 to 92 dollar zone remains intact. Ponnudi said silver's strength is supported by

both investment demand and powerful industrial drivers. Solar panels, EV batteries, electronics and AI-linked hardware are all pushing consumption higher. He said a breakout above 95.73 to 96.50 dollars could lift silver to 99 to 100 dollars, with long-term potential toward 110 to 120 dollars in 2026. On MCX, silver is inching closer to the Rs 3.5 lakh level. The 20-day EMA near Rs 3,17,000 continues to act as reliable support, and sustained trade above Rs 3,26,000 keeps the uptrend strong. Near-term targets lie at Rs 3,30,000 to Rs 3,32,000, with scope for an extension toward Rs 3,35,000 to Rs 3,50,000. Ponnudi said any dip toward Rs 3,15,000 to Rs 3,13,000 should be viewed as a high-conviction accumulation opportunity.

### SO, SHOULD YOU BUY NOW?

Gold and silver are rising because the world is unsettled. Geopolitical tensions are rising, global markets are shaky, major currencies are volatile and central banks continue to accumulate bullion.

## India remains top investment bet despite global volatility: Ananya Birla

New Delhi.(Agency)

India remains the most attractive market for long-term investors despite global uncertainty and short-term volatility, said Ananya Birla, Director at the Aditya Birla Group, on the sidelines of the annual meeting of the World Economic Forum 2026 in Davos. "Whoever is a long-term investor across the world, I think India is the market to be," she said in a conversation with Siddharth Zarabi - Editor, Business Today. "We have the highest working population, we are among the fastest-growing economies, and from a long-term point of view, India is the place to invest." Speaking about the global business environment, Ananya Birla said artificial intelligence is changing the way companies operate at a rapid pace. She said while AI is improving productivity, businesses are still trying to fully understand how the technology will reshape industries and workforces. "AI is really transforming things quite rapidly and we don't quite know how the landscape may change," she said, adding that companies must be careful about how they deploy technology. According to her, the focus should be on using AI to improve human efficiency rather than making jobs redundant.

She pointed out that this issue is especially important for countries like India, where employment and workforce participation are critical to economic stability. There is a moral dilemma when it comes to AI. We want to make sure we increase productivity and not create fear around jobs or impact the middle class," she said.

Ananya Birla also spoke about the growing importance of global integration. With the Aditya Birla Group operating across 41 countries and trading in nearly 80 markets, she said managing global capital flows and supply chains has become more important than ever.

Around 41% of the group's operations are outside India, underlining the need for stable global trade frameworks. On trade disruptions and tariffs, including higher duties on Indian exports to the US, she said short-term volatility remains a challenge. However, she added that long-term investors continue to back India due to its scale, growth and demographic strength. She also highlighted the role of infrastructure, inclusion and workforce readiness in India's growth journey. From formal banking inclusion to infrastructure development across sectors such as real estate, she said policy support and execution will be key as India works towards its long-term development goals.

## BPCL leads push to lock in long-term Middle East crude oil purchases

Kolkata.(Agency)

Indian state-owned refiner Bharat Petroleum Corp. is seeking to lock in long-term Middle East crude purchases, in the latest sign that the world's third-largest oil importer is edging back toward traditional suppliers and away from a heavy reliance on cheap Russian cargoes. BPCL, as the company is known, has issued tenders for three grades — Abu Dhabi's Murban, Iraqi Basra and Oman crude — for delivery from April to March 2027, according to traders familiar with the contracts. That's on top of a purchase agreement signed last year with Iraq for 2026, and is above levels seen in recent years, they said, asking not to be named due to the sensitivity of the matter.

BPCL did not respond to a request for

comment.

The oil market has kept a close eye on India's buying activity over recent months, as US sanctions on major Russian producers including Lukoil PJSC and consistent pressure from the Trump administration force refiners to begin weaning themselves off Moscow's discounted crude. In contrast to changes in spot purchases, which can be opportunistic, year-long agreements point to a longer-term commitment. New Delhi officials have now been walking a geopolitical tightrope for months, balancing the country's long-standing relationship with Russia with the reality of political and economic pressure from the US, which imposed punitive tariffs on Indian imports last year. A trade deal with Washington remains elusive. In one indication of increased government

attention, the oil ministry's planning and analysis unit asked refiners last month to furnish details of their imports from Russia and US on a weekly basis. They cited directions from the Prime Minister's office, according to people familiar with the matter. But major refiners are edging back to traditional suppliers. Reliance Industries Ltd. has been active in the Middle Eastern spot market, buying grades including Qatar L and Al-Shaheen earlier this month, the traders said. "We have had the situation when suddenly the sanctions came in, and we had to cut back," Srinivas Tuttugunta, chief operating officer of Reliance's refining and trading business, said on an earnings call last week. He added the company could approach national oil companies for alternative supply without disrupting the spot market.

## Wall Street sinks as Trump threatens 8 European countries with tariffs over Greenland

**The S&P 500 fell 143.15 points, or 2.1%, to 6,796.86. It is the steepest drop for the benchmark index since October.**

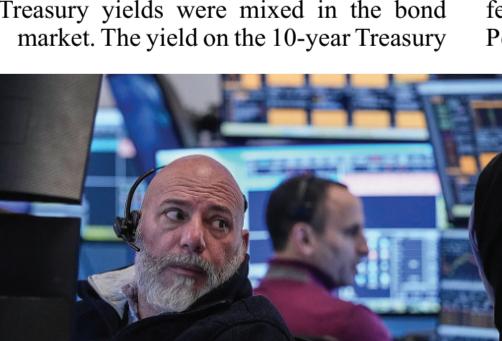
New Delhi.(Agency)

Stocks slumped on Wall Street Tuesday after President Donald Trump threatened to hit eight European countries with new tariffs as tensions escalate over his attempts to assert American control over Greenland. The losses were widespread, with nearly every sector losing ground. Major indexes in the U.S. extended losses from last week in what has been a wobbly start to the year. The S&P 500 fell 143.15 points, or 2.1%, to 6,796.86. It is the steepest drop for the benchmark index since October. The Dow Jones Industrial Average fell 870.74 points, or 1.8%, to 48,488.59. The Nasdaq composite fell 561.07 points, or 2.4%, to 22,954.32. Technology stocks were the heaviest weights on the market. Nvidia,

one of the most valuable companies in the world, plunged 4.4%. Apple fell 3.5%. Retailers, banks and industrial companies also fell sharply. Lowe's fell 3.3%, JPMorgan Chase fell 3.1%, and Caterpillar lost 2.5%. European markets and markets in Asia fell. Long-term bond yields in Japan rose to record levels on concerns over the government's fiscal policy, adding to anxiety in global markets. Trump's trade policy has roiled markets since the start of his second term. Stocks have sold off on the threat of steep tariffs, then rallied when Trump delays or cancels a tariff, or negotiates a lower rate. Trump said Saturday that he would charge a 10% import tax starting in February on goods from Denmark, Norway, Sweden, France, Germany, the United Kingdom, the Netherlands and Finland. The annual combined imports from European Union nations are greater than those from the top two biggest individual importers into the U.S., Mexico and China. Gold prices surged 3.7% and silver prices soared 6.9%. Such assets are often considered safe havens in times of geopolitical turmoil. The trade tensions

apparently short-circuited a recent rally in bitcoin. The cryptocurrency rose above \$96,000 late last week but has dropped back to around \$89,700.

Treasury yields were mixed in the bond market. The yield on the 10-year Treasury



rose to 4.29% from 4.23% late Friday. The yield on the two-year Treasury held steady at 3.60% from late Friday. Companies that focus on consumer staples held up better than most of the market. Colgate-Palmolive rose 1.1% and Campbell's rose 1.5%. The price of U.S. crude oil rose 1.5% to \$60.34 per barrel. The price of Brent crude, the international standard, rose 1.5% to \$64.92.

Trump linked his aggressive stance on Greenland to last year's decision not to award him the Nobel Peace Prize, telling Norway's prime minister that he no longer felt "an obligation to think purely of Peace," in a text message released

Monday. Trump's message to Jonas Gahr Støre appeared to ratchet up a standoff between Washington and its closest allies over his threats to take over Greenland, a self-governing territory of NATO member Denmark. Trump's threats have sparked outrage and a flurry of diplomatic activity across Europe, as leaders consider possible countermeasures, including retaliatory tariffs and the first-ever use of the European Union's anti-coercion instrument.

The trade and political conflict with Europe is heating up just as world leaders meet at the World Economic Forum annual meeting in Davos, Switzerland this week. Wedbush Securities analyst Dan Ives said the new tariff threat "is clearly an overhang on the conference," but that it would likely simmer over time.

Bigg Boss 18 Fame

# Kashish Kapoor

Reveals She Won't Be Part Of The 50:  
'I Had Been Approached But...'

JioHotstar's upcoming reality show 'The 50' has created quite a buzz ever since it was announced. With nearly two weeks to go for the reality show to premiere, fans are curious about the list of contestants who will be participating in the show. So far, a few contestants including Shiny Doshi, Divya Agarwal and others have been confirmed by the makers. Bigg Boss 18 fame Kashish Kapoor has now shared a statement sharing that she will not be a part of the show, even though she was approached for 'The 50'.

#### Kashish Kapoor On Why She Won't Be Joining The 50

On Tuesday, Kashish Kapoor shared a statement clarifying that she will not be participating in The 50. She revealed that she had been approached by the makers, and was in the final stage of payment negotiation. However, it didn't work out due to a scheduling conflict. In her Instagram stories, Kashish wrote, "Many ppl are speculating whether I am doing the 50 or not. So, here it is. Yes, I had been approached and we were in the final stages of negotiating payment however, the dates of

another project that I am doing came and that's clashing with the 50."

She further added, "Thus, due to the lack of availability of dates, I will not be doing the 50. Thanks for all the love though." Check out her Instagram story below! For the unversed, Kashish Kapoor was one of the wild card contestants on Bigg Boss 18. She was also seen in MTV Splitsvilla X5.

Meanwhile, recently, Bhojpuri actress Monalisa (Antara Biswas), known for her participation in Bigg Boss 10, confirmed that she has joined 'The 50' along with her husband Vikrant Singh Rajpoot, Divya Agarwal, Shiny Doshi, Karan Patel and Faisal Shaikh, also known as Mr Faisu, have also been confirmed for the show.

#### About The 50

Produced by Banijay Asia, The 50 is India's upcoming large-scale reality show. Streaming soon on JioHotstar and Colors, The 50 promises a bold new format set to disrupt the Indian reality TV playbook. The upcoming JioHotstar show, adapted from the popular French series Les Cinquante, features 50 contestants in a lavish palace setting with no fixed rules, allowing for unpredictable drama, strategy, and politics.



## Priyanka Chopra's Brother 'Grew Up On His Own' As Mom Travelled With Actress, Doctor Dad Stayed Busy

Fame often looks shiny from the outside. But inside many successful families, there are quiet trade-offs. In the case of Priyanka Chopra, that cost, her mother admits, was paid at home. Long before global premieres, red carpets and Hollywood headlines, Priyanka was an unsure teenager pushed gently but firmly towards a film career she did not even want. Behind that decision stood her mother, Madhu Chopra, who now speaks openly about the emotional toll that journey took on the family, especially on Priyanka's younger brother. After winning the Miss World title in 2000, offers poured in for Priyanka Chopra. But acting was never the plan. Madhu has recalled that her daughter was academically inclined and hesitant about cinema.

The doubt was so intense that when Priyanka signed her debut Tamil film Thamizhan, there were visible tear marks on the contract. To support her daughter, Madhu began travelling constantly with 18-year-old Priyanka. Their father, Dr Ashok Chopra, remained busy with his medical work. That left Priyanka's brother, Siddharth Chopra, largely on his own during his teenage years.

Speaking earlier on the Something Bigger Show, Madhu did not soften her words while reflecting on that phase. She said, "Siddharth was the collateral damage to all of Priyanka's success, because their dad (Dr Ashok Chopra) was working, I was with Priyanka, he just grew up on his own and he was a teenager at that time. He, I think, was collateral

damage for me." She added, "When I think about it, these are certain things that you had to deal with." Talking about Siddharth, who got married in 2024, Madhu admitted that she still worries about him. She said, "I see him struggling everyday and I feel that, okay god has blessed you, so just count your blessings, one by one and it will surprise you what the lord has done. I count my blessings everyday. I



have two great kids, who love me, care for me." On Dr Stuti Khare Shukla's YouTube channel, Madhu also spoke about managing Priyanka's early career, her own medical practice, and household duties. Despite the chaos, she insisted that time with her children was never compromised. She said, "When I was with them, it was 100 percent children's time. That was really good. I think that's how they could imbibe the work ethics also, that you have to work hard if you want to achieve something and also give time to yourself, your family and your life."

Border 2 Producer Nidhi Dutta Reveals Real Reason Why Tabu Was Not Cast In The Second Part



Producer Nidhi Dutta, the daughter of J. P. Dutta, who is gearing up for the release of her upcoming production 'Border 2', has shared why actress Tabu was not cast in the film's 2nd part. Nidhi spoke with IANS during the promotions of the film, and said that since 'Border 2' caters to a different battle from the 1971 war between India and Pakistan, and not the battle of Longewala, only a few actors from the first part make an appearance in the film.

She told IANS, "Sunny Deol is not playing Kuldeep Singh Chandpuri in the film. You must have understood in all the assets from the film that Major Kuldeep Singh Chandpuri, who he played in the first film, is a different character. So obviously, the wife will also be different". She also shared that the film was entrusted to them as a moral responsibility by the late CDS General Bipin Rawat. She said, "This is a responsibility, not an idea. Our late Chief of Defence Staff, General Bipin Rawat had called me and my father to Delhi a few years ago to meet. And during that time, he had given us stories of 22 such heroes, of which 3 and 4 are in this film. And he had said that these are some stories of our martyrs, of our soldiers, which have to be conveyed to the people.

And he had entrusted that responsibility to me and my father. After that, of course, unfortunately, we lost him in a helicopter crash. And so I would say that this film is not just a dream of mine and my father. I think this is also the dream of late General Bipin Rawat ji. And a year and a half after his passing, when I was thinking about what we should do in the next JP films, what should we do in my father's company, at that time, out of those 22 stories, there were a few stories that are now behind me, which I added together and wrote a script for 4 of them. And that's it. Border 2 is in front of you."

**Ranveer Singh's Mom Flaunts Granddaughter Dua's Name On Her Hand, Pic Goes Viral**



A picture of Ranveer Singh's mother Anju Bhavnani proudly flaunting her granddaughter Dua Padukone Singh's name has left fans gushing!

Ranveer Singh and Deepika Padukone are proud parents to their one-year-old daughter, Dua Padukone Singh, whom they welcomed in September 2024. The couple revealed their little one's face for the first time in October last year, sharing a set of adorable pictures that instantly won hearts. While Dua is undoubtedly the centre of Ranveer and Deepika's world, she is also equally cherished by her doting grandmother, Ranveer's mother, Anju Bhavnani. A picture that is going viral on Instagram shows Anju Bhavnani flaunting Dua's name on her hand.

**Ranveer Singh's Mom Flaunts Dua's Name**  
A photo that has been widely shared on Deepika and Ranveer's fan pages shows Anju Bhavnani proudly flaunting her granddaughter Dua's name written with henna on her hand. The picture seems to have been clicked at a wedding, and Anju Bhavnani is seen in a lime green ethnic outfit, posing happily as she shows off the beautiful, minimal mehendi featuring Dua's name. Fans couldn't help but gush over the sweet gesture, and while one netizen commented, "Dua's dadi is the coolest," another one wrote, "Baby Dua is so loved." Check out the picture below!

Earlier, in December 2024, Anju Bhavnani donated her hair to mark the third-month birthday of her granddaughter Dua. The touching moment quickly went viral on social media, with fans of Ranveer and Deepika Padukone sharing screenshots of Anju's heartfelt note dedicated to little Dua. Anju wrote, "Happy 3rd month birthday my darling Dua. Marking this special day with a gesture of love and hope. As we celebrate the joy and beauty of Dua growing up, we are also reminded of the power of goodness and kindness. Hoping that this small act might bring comfort and confidence to someone going through a difficult time."

Meanwhile, Ranveer and Deepika celebrated Christmas and New Year 2026 in New York together. They also attended their friend's wedding there. Several photos and videos of the couple posing with their fans in NYC went viral on social media in the last few weeks.

It is that time of the year when exams are approaching and stressed-out students are poring over their books. The trick is to relax and revise. Stressing out will only work against you. Here are a few ways to beat exam anxiety.



## Party manners for your kids

Here are some tips for your kids to be at their polite best during parties.

Are you going to an important party where there will be a lot of people and are scared your kid might create trouble? Here are some basic manners you must inculcate in your child for basic party etiquette -

### Greetings:

See to it that your child greets other guests politely with a smile. Make sure he/she knows when to shake hands and say hello.

### Polite words:

Every person should use polite words like thank you, excuse me and please, and these habits can be best inculcated in a kid. Ask him/her to use these words while asking for or offering food.

### No interruption:

Teach your kids not to interrupt when other people are talking. If they want to say something important, teach them to say excuse me first.

### Noise levels:

Kids are bound to do some mischief when they are with other kids and are also bound to create a lot of noise. It is okay to have fun, but teach them to not create a havoc in public places.



# 10 ways to beat Exam stress

- 1 Start with embracing a positive attitude. There is no way to avoid an exam. If you let negative thoughts reign your mind, you will find it difficult to succeed. No one can encourage you more than yourself.
- 2 Set up a routine and follow it through. Wake up early to get more time during the day. Make a small to-do list and abide by it.
- 3 A change in the place of study helps. Try to find a few different study spots that you feel comfortable and productive in. The more bored or distracted you are by your

- environment, the harder it is to focus on your books.
- 4 One of the most common compromises that students tend to make during this stressful period is sleep. You need your eight-hours now more than any other time of the year. A well-rested body and mind will grasp information more easily.
- 5 Eat healthy and follow a balanced diet. Eat fresh, whole foods whenever possible and drink lots of water. Avoid sugary, processed snacks, which will spike your blood sugar and make you feel sluggish.
- 6 Everybody has that one friend who talks about how he has been studying for 20 hours. It is not the duration that matters. It is the quality. If you finish the same number of chapters in a shorter period time, you are the winner.
- 7 It is always easy to study the stuff that you already feel comfortable with when you should really be tackling the tougher parts that you aren't

so familiar with. Mock tests are a great way to not only test your current knowledge but will help to identify the areas that need more focus.

8 It is important to revise. If you have already covered your portions, take time out to revise. But don't overdo it. Go slow and don't keep revising the same thing over and over again. If you have revised a chapter ample number of times, take a break and chill out. Don't be afraid of feeling confident.

9 Take a stroll after long study hours. Go out in the open and take in some fresh air. A walk in a park, by the lakeside relaxes the mind and body. Take a friend along if you want, but don't talk about exams and don't discuss chapters during this leisurely stroll.

10 Exercise to beat stress. Include a 30-minute workout into your daily routine. This will help you to concentrate better while studying.



## 10 ways women can take charge of their

# Career

Empower yourself by standing tall in the workspace and successfully achieving your goals. Follow our tips to shine on the job

When it comes to achieving career goals, momentum is the key for women. With all the responsibilities women have outside the workplace — health, family and children to name a few — it is easy to lose focus.

On Women's Day, we present some ways women can keep moving forward in their careers:

### 1. Map out your goals:

Chalk out your career goals on a blank piece of paper. Put down in writing exactly where you want to be, and what you want to achieve in a few simple pointers. Set specific time frames for each goal; keep the time periods reasonable. You don't want to overpromise yourself and then under-deliver!

### 2. Outline the action:

Now that you have your main goals in writing, think about the specific steps you will take to reach each one of them. Consider the skills and resources you have at your disposal and maximise their output. Discuss with a trusted colleague all the possible avenues you can explore for this purpose.

### 3. Make step-by-step plans:



Put down a step-by-step plan for each of your goals. Ensure that each plan has a solid foundation and is detailed in its ideas; the more meticulous your plan the higher your probability of achieving your target within the

set limit. For instance, you could jot down three pragmatic steps for each of your goals that you can take right now. Focus on what you do well and delegate the rest to those who know better.

### 4. Create a daily list of 'things to do':

Make a daily to-do list that aligns with your aspirations. This kind of list keeps your day organised and sets you on the path to achieve your purpose one day at a time. This list should have all the things you can do daily to bring you closer to the full realisation of your ambitions. When you start your day at work, examine what you need to do and jot it all down with deadlines. This is a great way to bring focus and alertness into your working style.

### 5. Apply the 80/20 rule to your job:

Think of your objectives as destinations of simultaneous journeys and your work itself as a long trip you are taking. Constantly ask yourself if you are meeting your own expectations. The 80/20 rule is a powerful

tool to go about doing this. Also called the Pareto principle, it states that 80 per cent of results come from 20 per cent of inputs; conversely, the other 20 per cent of results come from the other 80 per cent of inputs. Focus on the things that produce the maximum results to get more things done with minimum effort.

### 6. Make contacts:

Build a network of people who may turn out to be instrumental in meeting your ambitions. Every business contact you make could open up a new doorway in future; through a lead for a job opening or ideas for projects, for instance. People in your network could

possibly become employers or customers in future, or usher in opportunities for exciting new avenues. The wider you cast your net, the more your chances of success.

### 7. Use affirmations:

Create positive self-affirmations that bring you closer to your aim. For instance, if your goal is executing incredible projects, write down an affirmation that reads something like, "Every day, I will ideate and execute mind-blowing projects." For best results, print out the affirmation and read it aloud at intervals during the day for 21 days; it is the number of days it takes to form any new habit.

### 8. Visualise positive outcomes:

Use the tool of visualisation to achieve your targets. Every morning before you start your daily routine, spend 10-12 minutes visualising yourself completing and succeeding in your aims. For instance, if you want to be a project manager, visualise yourself as being one.

### 9. Prepare for the unexpected:

No matter how relentless you are in the pursuit of success, setbacks are likely. What puts a successful career woman apart from the herd is that she is prepared for any eventuality. Think about possible disaster situations you could encounter and have a Plan B ready for each action. Be a corporate chameleon, adapting yourself to any kind of situation, turning challenges into opportunities.

### 10. Evolve continuously:

Stay ahead of the curve and keep yourself updated with the latest innovations in your field. We work in a fast-changing world where being dynamic has become a necessity for survival. When you do achieve your initial goals, give yourself a pat on the back and celebrate your success. This will add to your drive for moving to the next milestone.