

Optics over humanity: Trinamool claims forces harassing people ahead of PM's visit

Ahead of Prime Minister Narendra Modi's visit to West Bengal, political tensions escalate with TMC accusing central forces of intimidating marginalised communities.

New Delhi (Agency) A political storm erupted ahead of Prime Minister Narendra Modi's visit to West Bengal after the All India Trinamool Congress (TMC) shared a video purportedly showing a man being beaten at a railway station, alleging the incident took place as part of security arrangements before the Prime Minister's programme to flag off the Vande Bharat Sleeper Train. Sharing the video on social media platform X, the ruling party accused the Centre of using central forces to "intimidate, harass and push aside the marginalised" to ensure an uninterrupted photo opportunity during the Prime Minister's visit.



"Is this how Narendra Modi welcomes India's poor?" the TMC asked, alleging that people were being treated as obstacles rather than citizens. The party claimed the episode reflected a governance model that prioritises

optics over humanity. The allegation came hours before Modi's scheduled arrival in Malda on Saturday, where he is to flag off India's first Vande Bharat Sleeper Train between Howrah and Guwahati (Kamakhya) from Malda Town Railway Station. The Prime Minister is also said to dedicate and lay the foundation stone for rail and road infrastructure projects worth over Rs 3,250 crore, followed by a public rally. The Bharatiya Janata Party has not responded directly to the video, but the Prime Minister earlier posted on X that he was looking forward to being among the people of Malda, accusing the TMC of "misrule" and claiming the state was ready for a development-oriented government.

PM Modi's visit comes amid heightened political tensions in West Bengal, with sharp exchanges between the BJP and the TMC over the ongoing Special Intensive Revision (SIR) of electoral rolls and recent Enforcement Directorate raids on consultancy firm I-PAC. The TMC has accused the BJP and the Election Commission of harassing voters through the SIR exercise, a charge denied by the BJP, which maintains that the revision is aimed at removing illegal entries from the rolls. After Malda, the Prime Minister will travel to Assam, and is scheduled to return to West Bengal on January 18 to attend official programmes and address a rally in Singur, Hooghly district. The visit is being closely watched as the state heads towards Assembly elections due later this year.

After BMC Drubbing, Uddhav Sena's Balasaheb Post, Raj Thackeray's Open Letter

BMC results: If anything is seen happening against the Marathi people, we will surely bring those in power to their knees, thundered Raj Thackeray.

Mumbai (Agency)

The Thackeray cousins have vowed to continue their Marathi identity politics after losing control of the country's richest civic body after 25 years. "This fight isn't over yet," read a post by Shiv Sena (Uddhav Balasaheb Thackeray), sharing a photo of the late Balasaheb Thackeray, who had championed the Marathi cause in state politics. The BJP and Eknath Shinde's Shiv Sena have emerged victorious in the Brihanmumbai Municipal Corporation (BMC) polls, snatching control from the Thackerays, who had united last year to defeat the ruling Mahayuti alliance.

Pursuing the Marathi cause, the cousins promised a better life to Mumbai's residents, but yesterday's results dealt a setback to what was expected to be a new chapter in Thackeray politics. However, Uddhav Thackeray's party, which won 65 out of 227 wards, assured, "The fight will continue just like this until the Marathis receive the respect they deserve."



(MNS) could win just six seats in the BMC elections, he vowed to keep fighting for his state and Marathis. "Our fight is for the Marathi people, for the Marathi language, for Marathi identity, and for a prosperous Maharashtra. This fight itself is our very existence. You are

well aware that such struggles are long-term in nature," he said.

Raj Thackeray also accused the Mahayuti of harassing and exploiting Marathis, underlining the significance of his struggle.

"Whether in the MMR region or across the entire state, the ruling powers and those who have gone under their shelter will not leave a single opportunity to harass and exploit the Marathi people. Therefore, we must stand firmly behind our Marathi people. Elections will come and go, but we must never forget that our very breath is Marathi," he said. The MNS will analyse and act on whatever went wrong and was left undone, he added, vowing to rebuild the party from scratch.

BMC Elections 2026

The BJP-led alliance swept the Brihanmumbai Municipal Corporation (BMC) elections, with the Thackerays losing grip on Mumbai's civic body after 25 years. The Mahayuti came to power in 25 out of 29 civic bodies across Maharashtra.

hurt religious sentiments and therefore needed to be removed, alleging that the BJP does not respect court orders.

AAP leader Saurabh Bharadwaj gave Kapil Mishra two days to apologise at the Darbar Sahib. On the Delhi Speaker's demand for a CBI probe into the Punjab Police investigation, Bharadwaj said the party had no objection to a CBI or even an NIA probe, asserting that any investigation would show Atishi did not use the word "guru". The political confrontation between AAP and BJP over the Atishi "Sikh



"guru" disrespect case has escalated sharply, with both sides trading accusations.

AAP leaders also backed comments made by music composer AR Rahman, saying that if the creator of the "Vande Mataram" tune is expressing concern, the Hindi film industry needs to reflect on the issue. They questioned whether symbolic gestures, such as clicking pictures with the Prime Minister, would address deeper concerns and warned against surrendering to communal forces.

"Public's Mandate Is Supreme": Ajit Pawar Accepts Defeat In Civic Polls

Rahul Gandhi accused the Election Commission of gaslighting citizens amid a row over the quality of 'indelible' ink used in marker pens in Maharashtra civic polls.

Pune (Agency)

Following the near-clear results of the 29 municipal corporation elections in Maharashtra, Deputy Chief Minister and NCP chief Ajit Pawar has officially conceded defeat in several key urban centres.

Taking to his official X handle, he stated that he accepts the public's verdict with "full respect". "The public's mandate is supreme, and we accept it with complete respect. I heartily congratulate all the winning candidates and wish them success in their upcoming terms," said DCM Pawar.

Addressing the party's failure to meet expectations, he added: "In this local body election, where we did not achieve the expected success, I assure you that we will work with more responsibility, honesty and double the vigour to regain the public's trust." He urged the winning candidates to prioritise public issues and accelerate development work. At the same time, he encouraged those who lost to remain dedicated to public service, stating that "serving the public must always remain the central goal".

The results represent a significant blow to Ajit Pawar's individual political standing in western Maharashtra.

Despite deciding to contest independently (separate from Mahayuti partners BJP and Eknath Shinde-led Shiv Sena) in his traditional bastions to prove his "original" NCP's strength, the party faced major losses in Pune and Pimpri-Chinchwad (PCMC). Once considered the personal fortress of the Pawar family, both corporations have seen a commanding lead and victory for the BJP, leaving Ajit Pawar's faction in a distant third or fourth place.

Karnataka CM Siddaramaiah hints next budget will be a tight one

Tumakuru (Agency) Chief Minister Siddaramaiah on Friday gave an indication that his budget for 2026-27 would be tight, as he promised Rs 6 crore to develop sports facilities in Tumakuru, against Rs 25 crore demanded by Home Minister Dr G Parameshwara. Inaugurating the seven-day state-level Karnataka Games 2025-26 at Mahatma Gandhi Stadium, Parameshwara, who is also district minister, appealed to the CM to grant Rs 25 crore to set up a hockey stadium and an international standard swimming pool in Tumakuru.

"That much cannot be given, but I will sanction Rs 6 crore to Tumakuru, the same amount granted to Mangaluru," he assured Parameshwara. He highlighted that the Congress government has provided 3 per

cent quota in recruitment—from constable to DySP post—in the Home department, and 2 per cent in other departments for sportspersons. Cash rewards of Rs 6 crore, Rs 4 crore and Rs 3 crore will be given to those who win gold, silver and bronze medals in the Olympics, he added.

He claimed that he was himself a small-time kabaddi player during his high school days and had participated in inter-school tournaments. "I have developed a liking for cricket and never miss one-dayers and T20 matches. I also watch World Cup football matches which happen at night as it does not affect my work," he said. "A real sportsperson is one who is happy even in defeat, and takes it in a sporting spirit. I congratulate those who win and also those



who lose. But one must have an attitude to win."

Parameshwara said the event was dedicated to the 'Say no to Drugs' campaign of the state to create awareness among youths. He hoped that Tumakuru turns into a sports hub, as construction of an international cricket ground by KSCA will start in a

couple of months, and the project would be completed in a year. The state government has provided 42 acres of land for the ground. An international tennis court would also be set up, he added. He likened Mahatma Gandhi Stadium, which cost Rs 60 crore under Smart City Project and state government funds, to Kanteerava Stadium in Bengaluru. Karnataka Olympics Association president and MLC K Govindaraj sought the CM's approval to propose to the Centre to conduct Khelo India sports meet in Tumakuru. He also suggested setting up a sports academy to nurture rural talents from across the district. With about 4,500 sportspersons taking part in 24 different sports, he wished that at least 500 take up sports as their career.

Delhi government formulates a comprehensive action plan to curb air pollution, says CM Rekha Gupta

New Delhi (Agency) Delhi Chief Minister Rekha Gupta, in a review meeting on Friday, directed officials to expedite all works related to increasing the number of electric buses, expansion of Metro Phase-IV, smart and multi-level parking, road redevelopment, traffic mapping, waste management, and urban infrastructure. The chief minister, while discussing on various aspects related to pollution control, gave instructions to all relevant departments that development works must be completed within the stipulated time frame.

The Chief Minister said that short-term and long-term plans have been prepared and are under effective implementation. She said that her government is working on a clear, measurable and outcome-oriented action plan to achieve a substantial reduction in PM

2.5 levels over four years. The department-wise details are as follows:

Delhi plans to increase its total bus fleet to 6,000 by December 2026, 7,500 by December 2027, 10,400 by March 2028 and 14,000 by March 2029. Of the planned 14,000 buses, 500 will be 7-metre-long buses to strengthen last-mile connectivity. These buses will be seamlessly integrated with the Delhi Metro network to ensure deep penetration of public transport in residential, commercial and high-density areas.

At present, last-mile connectivity is being provided through the deployment of 100 electric metro feeder buses. By January 2026, pilot integration of e-autos, bike taxis and feeder cabs at 10 major metro stations is planned.

Under the new Electric Vehicle Policy, Delhi's



transition to cleaner fuels. To reduce emissions caused by traffic congestion, 62 congestion points have been identified, of which improvement works have already commenced at 30 locations. To strengthen traffic management, the Delhi Government has deployed 1,200 additional personnel from DTC to assist the Delhi Traffic Police.

Public transport systems have been identified as the central pillar of the pollution reduction strategy. The Delhi Metro's existing 395-km network currently serves 6.5 to 7 million passengers daily and is being expanded with 110 km under Phase IV and 96 km under Phases V-A and V-B. With the completion of Phase IV, daily ridership is expected to double. Additionally, the NCRTC network will be expanded to a total length of 323 km over the next four years.

News box

Bike taxi rider strangles friend over ₹ 15k loan, then slits his throat in Gurgaon**Gurgaon.(Agency)**

A dispute over ₹ 15,000 and a failed promise of ₹ 1 lakh loan ended in a chilling murder in Sector 37.

On Thursday, police cracked the case three weeks after the murder, with the arrest of Satish Tiwari (25), a bike taxi driver, who strangled his friend — Faisal Idrisi (27) — and slit his throat and wrist veins with a blade at an industrial waste dump yard on Dec 24. During the autopsy, a piece of blade was found in the victim's neck, which was handed to the police.

A team from Sector 10 police station solved the blind murder of Idrisi, a resident of Mirpur Cantt in UP's Kanpur district, and nabbed Tiwari, a resident of Raebareli in Uttar Pradesh, from a rented accommodation in Saraswati Enclave on Thursday. The accused was traced through UPI transaction trails and CCTV footage.

Low wind speed, fog keep air at 'very poor' level for 2 days in a row in Gurgaon**Gurgaon.(Agency)**

The city's air quality deteriorated on Friday, with the air quality index (AQI) rising to 347 from the previous day's 318, and remaining in the 'very poor' category. All four air quality monitoring stations reported 'very poor' air, with Vikas Sadan recording the highest AQI at 387, followed by Sector 51 at 377, Teri Gram at 333 and Gwal Pahari at 321.

At these levels, according to health experts, prolonged outdoor exposure can lead to breathing discomfort and respiratory problems, especially among children, the elderly and those with existing lung or heart conditions. Officials attributed the sustained deterioration in the air quality mainly to winter weather conditions that trap pollutants near the ground and affect air quality. As per the weather and visibility data for the NCR, there was mist, haze, and dense fog in some areas. Visibility dropped to 150m at Safdarjung and Palam early on Friday before improving later. Wind speeds remained low throughout the day, limiting the dispersal of pollutants.

The air quality outlook remains poor for the region. Forecasts suggest AQI may move into the 'severe' range from Jan 17 to Jan 18, before easing slightly to 'very poor' on Jan 19. Dispersion conditions are expected to stay unfavourable, with a low ventilation index and average wind speeds below 10 kmph — factors that restrict pollutant movement and allow concentration levels to build up. Health experts advised residents to avoid morning walks and outdoor exercise, especially in areas reporting 'severe' pollution. They also recommended keeping windows shut during peak pollution hours and limiting exposure for vulnerable groups. As per Central Pollution Control Board guidelines, an AQI between 301 and 400 is classified as 'very poor', while 401 to 500 is considered 'severe'. An AQI between 0 and 50 is 'good', 51 to 100 'satisfactory', 101 to 200 'moderate', and 201 to 300 'poor'.

After 12L names deleted from draft rolls, Noida & Gzb may add 1.2L more**Noida.(Agency)**

Since the special intensive revision (SIR) of electoral rolls began in Nov last year, Gautam Budh Nagar and Ghaziabad have received more than 1.2 lakh new voter applications. Officials said these Form 6 applications — 71,000 in Ghaziabad and 32,000 in GB Nagar — were filed during the enumeration phase and were excluded from the draft electoral rolls published on Jan 6, as per Election Commission guidelines. The forms would now be digitised, verified at the field level and, if found eligible, included in the final electoral rolls. Officials said many voters marked as 'shifted' were still living within the same district but at a different address and must apply afresh. "If they reside in the district at a new address, they have to submit Form 6 as new applicants. These names will be added to the final roll," said Noida additional district magistrate Atul Kumar, adding that Form 6 applications are expected to increase in the coming days.

The size of the electorate in GB Nagar, which includes



Noida, Dadri and Jhajjar constituencies, came down from 18.7 lakh to 14.3 lakh voters in the draft roll published following the 62-day revision exercise. Ghaziabad saw a sharper cut, with the draft roll reflecting 20.1 lakh voters against an earlier electorate of 28.4 lakh. Of the nearly 8 lakh voters in Ghaziabad and over 4 lakh in GB Nagar that were deleted during the revision process, at least half were marked as "shifted". There are also three lakh voters in the two districts whose names, though included in the draft roll, are categorised as "unmapped" as their details could not be confirmed with the 2003 base rolls. Currently, unmapped voters are being served notices by the electoral registration officer through booth-level officers (BLOs), asking them to establish their eligibility. The objections and claims window is to close on Feb 26, and the final electoral rolls are to be published on March 6. UP's chief electoral officer (CEO) has announced three state-wide special campaign days — Jan 18, Jan 31 and Feb 1 — to support the ongoing intensive revision of the electoral rolls.

Safe roads a fundamental right, says Haryana rights panel, asks agencies to fix signage, markings, dividers**Gurgaon.(Agency)**

Hearing a complaint on widespread deficiencies in signage, markings and dividers, Haryana Human Rights Commission (HHRC) has ruled that safe roads are a fundamental right under Article 21 and any negligence in road maintenance amounts to violation of the right to life. A full bench of the commission headed by Justice Lalit Batra observed that there was persistent confusion among departments over responsibility for road safety measures and directed all agencies, including NHAI, PWD, HSIIDC, urban local bodies and police, to submit comprehensive compliance reports with photographic evidence at least one week before the next hearing, which is listed for April 9. The commission ordered that roads across Haryana must be maintained to ensure safe movement for vehicles and pedestrians, with surfaces free of potholes, cracks, and obstructions. It directed regular upkeep

of carriageways, shoulders, medians, culverts, footpaths, and drains, along with proper development and maintenance of central verges and dividers. On wider and multi-lane roads, authorities must ensure clear lane demarcation through adequate cat-eyes and retro-reflective studs, especially for night visibility, it said, adding that delineators must be installed on six-lane and eight-lane stretches to improve driver guidance. The commission also said plantation on central verges should be maintained to act as natural visual barriers and reduce glare from oncoming traffic. The bench directed that wherever triple road markings are present, retro-reflective studs and cat-eyes must be installed to warn drivers about lane merging. "Rumble strips must be provided at accident-prone locations, crossings, and junctions to encourage speed control. Mandatory, cautionary, and informative signboards must comply with IRC guidelines, with

proper placement, visibility, and legibility at junctions, curves, accident-prone stretches, and pedestrian crossings," the commission said, and reiterated that road markings must be executed using thermoplastic paint to ensure durability and visibility.

Underlining the role of police, especially traffic police, the commission observed that safeguarding citizens' life and safety is a constitutional duty of the state.

Police were directed to strictly enforce traffic rules, prevent rash and negligent driving, and curb speeding, lane violations, wrong-side driving, and misuse of high-beam lights.

They have been asked also to identify black spots and hazardous stretches, share information promptly with road-maintenance agencies, and ensure immediate installation of temporary safety measures wherever required. The commission noted that failure to enforce traffic discipline or respond to known hazards amounts to negligence that can

cost lives. In view of recurring winter fog risks, the commission mandated retro-reflective tapes on vehicles and roadside infrastructure, and deployment of highway patrol vehicles with warning systems on vulnerable stretches. Authorities have been asked to circulate safety messages through electronic billboards and provide real-time updates on accident-prone routes, fog-hit stretches, and diversions through SMS, WhatsApp, and priority alerts. The commission also directed prompt rectification of accident-prone spots, installation of crash barriers where necessary, and implementation of speed-calming measures to reduce risk. Reiterating its stance, the commission said safe public roads are not merely a service but a constitutional and human rights obligation. Any failure to maintain basic road-safety infrastructure exposes citizens to avoidable danger and violates their fundamental right to life and security.

Haryana Human Rights Commission disposes 5.6k complaints in 2025, pendency drops to 1k**Gurgaon.(Agency)**

Haryana Human Rights Commission (HHRC) recorded a major surge in efficiency, disposing of 5,610 complaints between Nov 27, 2024, and Dec 23, 2025 — an average of 468 cases a month. Starting with 2,991 pending matters and 3,632 fresh complaints, the Commission reduced its total pendency to just 1,013 cases. Under the leadership of chief justice Lalit Batra and members Kuldeep Jain and Deep Bhatia, HHRC also adopted a proactive rights-based approach, taking suo motu cognisance in 20 serious matters, ranging from dilapidated roads and custodial torture to child safety, environmental concerns, and discrimination, strengthening accountability across departments.

According to registrar (judicial) Sanjay Kumar Khanduja, at the time of reconstitution, the commission inherited a legacy of 2,991 pending complaints. Between 27 Nov 2024 and 23 Dec 2025, 3,632 new complaints were registered, taking the total number of pending cases to 6,623.

"Through organised, coordinated and sustained efforts, the commission disposed of 5,610 complaints during this period, with an average of 468 cases per month," said Khanduja. At the time of filing this report, only 1,013 complaints remain pending. In cases involving human rights violations, the commission took suo motu cognisance in 20 cases between 27 Nov 2024 and 23 Dec 2025. Key cases include complaints on dilapidated roads from Safidon to Panipat, posing grave risks to public safety; lack of infant-friendly facilities for women and newborns at the Aadhar Registration Centre in the main post office, Hisar; a case of gang rape of a 14-year-old girl in Shahbad; ragging incidents at Jindal Global University, Sonipat; severe neglect of specially abled children at SIRTAR, Rohtak; and Gurgaon Municipal Corporation's inaction after the Chintals Paradiso incident.

Dubai-linked WhatsApp investment fraud busted by Gurgaon cops, nine arrested for routing funds overseas**Gurgaon.(Agency)**

Nine men have been arrested from Rajasthan's Kota for allegedly cheating investors through WhatsApp groups by luring them with promises of high returns from stock trading, online games and casino investments. The fraud followed a coordinated modus operandi with links to overseas cyber operators. Dubai-based handlers circulated links to WhatsApp groups, online casinos and gambling platforms, while cons part of the syndicate in India managed chats with targets, convinced them to invest, collected funds in bank accounts, and routed the money to bank accounts before transferring it abroad. The nine fraudsters were nabbed by a team led by ACP (cybercrime) Priyanshu Dewan and inspector Sandeep Kumar on Jan 14. "The gang rented a flat in Kota for Rs 15,000 per month, from where they operated the fraud," a police officer said. Police said the case was registered at cybercrime west police station after a complaint was filed on Dec 15, 2024. The complainant alleged fraud through WhatsApp groups that



encouraged users to invest money with assurances of quick and high profits. Those arrested have been identified as Lekhraj (25), Manish (21), Anil Bairagi (24), Sonu (26), Deepak (25), and Himanshu from Kota, Sanskar alias Pranshu (24) from Rewa in MP; Gagan Patel (19) from Indore in MP, and Manish Meena (24) from Rajasthan's Baran. During the interrogation, police found that Rs 2 lakh from the defrauded amount was transferred to a bank account in the name

of Madhav Associated Company, held by Lekhraj Meena. Lekhraj told police he sold his bank account to co-accused Manish for Rs 10,000. Manish said the account was opened using a fake rent agreement on the instructions of Anil Bairagi, and that he was paid Rs 40,000 for it. Bairagi admitted to working with Sanskar in coordination with cyber fraudsters based in Dubai. The syndicate sent 70% of the defrauded amount to Dubai-based handlers and kept 30% as commission, the police officer said. Police said several accused, including Gagan Patel, Himanshu, Deepak, Manish Meena, and Sonu, worked under Bairagi, making calls, operating online games, and handling bank transfers. They were paid a monthly salary of Rs 15,000 along with commissions. During raids in Kota, police seized 13 mobile phones, three laptops, a tablet, and 37 debit cards. All nine accused were produced before a court on Jan 15 and sent to judicial custody. "Investigation into the money trail and overseas links is under way," the officer added.

Cold winds keep minimum temperature below 5°C in Gurgaon**Gurgaon.(Agency)**

The city experienced a clear, sunny day on Friday after a morning of shallow fog, with the minimum temperature recorded at 4.9 degrees Celsius, which was 0.4 notch lower than the previous day, according to India Meteorological Department (IMD). According to the weather department, the state's average minimum temperature rose by 1.2°C compared to the previous day, but it remained 2.1°C below normal. Bhiwani recorded the lowest minimum temperature in the state at 1.5°C. The IMD bulletin noted that a western



disturbance was affecting the region. A subtropical westerly jet stream with core winds of around 130 knots at 12.6km above mean sea level was prevailing over northwest India, it said, adding that

another fresh western disturbance was likely to affect northwest India from Jan 19. Haryana is likely to remain mostly dry, with light rain possible at isolated places on Jan 19 and Jan 22. The minimum temperature is expected to rise gradually by 2-4 degrees over the next week. Despite clear daytime weather, IMD said that dense fog could occur at isolated places in Haryana in the coming days, especially during late night and early morning hours, and drivers should remain cautious on highways and open stretches during low-visibility periods.

No more relaxation: Haryana to enforce 6-year-age norm for Class 1 admission**Gurgaon.(Agency)**

Admission to Class I in Haryana will strictly require a child to have completed six years of age from the 2026-27 academic session. The state govt has formally ended all forms of age relaxation in line with directions of Punjab and Haryana high court and the National Education Policy (NEP) 2020 — in a move that will significantly impact thousands of parents planning first-time school admissions in Gurgaon and other cities. With the six-year rule set to become compulsory, education experts say parents should plan admissions well in advance, apply early, rely only on official notifications and focus on choosing schools that best match their child's needs, values and budget, as the era of age-related flexibility in Class I admissions is set to formally end in Haryana. The decision comes amid the Haryana govt's move to amend the Haryana Right to Education (RTE) Rules, 2011, which earlier allowed children aged between five and six to be admitted to Class 1. This



provision repeatedly led to confusion, legal challenges and last-minute court petitions every admission season. The HC, in the case of Divisha Yadav vs State of Haryana, strongly criticised the state for publicly endorsing the NEP's six-year rule while continuing to follow outdated bylaws and directed the govt to bring its rules in line with central law. At the same time, the govt said children below the age cut-off will be accommodated in Balvatika or pre-primary classes and shifted to Class I once they meet the age requirement, ensuring they

continue with the same peer group. Against this backdrop, parents in Gurgaon are advised to carefully track age eligibility while applying to private schools, where competition for entry-level seats remains intense. Most private schools in the city follow a predictable admission calendar, announcing admissions for pre-nursery and nursery between late July and August, inviting online applications and conducting draws of lots when applications exceed available seats. Explaining the limited seat availability, DPS Gurgaon

year and that demand for nursery and kindergarten far exceeds seat availability, with limited vacancies later only due to withdrawals.

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PM Flags Off India's first Vande Bharat Sleeper Train between Kamakhya and Howrah

Maligaon: The Honourable Prime Minister of India, Shri Narendra Modi today flagged off India's first Vande Bharat Sleeper Express train, connecting Howrah with Guwahati (Kamakhya), from Malda Town Railway Station. The Prime Minister also virtually flagged off the Guwahati (Kamakhya)-Howrah Vande Bharat Sleeper Express virtually. In addition, four new Amrit Bharat Express trains and two new LHB-coach-equipped express services were flagged off, further enhancing affordable and reliable long-distance rail connectivity. This landmark event marked a significant milestone in the modernization of Indian Railways and a major boost to rail connectivity between Eastern and the North-Eastern region. On the occasion, the Prime Minister inaugurated and laid the foundation stone of multiple rail and road infrastructure projects worth more than Rs. 3,250 Cr. from Malda, aimed at strengthening connectivity, enhancing logistics efficiency and accelerating socio-economic development in West Bengal, Assam and the North-East.

Addressing the gathering, the Prime Minister stated that from the sacred lands of Bengal & Assam, a new chapter in rail-



way modernization has begun with the introduction of Vande Bharat Sleeper trains. He highlighted that this state-of-the-art, fully air-conditioned sleeper train will make long-distance journeys faster, safer and more comfortable, while offering an airline-like travel experience at economical fares. The Prime Minister emphasized that the train, developed under the 'Make in India' initiative, reflects the vision of a developed and self-reliant India. The Guwahati

(Kamakhya)-Howrah Vande Bharat Sleeper Express which was virtually flagged off by the Hon'ble PM is expected to reduce travel time by approximately 2.5 hours on the Howrah-Guwahati (Kamakhya) route. The Vande Bharat Sleeper Express, connecting the land of Maa Kali with the land of Maa Kamakhya, will give a significant boost to religious tourism, trade, and people-to-people connectivity. As part of the programme, the Prime Minister laid the foundation

stone of four major railway projects in West Bengal, including a new rail line between Balurghat and Hili, next-generation freight maintenance facilities at New Jalpaiguri, upgradation of the Siliguri Loco Shed, and modernization of Vande Bharat train maintenance facilities in Jalpaiguri district. These initiatives will strengthen passenger and freight operations, improve logistics efficiency in North Bengal and generate employment opportunities in the region. The Prime Minister also dedicated to the Nation the electrification of railway sections between New Coochbehar-Bamanhat and New Coochbehar-Boxirhat, enabling faster, cleaner, and more energy-efficient train operations. Further expanding long-distance connectivity, the Prime Minister virtually flagged off four new Amrit Bharat Express trains-New Jalpaiguri-Nagercoil, New Jalpaiguri-Tiruchirappalli, Alipurduar-SMTV Bengaluru, and Alipurduar-Mumbai (Panvel). These services will provide affordable and reliable rail travel options for common citizens, students, migrant workers and traders, while strengthening inter-state economic and social linkages.

Cleanliness campaign gains new momentum: Blankets distributed to sanitation workers, Outstanding performers honored

Manoj Pal

Muzaffarnagar. To give new impetus to the cleanliness campaign jointly run by the Municipal Council and the private company JS Enviro Pvt. Ltd., with the goal of making the city clean, beautiful, and garbage-free, a special program, "Blankets of Compassion for Sanitation Workers," was organized on Saturday. During the program, sanitation workers who made outstanding contributions to door-to-door waste collection, user charge collection (UCC), and urban sanitation were honored with blankets. The chief guest at the program was the Chairperson of the Municipal Council, Meenakshi Swaroop. The company's Managing Director, Jeevan Kumar



Upadhyay, presented her with a bouquet. Other officials, including Executive Officer Dr. Pragya Singh, were also honored on this occasion.

In her address, Meenakshi Swaroop described the sanitation workers and the company's team as the "backbone" of the cleanliness campaign, stating that making Muzaffarnagar a garbage-free city is not just an administrative goal,

but a shared resolution of every citizen. She said that the municipality's priority is to make door-to-door waste collection completely smooth and technology-based. The role of all employees is crucial in bringing the city to the top position in the Swachh Surveykhan (Cleanliness Survey) 2026. She also appealed to citizens to segregate their waste and cooperate in the cleanliness campaign.

Delhi Gets 'Zero-Tolerance' Zones To Ease Traffic Congestion In Busy Areas



New Delhi: In a major move to curb traffic violations and ease congestion at critical stretches, 'Zero Tolerance' Zones have been created across some of the busiest corridors in New Delhi, including the Ring Road, Outer Ring Road and the North Delhi Municipal Corporation (NDMC)-controlled areas. The initiative, which was approved by the Delhi Traffic Police,

aims to enforce strict lane discipline, improve crowd management, and reduce pollution levels in high-traffic zones. As part of the initiative, bus lanes will be clearly demarcated, and strict enforcement measures will be put in place to ensure compliance. Officials said that indiscriminate by buses, particularly the practice of picking up passengers from the main carriageway, has

NAME CHANGE

I, hitherto known as GOVIND S/O PARDEEP KUMAR R/O A-118, Sadh Mohalla, Chhawla, South West Delhi, Delhi-110071 have changed my name and shall hereafter be known as GOVIND AHLAWAT.

PUBLIC NOTICE

I, MANVINDER KAUR CHADHA, daughter of Shri GURSARAN SINGH CHADHA and wife of KASHIF GHANI residing at 3/137, Subhash Nagar, Block-3, Tagore Garden, PO: Tagore Garden, District: West Delhi, Delhi-110027, do hereby solemnly affirm and declare that I have embraced ISLAM and renounced HINDUISM with effect from 29/08/2022 and also I have changed my name from MANVINDER KAUR CHADHA to ALISHA for all future purposes.

NAME CHANGE

It is for general information that I, BABITA DEVI W/o BANTY KUMAR, R/o E-162A, G/F Gali No. 6, Harsih Vihar, Hari Nagar Part-3, Jaitpur, South Delhi, Delhi-110044, declare that name of my father has been wrongly written as BABITA and BANTY KUMAR in my minor daughter BHUVNESHWARI PAL, aged 17 years in her 10th class educational documents. The actual name of mine and my husband are BABITA DEVI and BANTY KUMAR respectively, which may be amended accordingly.

PUBLIC NOTICE

It is for general information that I, BHARAT S/O RAM KISHAN residing at D-3, Shakur Pur, JY Colony, Saraswati Vihar S.O. North West Delhi, Delhi-110034 declare that name of my father has been wrongly written as RAM KRISHAN in my 10th, 12th Class, Mark Sheet and Certificate. The actual name of my father is RAM KISHAN, which may be amended accordingly.

It is for general information that I, Mohammad Yusuf S/o Faheem R/o E-20/10, Gali No-8 North Ghonda, Subhash Vihar, Garhi Munda, Bhajan Pura, North East Delhi, Delhi-110053 declare that name of my mother has been wrongly written as Marju in my All Educational Documents. The actual name of mine and my husband are BABITA DEVI and BANTY KUMAR respectively, which may be amended accordingly.

It is for general information that I, Khurshid Nishad, son of Khurshid Nishad, and Suman Devi S/o Sahdev Nishad R/O House No. E-20/10, Gali No-8 North Ghonda, Subhash Vihar, Garhi Munda, Bhajan Pura, North East Delhi, Delhi-110053 declare that name of my mother has been wrongly written as Marju in my All Educational Documents. The actual name of mine and my husband have been wrongly written as BABITA and BANTY KUMAR in my minor daughter BHAWANA PAL, aged 17 years in her 10th class educational documents. The actual name of mine and my husband are BABITA DEVI and BANTY KUMAR respectively, which may be amended accordingly.

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NEWS BOX

Pak Determined To Beat Terrorism, Throw It In Indian Ocean: Shehbaz Sharif

Islamabad. (Agency)

Prime Minister Shehbaz Sharif on Friday said that Pakistan was determined to defeat terrorism, asserting that the menace of militancy would be "thrown into the Indian Ocean". He made the comments during a meeting with senior clerics, representing the National Paigham-i-Aman Committee. "We are determined to defeat terrorism, and with the support of the people, we will throw it into the Indian Ocean," he said. He said that militants were supported by the "enemies of Pakistan". Noting that more than 100,000 Pakistanis have been killed due to terrorism, Shehbaz said that the international



community should acknowledge Pakistan's immense sacrifices. He also said that Pakistan demonstrated its strength in May 2025 during a four-day conflict with India. Shehbaz said Pakistan was blessed with vast natural resources worth trillions of dollars, which, if explored effectively, could help overcome challenges such as poverty and unemployment. He said if we use the hidden treasures, all our problems will end.

The committee comprising clerics was set up last year to counter extremism, hate speech, terrorism and sectarianism in the country. It has strongly condemned the Tehreek-e-Taliban Pakistan as well as the Afghan Taliban, stressing that terrorism has no justification under any circumstances. PM Shehbaz hoped that the committee would play a pivotal role in strengthening the national narrative against extremism and terrorism.

US Warns Of "Military Activities" Over Mexico, Central America

World. (Agency)

US aviation authorities issued notices Friday warning airlines to "exercise caution" in the airspace over Mexico and Central America due to "military activities." The Federal Aviation Administration posted a series of messages cautioning about a "potentially hazardous situation," citing the chance for interference to the Global Navigation Satellite System.

"The FAA issued flight advisory notices to Airmen for specified areas of Mexico, Central America, Panama, Bogota, Guayaquil and Mazatlan Oceanic Flight Regions, and in airspace within the eastern Pacific Ocean," an FAA spokesperson said.

The advisory remains in effect for 60 days.

The announcement comes amid continued reverberations of a US special forces raid and airstrike on January 3 that captured Venezuelan president Nicolas Maduro and his wife, Cilia Flores to face trial on drug-trafficking and other charges.

President Donald Trump has also suggested he is planning land strikes on drug cartels in Mexico, in what would mark a provocative military action against a US neighbor and major trading partner.

We are going to start now hitting land, with regard to the cartels. The cartels are running Mexico," Trump told Fox News last week.

EU Advises Airlines To Avoid Iranian Airspace Amid Unrest

London. (Agency)

The European Union Aviation Safety Agency on Friday advised airlines to avoid Iranian airspace, after threats of US attacks that have put the Islamic republic on guard. "Given the ongoing situation and the potential for US military action, which has placed Iranian air defence forces on a heightened state of alert, there is currently an increased likelihood of misidentification," the regulator said.

"The presence and possible use of a wide range of weapons and air-defence systems, combined with unpredictable state responses and the potential activation of SAM (surface-to-air) systems, creates a high risk to civil flights operating at all altitudes and flight levels."



Protests linked to the cost of living broke out in Iran on December 28, spiralling into one of the largest protest movements against the clerical leadership since the Islamic republic was founded in 1979.

At least 3,428 protesters have been killed, according to the latest toll from the Norway-based NGO Iran Human Rights, which described this as "an absolute minimum", and reported more than 10,000 arrests.

Until Wednesday, the United States had threatened military action if Iran did not abandon plans to execute arrested protesters. But after warnings from its Gulf allies of regional repercussions, Washington has since stepped back, although on Thursday it repeated that "all options remain on the table". US President Donald Trump on Thursday thanked the Iranian government for cancelling "all scheduled hangings" after threatening Tehran with "serious consequences" if the crackdown continued.

Kurdish-led SDF to withdraw from Aleppo as hundreds flee amid Syrian military strikes

World. (Agency)

"The leader of Kurdish-led forces in Syria announced on Friday that they will withdraw from a contested area in northern Syria, potentially heading off a major clash with government forces. The announcement by Mazloum Abdi, the leader of the Kurdish-led Syrian Democratic Forces, came as the Syrian military announced it had begun striking SDF positions, while the SDF reported "intense artillery shelling" in the town of Deir Hafer east of the city of Aleppo.

Hours earlier, a US military designation had visited Deir Hafer and met with SDF officials in an apparent attempt to tamp down tensions. The US has good relations with both sides and has urged calm. A spokesperson for the US military did not immediately respond to a request for comment. Abdi said in a statement posted on X that "based on calls from friendly countries and mediators and in a demonstration of good faith," the SDF would redeploy its forces to areas east of the Euphrates River on Saturday morning.

Shortly before Abdi's announcement, interim President Ahmad al-Sharaa had announced issuance of a decree strengthening Kurdish rights.

A wave of displacement

Earlier in the day, hundreds of people carrying their belongings arrived in government-held areas in northern Syria ahead of the anticipated offensive by Syrian troops on territory held by Kurdish fighters. Many of the civilians who fled were seen using side roads to reach government-held areas because the main highway was blocked at a checkpoint in the town of Deir Hafer controlled by the SDF.

The Syrian army said late Wednesday that civilians would be able to evacuate through the "humanitarian corridor" from 9 am to 5 pm on Thursday and then extended the evacuation period another day, saying the SDF had stopped civilians from leaving. There had been limited exchanges of fire between the two sides in the area before that. Men, women and children arrived on the government side of the line in cars and pickup trucks that were packed with bags

of clothes, mattresses and other belongings. They were met by local officials who directed them to shelters. In other areas, people crossed canals on small boats and

"only to be surprised when we arrived at Deir Hafer and found it closed." SDF fighters were preventing people from crossing through Syria's main east-west highway and forcing them to take a side road, he said. Kortay Khalil, an SDF official at the Deir Hafer checkpoint, said they had closed it because the government closed other crossings. "This crossing was periodically closed even before these events, but people are leaving through other routes, and we are not preventing them," he said. US military visit

The US military convoy arrived in Deir Hafer in the early afternoon accompanied by SDF officials. Associated Press journalists saw SDF leaders and American officials enter one of the government buildings, where they met inside for more than an hour before departing the area.

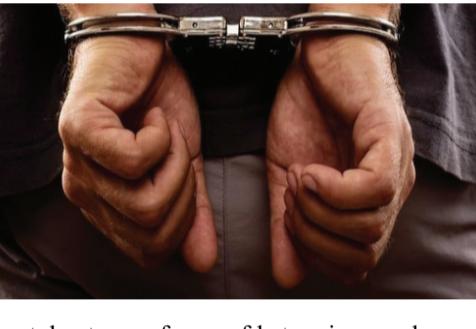
Inside Deir Hafer, many shops were closed Friday and people stayed home.



UK police arrest, charge man for hate crime after meat thrown outside gurdwara in West Bromich

BEIJING. (Agency)

In a racially motivated hate crime, a 42-year-old man has been arrested and charged by the West Midlands Police in the United Kingdom for allegedly throwing a bag of meat outside a gurdwara in the Black Country. In a statement issued recently, the West Midlands Police said that a man had been charged after emptying a bag of meat outside a gurdwara in West Bromwich last month. Tomasz Bruch (42), who has no fixed address, was arrested and charged on January 15. He was produced before the Wolverhampton Magistrates' Court. "On December 22, we received a report that a man walked past the Guru Nanak Gurdwara on Edward Street and emptied a bag of raw meat outside. Following an investigation, which included lengthy CCTV trawls by the West Bromwich Neighbourhood Team, Tomasz Bruch, aged 42, of no fixed address, has been charged with a hate crime offence. He has been remanded in custody to appear at Wolverhampton Magistrates' Court today," the statement read. It added, "We will not



tolerate any forms of hate crime, and we will continue to bring hate crime offenders to justice."

The police also urged the public to report hate crimes. "If you witness a hate crime or incident, make sure to report it. Not only will this help us deal with the incident, but reporting to the police will help us understand the extent of hate crime in your local area, so we can improve how we tackle and prevent future incidents," it said.

Thanking the West Midlands Police, Labour MP for West Bromwich, Sarah Coombes, who had earlier raised the issue in the UK Parliament, wrote on X and attached a video, "Recently Guru Nanak Gurdwara was attacked in a

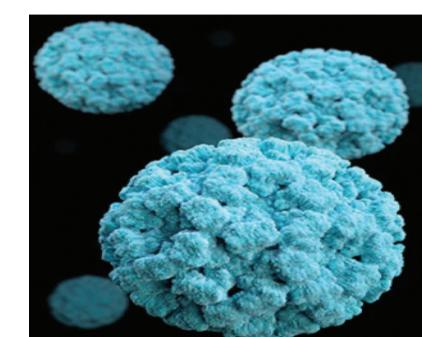
racially motivated hate crime. I'm glad that the police have identified, arrested and charged someone in connection with this instance of horrible hatred." The committee of Guru Nanak Gurdwara said in a statement that following investigations, the gurdwara had been informed that on January 14, a man was arrested on suspicion of carrying out the

hate crime. "The Crown Prosecution Service (CPS) has approved the charges against the individual, and he has been remanded in police custody awaiting the next available court date. We take this opportunity to thank the sangat, councillors, local law enforcement officers and Sarah Coombes MP for West Bromwich for highlighting the seriousness of this issue and taking necessary steps," it said. Earlier, the gurdwara committee had stated that on December 23, its representatives held meetings with the police, MPs and local councillors and were assured that the incident had been taken seriously. They had also urged people to provide any information they

Norovirus Infects Over 100 Students At South China School

BANGKOK. (Agency)

A total of 103 students at a senior high school in Foshan, south China's Guangdong Province, have been infected with norovirus, local health authorities said on Saturday, noting that no critical or fatal cases were reported. Norovirus, a common pathogen leading to acute gastroenteritis, typically causes symptoms such as vomiting and diarrhea. The students from Xinghui Middle School recently fell ill with symptoms preliminarily confirmed as caused by norovirus infections. All 103 students are in stable conditions. The school campus has been disinfected, and students are subject to health monitoring and attendance checks. An epidemiological survey is also underway. According to the Guangdong provincial disease control



authorities, the province enters its annual norovirus epidemic season from October to March of the following year, Xinhua news agency reported. Norovirus is a group of viruses that causes severe vomiting and diarrhea. It's a very common illness and it's very contagious. Norovirus outbreaks usually happen

seasonally in colder months. The infection is the Number 1 cause of foodborne illness in the United States. An estimated 685 million cases of norovirus are seen annually, including 200 million cases amongst children under 5. The burden of norovirus is significant; norovirus causes an estimated 200,000 deaths per year, including 50,000 child deaths, primarily impacting low-income countries. Norovirus has been estimated to cost \$60 billion globally as a result of healthcare costs and economic losses. The first norovirus outbreak occurred in Norwalk, Ohio, USA, in a school in 1968. For this reason, the first strain of norovirus was known as the Norwalk virus.

Norovirus causes gastroenteritis, which some people may call the "stomach flu."

Trump names Rubio, Blair and others to Gaza 'board of peace' as Palestinian committee meets

CAIRO. (Agency)

The White House released the names of some of the leaders who will play a role in overseeing next steps in Gaza after the Palestinian committee set to govern the territory under US supervision met for the first time on Friday in Cairo. The committee's leader, Ali Shaath, an engineer and former Palestinian Authority official from Gaza, pledged to get to work quickly to improve conditions. He expects reconstruction and recovery to take about three years and plans to focus first on immediate needs, including shelter. "The Palestinian people were looking forward to this committee, its establishment and its work to rescue them," Shaath said after the meeting, in a television interview with Egypt's state-owned Al-Qahera News. US President Donald Trump supports the group's efforts to govern Gaza after the two-year war between Israel and Hamas. Israeli troops withdrew from parts of Gaza after the

ceasefire took effect on Oct. 10, while thousands of displaced Palestinians have returned to what is left of their homes.

Now, there will be a number of huge challenges going forward, including the deployment of an international security force to supervise the ceasefire deal and the difficult process of disarming Hamas.

Under Trump's plan, Shaath's technocratic committee will run day-to-day affairs in Gaza under the oversight of a Trump-led "Board of Peace," whose members have not yet been named. White House names some officials to oversight boards. The White House said an executive board will work to carry out the vision of the Board of Peace. The executive board's members include US Secretary of State Marco Rubio, Trump envoy Steve Witkoff, Trump's son-in-law Jared Kushner, former British Prime Minister Tony Blair, Apollo Global Management CEO Marc Rowan, World Bank President Ajay Banga, and Trump's deputy national security adviser



Robert Gabriel. Nikolay Mladenov, a former Bulgarian politician and UN Mideast envoy, is to serve as the executive board's representative overseeing day-to-day matters. The White House also announced the members of another board, the "Gaza Executive Board," which will work with Mladenov, the technocratic committee and the international stabilization force. Witkoff, Kushner, Blair, Rowan and

Mladenov will also sit on that board. Additional members include: Turkish Foreign Minister Hakan Fidan; Qatari diplomat Ali Al-Thawadi; Hassan Rashad, director of Egypt's General Intelligence Agency; Emirati minister Reem Al-Hashimi; Israeli businessman Yakir Gabay; and Sigrid Kaag, the Netherlands' former deputy prime minister and a Mideast expert. Death of boy mourned in the West Bank. In the West Bank, friends and relatives gathered Friday to mourn the death of a 14-year-old Palestinian boy killed by Israeli forces. The Palestinian Health Ministry, which confirmed his death, said Mohammad Na'san was the first child killed by the army in the occupied West Bank in 2026. Residents said Israeli forces fired stun grenades and tear gas in an unprovoked attack. Israel's military said in a statement that the incursion came after Palestinians had hurled rocks at Israelis and set tires afire. "There was gunfire directed at citizens and farmers."

NEWS BOX

Tungabhadra Dam gate trial run boosts ryots' confidence**Kurnool.(Agency)**

The successful trial run of a newly installed gate at the Tungabhadra Dam in Karnataka has boosted confidence among over 10 lakh ayacut farmers in Andhra Pradesh, Telangana and Karnataka.

Engineers of Tungabhadra Board successfully conducted a trial run of the newly installed Gate No. 18, making a milestone in the modernisation of dam. Built nearly 70 years ago, the Tungabhadra Dam provides irrigation to about 20 lakh acres and supports over 10 lakh farmers across three States. The original gates, designed for 40 years, with the collapse of Gate No. 19 two years ago highlighting the urgency for replacement. Tungabhadra Board Secretary Ramakrishna Reddy said six more gates will be installed this month, all 33 replaced by May, and efforts are on to ensure water supply for the coming kharif season despite no release during Rabi.

Chief Minister Nara Chandrababu Naidu congratulated the Board engineers for the successful trial run. Tungabhadra Dam SE said officials would complete installation of gates within the given timeframe.

Ahmedabad: Retiree uses fake stock trading app, cheated of Rs 1.4cr**Ahmedabad.(Agency)**

A 68-year-old retired man from the Satellite area of the city fell prey to a sophisticated cyberfraud in which scammers duped him of Rs 1.4 crore by luring him into a fake stock trading and IPO investment scheme operated through social media and messaging platforms.

According to the FIR filed with Cybercrime police on Thursday, the victim came across an advertisement related to a stock diagnostic report of a commercial vehicle manufacturing company while browsing Instagram in Sep last year. After clicking on the advertisement, he was redirected to a WhatsApp group that claimed to be associated with a known brokerage firm. The group had several members who regularly posted screenshots of their stock trading profits, which helped build credibility.

Soon after, the victim was contacted by a woman who introduced herself as an investment assistant at the brokerage firm. She persuaded him to take a "full membership" and guided him to open a so-called Direct Market Access (DMA) account. He was asked to download a mobile application that closely resembled a legitimate trading platform, and was assisted in creating login credentials.

Over the next few weeks, the victim transferred money in multiple instalments to different bank accounts shared by the group's administrators, believing the funds were being invested in stocks. The application displayed steady profits, prompting him to invest more. In all, he transferred around Rs 1.4 crore between Nov and Dec. The fraud came to light when the scammers pushed him to invest in a high-value IPO and later demanded additional funds of over Rs 1.6 crore, citing allotment requirements and service charges.

No English-medium D El Ed at DIET Hyderabad leaves aspirants in lurch**Hyderabad.(Agency)**

The unavailability of the Diploma in Elementary Education (D El Ed) in English medium at District Institutes of Education and Training (DIET), Neredmet, Hyderabad, in the present academic year, has caused significant hardship to D El Ed aspirants.

Several DIET lecturers and teaching aspirants have urged the authorities of School Education department to introduce the course in English medium from the upcoming academic year and also sought upgradation of infrastructure in the institute.

According to sources, due to poor infrastructure, the National Council for Teacher Education (NCTE) had withdrawn affiliation from the Neredmet DIET in 2024 but last year affiliation was restored only for two units - 50 seats each in Telugu and Urdu mediums. But English medium D El Ed is not yet available at DIET, Hyderabad, despite increasing demand. Neredmet DIET being the only government run institution and also private DIET institutions too do not offer course in English medium.

A few teaching aspirants pointed out that during this current academic year due to non-availability of courses in English medium, they were forced to enrol in several districts including Mahbubnagar, Vikarabad, Medak and Nizamabad.

Cold wave to severe cold wave conditions

Bathinda.(Agency)

With a cold wave continuing in Punjab and Haryana, Ballowal Saunkhri in Shaheed Bhagat Singh Nagar in Punjab remained the coldest in the plains of the country, with a minimum temperature of 0.9°C.

Bhiwani was the coldest in Haryana, with a minimum temperature of 1.5°C, followed by 2°C in Narnaul and Sirsa, 2.2°C in Hisar, and 2.7°C in Mahendragarh. The minimum temperature in Hisar recorded a departure of 4.4°C from normal.

Chandigarh recorded a minimum temperature of 5.3°C, with a departure from normal of 2.1°C.

Cold wave to severe cold wave conditions

prevailed in many parts of Punjab and Himachal Pradesh. Cold day conditions

prevailed in isolated pockets of Haryana.

Dense to very dense fog conditions

prevailed in many parts of Punjab and Haryana.

Light to moderate isolated to scattered

rainfall/snowfall is likely over Himachal

Pradesh till Jan 22, and isolated rainfall over

Punjab on January 18, 19, and 22; and over

Haryana and Chandigarh on Jan 19 and 22.

As per the India Meteorological

Department (IMD), dense to very dense

fog conditions are very likely to prevail

in morning/night hours in some parts

over Punjab, Haryana, and Chandigarh

till January 17, and dense fog in isolated

pockets till January 22.

Cold wave conditions are very likely in

isolated pockets over Himachal Pradesh,

Punjab, Haryana, and Chandigarh on Jan 17.

Light to moderate isolated to scattered

rainfall/snowfall is likely over Himachal

Pradesh till Jan 22, and isolated rainfall over

Punjab on January 18, 19, and 22; and over

Haryana and Chandigarh on Jan 19 and 22.

As against Thursday, a fall of 0.3°C in the

average minimum temperature was recorded

till the morning on Friday in Punjab, and it

was recorded near normal in the state. The

lowest minimum temperature in the state

was recorded at 0.9°C at Ballowal.

In Haryana, as against Thursday, a rise of

1.2°C in the average minimum temperature

was recorded till the morning on Friday, and it

was recorded below normal by 2.1°C in the

state. The lowest minimum temperature was

recorded at 1.5°C at Bhiwani.

STATE**24 hours of violence: Chandigarh rocked by murder, firing****Chandigarh.(Agency)**

Two rounds of gunfire shattered the dead of night. Hours later, a 21-year-old youth was murdered in broad daylight — all within a span of 24 hours.

In a chilling turn of events, Golu, alias Kolis, 21, was chased and stabbed to death in Sector 38 on Friday afternoon. Police suspect the killing was the outcome of an old rivalry. A resident of Mauli Jagran, Golu had appeared in the Sector 43 district court earlier in the day with his mother, Meena, in connection with a dispute case. According to police sources, the accused were aware of his court appearance and allegedly kept watch on him during the hearing. After court proceedings, Meena left via a different route, while Golu managed to evade the suspects and reached a friend's house in Sector 38. The friend later warned him that the attackers were still looking for him and advised him to leave immediately. As soon as Golu stepped out, two men on a Bullet motorcycle

allegedly began tailing him. Police said the assailants were armed with sharp-edged weapons. They first attempted to attack him near the BJP office. Around 3pm, the attackers intercepted him near the slip road in Sector 38, surrounded him, and stabbed him repeatedly before fleeing. Severely injured, Golu collapsed on the road. A passer-by alerted the police, and he was rushed to a hospital, where doctors declared him dead. Teams from the Sector 39 police station, along with forensic experts and senior officers, reached the spot, cordoned off the area, and collected evidence, including blood samples and the victim's two-wheeler.

The killing has left the family devastated. Golu was married just 45 days ago, and a post-wedding ritual was scheduled at his residence on Friday night. Preparations were underway when news of his death reached the

Golu's mother alleged that the accused — Shammi, Gautami, Kishu, Golu, and others — had nursed a grudge against the family for nearly a year. She claimed the same group attacked one of their

injuries were reported. Police reached the area and began examining CCTV footage to identify the assailants. The motive behind the firing was not immediately clear.

Police investigations revealed that a personal dispute centred around a woman led to the firing incident at a chemist shop in Sector 32 on Thursday night.

According to officials, the attackers were unhappy about an alleged relationship involving one of the shop owners and had issued verbal warnings asking him to stay away from the woman. The firing, police said, followed these threats.

The incident took place at around 9.50 pm at Sewak Pharmacy in Sector 32 D. Two unidentified youths reached the spot on a white scooter. Police said one of them entered the shop and fired two bullets at 23-year-old Tanish Luthra, one of the owners, before escaping.

Man moves HC fearing erasure of paternal identity after ex-wife declared child's guardian

Ahmedabad.(Agency)

A divorced man approached the Gujarat high court, expressing fear that he would be deprived of his fatherhood and shut out of his son's life by his separated wife, since a family court in Surat appointed her sole guardian of the 10-year-old.

In this case, the couple got married in 2013, and a son was born to them in 2015. They took divorce with mutual consent in Jan 2021, with an arrangement that the child would be in the mother's custody and the father would enjoy visitation rights. The woman remarried in 2022 and applied to the Surat family court to appoint her the guardian of the son under the provisions of section 7 and 9 of the Hindu Minority and Guardianship Act. In Nov 2025, the family court appointed the woman as her son's sole guardian.

The child's father filed an appeal in HC against the family court's order and contended that such a declaration cannot be made for the sake of convenience, and that the biological father is the first natural guardian of a child above 5 years of age.

The appellant submitted that, in her application for guardianship, his former wife contended before the family court that the mention of the biological father's name in the child's birth certificate and records was causing difficulty for her. He expressed apprehension that, after the guardianship rights bestowed on the child's mother, the child would be alienated completely and the biological father might not get any say in his education and future. HC recorded his submissions as: "The appellant is apprehending that the respondent would be at liberty to go with the adoption of the child in favour of the second husband. It is further submitted that as per the provisions of section 6 of the Hindu Minority and Guardianship Act, 1956, father is a natural guardian first and then the mother, except in the cases of a child below 5 years."

Expressing apprehension that his name would be erased from the child's certificate in favour of the mother, the appellant contended: "The nature of the order (by family court) is such that the appellant would be deprived of his fatherhood."

Navi Mumbai's first urban agriculture centre set up in Kharghar**Navi Mumbai.(Agency)**

The policy adopted by Cidco to utilise land beneath high-tension transmission lines for green zone development has resulted in the establishment of Navi Mumbai's first Urban Agriculture Centre.

The plot allotted to Konkan Krishi Vikas Pratishthan (KKVP) by Cidco in 2008 at sector 5, near Utsav Chowk, Kharghar for a nursery cum Agro Information Centre has gained wider recognition, leading to a Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) between KKVP and Dr.

Balasaheb Sawant Konkan Krishi Vidyapeeth (DBSKV)- Ratnagiri to promote urban agriculture, natural farming and

MMR.

The nursery has been on the focus for the last few years over growth of various types of indigenous and other varieties of saplings. Many from the locality visit the nursery.

The initiative will focus on extension activities such as demonstrations, awareness programs, training, capacity building and exposure tours, with special emphasis on urban agriculture, natural farming and entrepreneurship.

The agriculture centre aims to benefit farmers, urban growers and agri-entrepreneurs from Navi Mumbai and other urban

and peri-urban areas. Dr. Mandar Geete, program coordinator of KKVP highlighted the role of urban agriculture in enhancing food security, green cover, climate resilience and biodiversity in cities.

The MoU was signed in the presence of DBSKV's vice chancellor Dr. Sanjay Bhave, and Dr. Satish Narkhede, the director of education, KKVP's managing trustee Shekhar Sawant, and program coordinator Dr. Mandar Geete. Senior faculty members including Dr. Santosh Waravdekar and others were also present. Many have opposed the Cidco move.

Navi Mumbai citizens complain of trees marred to install hoardings**Mumbai.(Agency)**

At least three trees have been severely damaged at Vashi, sector 1, next to Ganesh Tower society, where a new hoarding has been recently



This is happening because our tree corner is being reduced."

The NMMC garden officer at Vashi ward office, Ganesh Deshmukh, said, "We have already sent a notice to the housing society where the new hoarding is being installed, and also informed the licensing department which had issued permission for this hoarding."

The NMMC commissioner said he will look into this matter. Shankar added, "Earlier, an almond tree was illegally chopped from top several times, in order to display a hoarding behind it. Now, another hoarding has been erected just a few metres away, by damaging more trees. We want the civic body to save our city trees and cancel such hoardings which are spoiling our greenery, which is already scanty."

Green group NatConnect Foundation's director B N Kumar said, "On Dec 31, the AQI in Navi Mumbai was very high — at 407 units. This is happening because our tree corner is being reduced."

Disclosing the details to the media, Warangal Commissioner of Police (CP) Sunpreet Singh said that the main accused, Pasunuri Basava Raju and Jella Pandu, ran an online service center at Yadagirigutta in Yadadri Bhuvanagiri district.

Another accused Ganesh Kumar collected registration fees from farmers through Meeseva operators and Online centers by promising to pay challans through NRI accounts. The collected money was distributed as commissions to service operators and middlemen, while the remaining



amount was transferred to the prime accused. During the payment of government fees related to registration documents, technical issues would occasionally arise. Taking advantage of this, the accused repeatedly attempted to manipulate loopholes in the Dharani and Bhu Bharati websites for their benefit.

Cold wave continues in region, temp dips to 0.9°C in Pb's Ballowal**Bathinda.(Agency)**

With a cold wave continuing in Punjab and Haryana, Ballowal Saunkhri in Shaheed Bhagat Singh Nagar in Punjab remained the coldest in the plains of the country, with a minimum temperature of 0.9°C.

Bhiwani was the coldest in Haryana, with a minimum temperature of 1.5°C, followed by 2°C in Narnaul and Sirsa, 2.2°C in Hisar, and 2.7°C in Mahendragarh. The minimum temperature in Hisar recorded a departure of 4.4°C from normal.

Chandigarh recorded a minimum temperature of 5.3°C, with a departure from normal of 2.1°C.

Cold wave to severe cold wave conditions



prevailed in many parts of Punjab and Himachal Pradesh. Cold day conditions prevailed in isolated pockets of Haryana. Dense to very dense fog conditions prevailed

in many parts of Punjab and Haryana, and dense fog conditions prevailed in isolated pockets of Chandigarh. Zero visibility was reported in Amritsar, 20 metres in Ludhiana, Faridkot, and Ballowal Saunkhri, 30 metres in Bathinda, and 40 metres in Patiala in Punjab. Visibility was 0 metres in Ambala and Bhiwani, 20 metres in Hisar, 40 metres in Karnal, and 80 metres in Chandigarh.

As per the India Meteorological Department (IMD), dense to very dense fog conditions are very likely to prevail in morning/night hours in some parts over Punjab, Haryana, and Chandigarh till January 17, and dense fog in isolated pockets till January 22.

Cold wave conditions are very likely in

isolated pockets over Himachal Pradesh, Punjab, Haryana, and Chandigarh on Jan 17. Light to moderate isolated to scattered rainfall/snowfall is likely over Himachal Pradesh till Jan 22, and isolated rainfall over Punjab on January 18, 19, and 22; and over Haryana and Chandigarh on Jan 19 and 22. As against Thursday, a fall of 0.3°C in the average minimum temperature was recorded till the morning on Friday in Punjab, and it was recorded near normal in the state.

Donroe Doctrine: A chronicle of magic realism foretold

During the past 10 days that shook the world, two fault lines have appeared in international politics—principally, the regime change project of the US President Donald Trump in Venezuela and, two, a potential break-up of the Western alliance.

If only the celebrated Latin American literary giant Gabriel García Márquez were alive today, this would have been a fitting moment in his tumultuous career—marking the entry of magical realism, a literary genre blending the mundane with the fantastic, into the realm of geopolitics.

Herein lies a paradox. While Trump may have missed the Nobel Peace Prize, he can still claim a legacy of making magical realism a global phenomenon in politics—a potentially more enduring legacy for some. He has succeeded in situating us onlookers in a predominantly realistic setting while his fantasies are rolling out in an unreal world, with unreal characters. He brings alive García Márquez's powerful metaphor of cows wandering through and eating the curtains inside a deposed dictator's home.

The regime change in Venezuela had an easy explanation—it is a vivid display of the Trump administration's prioritisation of the Western hemisphere in its foreign policy strategies, as outlined in the recent National Security Strategy released by the White House. This hypothesis was articulated, albeit somewhat crudely, by Secretary of State Marco Rubio, the most experienced top diplomat in the entire Trump team, when he spoke to a TV network on Sunday, "This is the Western hemisphere. This is where we live—and we're not going to allow it to be a base of operations for adversaries, competitors and rivals of the United States." All sorts of atavistic fears appear to be swirling in Rubio's subconscious mind, vaguely hinting that the US, like an ageing lion losing its mane, is coming home for better cooling and hunting in a thorny terrain, but where it also has to contend with predators who appeared to settle old scores—Russia, China and Iran in particular.

Venezuela is synonymous with energy security. If China accounts for around 80 percent of Venezuela's oil exports in recent years, Russia and Iran are Caracas's team-mates in the Great Game over the petrodollar. If China has quietly 'de-dollarised' its oil trade with Venezuela, Russia and Iran are world champions in beating American sanctions. All this has been going on right under the nose of the Americans, who couldn't do anything about it. To be sure, there's a long haul ahead for Trump. Mexico, for instance, is a challenge equivalent to Venezuela multiplied by at least five—with a 2,000-mile long land border with the US, its political economy rests firmly on a bizarre institutionalised bonding between its leftist ruling elite and the mafiosi (with collaborators in the US). President Claudia Sheinbaum is seeking a settlement with Trump, had a "good conversation" with him and even ruled out a US invasion. On the other hand, Cuban President Miguel Diaz-Canel remains defiant, unimpressed by the shock and awe of the US's secret strategic weapon (sourced from microwave generators) generating ultra-high-frequency electromagnetic radiation.

Trump cannot emulate Ali Baba and the Forty Thieves by simply chanting the magical phrase 'Open Sesame' to lure the regional states to come over to his side. Ever since the US transitioned in the mid-20th century to a more proactive international strategy—with the state department officially declaring the end of the Monroe Doctrine era—the Western hemisphere has transformed beyond recognition. Trump himself admitted as much when, on January 3, he rechristened it as the 'Donroe Doctrine'. Simply put, it is impossible to make a chastity belt to lock the elected leaders of such a vast, uncontrollable continent teeming with poors and guerrillas.

Participation of youngsters at the Kashi-Tamil Sangamam illustrates the passion among our yuva shakti to deepen their connect with our roots.

A FEW days ago, I was in the sacred land of Somnath to be part of the Somnath Swabhiman Parv, marking a thousand years since the first attack on Somnath, which took place in 1026. People from all across India had come to be part of this moment of remembrance, united by a shared reverence for history, culture and the enduring spirit of the people of India. I met a few people who had previously come to Somnath during the Saurashtra-Tamil Sangamam and had been to Kashi during the Kashi-Tamil Sangamam. Their words of appreciation for such platforms touched me, and so I thought of sharing a few thoughts on this subject. During a Mann Ki Baat programme, I had said that not learning Tamil is a major regret of my life. Fortunately, over the last few years, our government has had several opportunities to further popularise Tamil culture across India and to deepen the spirit of 'Ek Bharat, Shreshtha Bharat'. A prime example of such an effort is the Kashi-Tamil Sangamam. In our ethos, sangam or confluence has a special place. Seen in this light, the Kashi-Tamil Sangamam stands out as a distinctive initiative, one that celebrates the living unity of India's many traditions while honouring their unique identities.

And what can be a better place than Kashi to host such a sangamam? The same Kashi, which has remained a civilisational anchor from time immemorial, where, for thousands of years, people from all over have come in search of knowledge, meaning and moksha. Kashi's connection with Tamil people and culture is very deep. It is in Kashi that Baba Vishwanath resides, while Tamil Nadu has Rameswaram. Tenkasi in Tamil Nadu is known as the Kashi of the South or Dakshin Kashi. Saint Kumara Guruparar Swamigal forged a lasting link between Kashi and Tamil Nadu through his spirituality, scholarship and institution-building. Mahakavi Subramania Bharati, one of Tamil Nadu's greatest sons, found in Kashi a space of intellectual growth and spiritual awakening. It was here that his nationalism deepened, his poetry sharpened and his vision of a free, united India took clearer shape. There are several such instances that highlight this close bond.

The first edition of Kashi-Tamil Sangamam took place in 2022. I recall attending the inauguration programme. Scholars, artisans, students, farmers, writers, professionals and many others from Tamil Nadu

travelled to Kashi, Prayagraj and Ayodhya. Subsequent editions expanded the scale and depth of this effort. The aim was to introduce fresh themes, innovative formats and deeper engagement, thus ensuring that the sangamam continued to evolve while remaining rooted in its core spirit. In the second edition in 2023, technology was used on a larger scale to ensure that language does not become a barrier for people. In the third edition, the focus was on the Indian knowledge

Namo Ghat, academic sessions at Banaras Hindu University and cultural programmes.

One of the things that makes me happy about the Kashi-Tamil Sangamam is the participation of thousands of youngsters. It illustrates the passion among our 000000000000000000000000 to deepen their connect with our roots. It is a brilliant platform for them to showcase their talent and creativity during the various cultural programmes. In addition to the sangamam, efforts have been made to make the journey to Kashi memorable for the participants. The Indian Railways operated special trains to take people from Tamil Nadu to Uttar Pradesh. In many railway stations, particularly in Tamil Nadu, they were cheered, and the train journey was marked by melodious songs and conversations. I would also like to appreciate my sisters and brothers of Kashi and Uttar Pradesh for their warmth and hospitality shown to the delegates of the various Kashi-Tamil sangamams. Several people opened the doors of their homes for the guests from Tamil Nadu. The local administration worked round the clock to ensure the guests had a seamless experience. As the MP from Varanasi, I could not be prouder! This time, the valedictory function of the Kashi-Tamil Sangamam was held in Rameswaram and it was graced by the Vice-President, Thiru CP Radhakrishnan, who is a proud son of Tamil Nadu. He delivered an inspiring address, emphasising India's spiritual greatness and how such platforms deepen national integration.

The Kashi Tamil Sangamam has delivered meaningful outcomes, like strengthening cultural understanding, fostering academic and people-to-people exchanges and creating lasting bonds between parts of the country that share a civilisational ethos. We want to make this platform more vibrant. Most importantly, it has furthered the spirit of 'Ek Bharat, Shreshtha Bharat'. This spirit has flourished for centuries through our festivals, literature, music, art, cuisine, architecture and systems of knowledge. This time of the year is auspicious for people across India. People are celebrating various festivals, like Sankranti, Uttarayan, Pongal, Magh Bihu, which are, among other things, associated with the Sun, nature and farming. These festivals bring people together and deepen the spirit of harmony in our society. I convey my best wishes for these festivals and hope they continue to inspire us to deepen national unity through our shared heritage and collective participation.



systems. At the same time, academic discussions, cultural performances, exhibitions and interactions witnessed greater participation. Thousands of people have taken part in these events. The fourth edition commenced on December 2, 2025. The theme was interesting — Tamil Karkalam — Learn Tamil. It presented an opportunity for people in Kashi and other parts to learn the beautiful Tamil language. Teachers came from Tamil Nadu and the students of Kashi had a very memorable experience!

There were many other special events this time. 'Tholkappiyam', the ancient Tamil literary classic, was translated into four Indian and six foreign languages. A unique event, Sage Agastya Vehicle Expedition (SAVE), was undertaken from Tenkasi to Kashi. On the way, various initiatives, such as eye camps, health awareness camps, digital literacy camps, were held. The expedition paid homage to King Adi Veera Parakrama Pandyan, the great Pandya ruler who spread the message of cultural oneness. There were exhibitions at

End of 10-minute delivery offer is a breakthrough

The Tribune Editorial: This is not merely a law-and-order issue; plastic manja is an environmental hazard



A chilling video from Bidar district in Karnataka on Wednesday captures the horror of what a banned kite string can do: Sanjukumar Hosamani (48) was riding his motorcycle when a taut nylon kite thread across the road slit his neck. By the time medical help arrived, he was dead. Poorly enforced regulations turn festive traditions into fatal hazards every year across the country: lives lost, birds mutilated, animals injured and administrations scrambling for damage control.

In Punjab, district authorities have reiterated that the manufacture, sale, storage and use of synthetic kite string are illegal. They have even sought public cooperation, while police claim to have netted vendors. Yet manufacturers and suppliers evade arrest and the string remains freely available, both offline and online. The result: razor-sharp threads slicing throats of unsuspecting motorcyclists, injuring children and killing birds in large numbers. The menace thrives because enforcement is episodic and reactive.

banned string continues. Parents allow children to use it, organisers look the other way and consumers treat prohibition as advisory rather than binding.

This is not merely a law-and-order issue. Plastic manja is an environmental hazard — non-biodegradable, persistent and destructive to ecosystems. Courts have repeatedly described it as a "man-made weapon". Yet responsibility is diffused across departments, allowing accountability to slip through the cracks. The ban must be backed by year-round surveillance, tougher criminal liability for manufacturers and sellers and strict action against parents and event organisers who encourage its use. Online marketplaces, too, must be held accountable for listings disguised under misleading labels. Until enforcement becomes consistent and deterrent, the skies will remain deadly.

Human cost of the gig economy's need for speed

As companies are rethinking 10-minute deliveries, we must understand the result of such promises. Opaque, algorithm-based incentives compel workers to imperil themselves to improve ratings and earnings. The new labour codes do not help. We need an independent fairness index for gig platforms

When delivery workers in several major cities logged out of their apps in a coordinated manner near the end of last year, it forced India to confront an uncomfortable truth. While business circles continue to celebrate the emergence of business models that promise speed through technological prowess, the 10-minute delivery proposition must also be seen for what it is: a social experiment whose costs are disproportionately borne by those with the least power to refuse.

For many young urban migrants and new entrants in the labour market, platform work has become a default option rather than a short-term stopgap. Yet, research by the International Labour Organization has consistently noted that this growth has been accompanied by a fundamental reorganisation of work itself, where stable employment is replaced by task-based engagements governed by algorithms. In this system of management, performance is continuously monitored through delivery times, customer ratings and acceptance rates, while the decision-making remains opaque to workers. Studies under the Oxford Internet Institute's Fairwork Project show that such opacity generates income volatility and heightens workers' dependence on platform-determined incentives. The health and cost implications are borne by the workers rather than the firms that profit from these systems.

Against this backdrop, the recent log-outs must be understood as a sign of structural strain. They raise pressing questions about how India's platform economy is governed, who absorbs the costs of speed, and whether the current regulatory frameworks are equipped to deal with the form of work. Much of the sector's defence of ultra-fast delivery rests on technical

explanations. They argue that delivery times are determined not by rider behaviour but by dense networks of neighbourhood warehouses, optimised routing and short distances. In theory, this frames speed as a logistical outcome rather than a labour issue.

However, studies by the International Transport Workers' Federation and Fairwork India highlight that time pressure is experienced not simply in terms of distance but through the cumulative micro-delays resulting from traffic congestion, access barriers in apartment complexes, weather disruptions and order batching that remain invisible to algorithmic systems. Our cities are not spreadsheets, and the friction that defines everyday urban life is rarely captured in neat delivery-time calculations.

Platforms rely on automated metrics, not human supervision, to determine workers' access to future orders. Thus, they shape worker behaviour while denying employer obligations. The lack of transparency makes it difficult for workers to contest penalties or understand how to improve their standing.

This opacity has material consequences. Research by the Centre for Sustainable Employment and the ILO shows that platform workers often experience income instability even during periods of high demand, as incentive structures shift unpredictably and penalties are imposed retroactively. In such conditions, workers may prioritise speed over safety as a rational response. In India, the Code on Social Security, 2020 recognises gig

and platform workers as a distinct category—an important conceptual step. Yet, the recognition has not translated into robust protection. By linking eligibility for insurance and benefits to minimum engagement



thresholds—90 days on one platform or 120 days across several—the State has inadvertently mirrored the logic of the platforms themselves.

In a system marked by high churn, unpredictability and frequent account deactivations, many workers will never remain visible long enough to qualify. The continued classification of workers as independent contractors further allows platforms to shift operational risks outwards. Fuel price volatility, insurance gaps and

the absence of paid leave are treated as individual problems rather than systemic features. This fragmentation weakens collective voice even as dependence on platform income deepens. What emerges is a new kind of urban buffer class—present when demand surges, absent when liabilities arise. Flexibility, once framed as empowerment, increasingly resembles instability by design. If India is to preserve both innovation and dignity, the next phase of platform regulation must prioritise transparency over speed. One practical step would be the creation of a publicly-visible fairness index for gig platforms—a n independently governed rating system that evaluates companies on labour integrity rather than delivery velocity. Much like energy efficiency labels or food safety standards, it would allow consumers, regulators and investors to see what currently remains hidden.

The index's key dimensions could include income viability (net earnings meeting local living wages), time realism (delivery promises adjusted dynamically for traffic, weather and peak congestion), due process (a human-led mechanism to contest suspensions and penalties), and social protection (insurance and accident cover from the first day of work).

Paint Your house Green this winter



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

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

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

Know your plants

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

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

Maintenance of indoor plants

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

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

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

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

Water the plants carefully

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

Kitchen garden in pots

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

grow vegetables in the little balcony of your apartment.

Do not use soil from

the garden. It can be filled with weed seeds, insects, and fungal diseases. It is better and easier to buy readymade potting soil (a mixture comprising clay, bone dust, vermicompost, neem cake and mustard cake) from the local nursery. You can also go for coco peat, which are made from coconut husks and is a medium for growing plants.

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

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

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

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

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

Veggies for beginners

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

Winter blossom

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

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

water-selected.

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

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

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

Preparing the potting mixture & sowing seeds

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

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

However, if insects or diseases do strike your plants, go for the safest botanical or microbial pesticides'

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

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

- Do not pile soil on top of the plant

- Get various seedlings from the nursery

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

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

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

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

Terrace talk

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

water-selected.

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

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

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Dense Fog Blankets Delhi-NCR Amid Cold Wave, Air Quality 'Severe'

Minimum temperatures across the national Capital dipped well below seasonal norms, deepening the chill. Delhi recorded a low of 4.3 degrees Celsius.

Yamuna gets GPS-based dredger for sludge and weed clearance

New Delhi.(Agency)
In a step towards cleaning the Yamuna river, the Irrigation and Flood Control Department on Friday commissioned an amphibian multipurpose dredger Watermaster along with three hopper barges at the Nafajgarh drain, which accounts for nearly 70% of the total pollution load entering the Yamuna.

The dredger, sourced from Finland, is a highly versatile machine capable of operating efficiently from dry land to 6-metre deep water. It can be deployed for dredging, raking, piling, sludge removal, and aquatic weed clearance, making it particularly suitable for complex and congested drain systems like the Nafajgarh drain.



Delhi Irrigation and Flood Control Minister Parvesh Verma said that the initiative marks a decisive shift towards technology-driven, large-scale and sustained action to clean major drains. The dredger also includes GPS-based tracking with a fuel sensor, ensuring transparency and operational efficiency.

"Nafajgarh drain is the biggest contributor to Yamuna pollution. If we are serious about cleaning the river, this drain has to be treated with the best available technology and continuous monitoring. This dredger represents a global standard. Our approach is outcome-based. If the performance of this machinery meets expectations, more such advanced machines will be deployed at different locations across the Yamuna river and its drains," Parvesh Verma said.

As Ayushman centres expand, Delhi shuts 137 mohalla clinics, only 30 left

New Delhi.(Agency)
Amid the rapid expansion of Ayushman Arogya Mandirs (AAMs), the Delhi government has ordered the closure of 137 mohalla clinics across the city, significantly scaling down a flagship primary healthcare initiative of the previous decade. With this move, the total number of mohalla clinics in the capital has dropped sharply from 167 to just 30, health officials said on Thursday. The decision was communicated to Chief District Medical Officers (CDMOs) of all districts by the mohalla clinic cell of the Directorate General of Health Services (DGHS).

Officials said the closures are part of a broader restructuring of Delhi's primary healthcare network to avoid duplication of services. Of the 137 clinics slated for shutdown, 101 were operating from porta cabins, 30 from rented premises, five from government buildings, and one from a private building provided rent-free. According to officials, 41 of these clinics were already non-functional as they did not have doctors. The remaining 96 clinics were located in close proximity to newly established Ayushman Arogya Mandirs, making them redundant. At its peak, Delhi had more than 540 mohalla clinics, which were introduced to provide accessible neighbourhood-level healthcare. Authorities indicated that even the remaining 30 clinics could be shut in the future as the AAM network continues to expand across the city.

Meanwhile, Chief Minister Rekha Gupta on Wednesday inaugurated 81 new Ayushman Arogya Mandirs, taking the total number of such centres in Delhi to 319. The government plans to establish around 15 AAMs in each Assembly constituency to strengthen local healthcare access.

Designed as comprehensive primary healthcare centres, AAMs are expected to provide 12 essential service packages. These include free distribution of 161 types of medicines, 12 diagnostic tests, and all vaccinations for pregnant women and newborns. Screening for common non-communicable diseases such as cervical, breast and oral cancer will also be a core component. Also, the centres will be equipped with video conferencing facilities, enabling patients to consult specialists at government hospitals remotely.

41 of these clinics already non-functional, say officials

According to officials, 41 of these mohalla clinics were non-functional as they did not have doctors. The remaining 96 clinics were located in close proximity to newly established Ayushman Arogya Mandirs, making them redundant. At its peak, Delhi had more than 540 mohalla clinics to provide accessible neighbourhood-level healthcare.

New Delhi.(Agency)
Delhi and the National Capital Region (NCR) woke up to another harsh winter morning on Saturday, with icy temperatures, dense fog and hazardous air quality combining to intensify discomfort across North India. The cold wave continued unabated for the sixth consecutive day, while pollution levels breached the "severe" category, prompting authorities to reimpose stringent restrictions under Stage-III of the Graded Response Action Plan (GRAP). Minimum temperatures across the national Capital dipped well below seasonal norms, deepening the chill. Delhi recorded a low of 4.3 degrees Celsius, while Safdarjung and Ayanagar weather stations reported 4.7 degrees Celsius a day earlier. The weather conditions were further compounded by dense fog, which significantly reduced visibility during the early morning hours. At Indira Gandhi International Airport,

visibility dropped to around 350 metres at approximately 6:30 am, leading to operational challenges and flight delays. Under these restrictions, non-essential Airport authorities had issued a travel advisory earlier in the morning, confirming that low-visibility procedures were in place for both arrivals and departures. In a post on social media platform X, Delhi Airport said, "Low Visibility Procedures are in progress at Delhi Airport. All flight operations are presently normal. Passengers are requested to contact the airline concerned for updated flight information." Meanwhile, air quality deteriorated sharply, with the Air Quality Index (AQI) crossing the 350 mark in several areas. In response, the Commission for Air Quality Management (CAQM) enforced

Stage-III GRAP measures to curb further environmental and health damage.

Data from the Central Pollution Control Board (CPCB) showed that AQI levels at ITO touched 402, firmly placing it in the "severe" category. According to CPCB standards, AQI readings above 401 indicate severe pollution, posing serious health risks, particularly to children, the elderly and those with respiratory ailments. Several neighbourhoods reported even higher pollution levels. Anand Vihar emerged as the most polluted area with an AQI of 437, followed by Patparganj at 429, Chandni Chowk at 426, Nehru Nagar at 421 and Vivek Vihar at 418. Thick smog was visible along major traffic corridors, reducing visibility and worsening commuting conditions. Authorities have urged residents to limit outdoor activities, especially during early morning and late evening hours, as the twin impact of extreme.



construction and demolition activities have been halted, including welding, plastering, painting, piling, trenching and flooring work.

"No Internet, Dangerous Protests": First Flights From Iran Land In Delhi

New Delhi.(Agency)
The first two commercial flights carrying Indians from Iran landed in Delhi late last night, since violent protests erupted against the Khamenei regime. These were regular flights and not part of any evacuation effort. The Indian government, however, remains prepared for any eventuality. It had earlier cautioned its citizens against non-essential travel to Iran. Some flights from India had been impacted on January 15 due to a brief closure of the Iranian airspace amid escalating tensions. The situation now appears to be moving towards normalcy, though several Indians chose to return as air traffic resumes over Iran.

Back in India, the nationals thanked the

government for its assistance during the crisis. India's Embassy in Tehran had issued advisories and had been in touch with Indian pilgrims, tourists, students, and businessmen for

Iran for a month, said he had been facing problems only over the last couple of weeks. "When we went outside, protesters would come in front of the car. They would cause a little trouble. There was no internet. Therefore, we couldn't inform our families, and we were a little worried. We couldn't even contact the embassy," he added.

An electrical engineer who had gone to Iran for work purposes said the situation has now improved, with network issues being the only problem he faced during his brief stay. "People were worried, but now the scenario in Tehran is now normal. There was fire; the protests were dangerous. However, there were fewer protesters compared to those supporting the regime," said another national, thanking.



evacuation from Iran. An MBBS student who returned from Iran said she had heard about the protests but never saw any agitation herself and that there was no internet.

Another Indian national, who was in

'No Role In Such Ventures': MEA Distances Itself From 'Battle Of Galwan'

New Delhi.(Agency)
Ahead of the release of Salman Khan's movie "Battle of Galwan", based on the 2020 clash between Indian and Chinese troops in the Galwan Valley, the Ministry of External Affairs on Friday said issues regarding film-making in India are looked after by "relevant authorities", and the MEA has "no role" in this or such ventures. At his weekly media briefing, External Affairs Ministry Spokesperson Randhir Jaiswal said this in response to a query from a reporter.

Produced by Salman Khan and his mother Salma Khan, "Battle of Galwan" releases on April 17.

Jaiswal was asked to comment on some reports claiming that the MEA has "raised objections" to the film depicting the clash between Indian and Chinese troops in the

"We understand that a film of this nature is being planned. Issues regarding film-making in India, as you are well aware, are looked after by the relevant authorities. And as far as we are



concerned, MEA has no role in this or such ventures," he said.

The film, directed by Apoorva Lakhia, has Salman playing the role of Bikkumalla Santosh Babu, who laid down his life along with 19 other soldiers

of the 16 Bihar Regiment in the 2020 battle while defending Indian territory.

He was posthumously given India's second-highest wartime gallantry award, the Maha Vir Chakra. A 1.12-minute teaser of the film, which has created buzz on the Internet, was released on Salman's 60th birthday on December 27. Several Indian media outlets have reported on the teaser and the criticism it drew from various Chinese media. The military standoff in eastern Ladakh began in May 2020. Clashes at the Galwan Valley in June that year resulted in a severe strain in ties between India and China. Twenty Indian Army personnel laid down their lives in the Galwan Valley clashes on June 15, 2020. In February 2021, China officially acknowledged that five Chinese military officers and soldiers were killed in the clashes, though it is widely believed that the death.

Gupta said the Assembly Secretariat has issued a notice to the Director of the Forensic Science Laboratory (FSL), Punjab, seeking a detailed response along with the basis of its report, with time granted till January 22. He said the House would not permit any dilution of truth or interference with due process. The Speaker said replies have been received from the Director General of Police, Punjab, and the Commissioner of Police, Jalandhar, while additional time has been granted to both to submit detailed responses due to personal and official reasons.

On the forensic examination, Gupta said the Special Director General of Police (Cyber Crime), Punjab, has submitted a written reply stating that the cyber crime wing had no operational or investigative role in the matter.

He said the reply is under examination and the officer may be asked to appear for further clarification. Gupta also said the Committee on Privileges of the Delhi Legislative Assembly has initiated proceedings in the matter and issued a notice to Atishi over an alleged breach of privilege, seeking her written reply by January 19.

"If required, the House will convene again to uphold its dignity and the democratic will of the people," he added.

Rs 1,000-Crore Illicit Funds Routed Via Mule Accounts, CBI Charges 19

New Delhi.(Agency)
The CBI has registered an FIR against a branch head of Punjab & Sind Bank and 18 others for allegedly opening mule accounts which were used to conceal and layer funds over Rs 1,000 crore generated from cybercrime and other illicit activities, officials said Friday. The agency has taken action on the basis of its preliminary enquiry, which exposed 13 mule accounts opened in the names of non-existent companies using forged documents, they said.

The agency found that several individuals arranged forged and fabricated KYC documents, false rent agreements and other fabricated

supporting documents used for opening the accounts in the bank's Government Girls Senior Secondary School Branch in Rajasthan's Sriganganagar. Vikas Wadhwa was the head of that branch.

"The said accounts were allegedly opened with the connivance and criminal conspiracy of unknown bank officials, violating KYC norms, due diligence requirements and standard operating procedures," the agency has alleged in the FIR. A mule account - set up using falsified identification documents - is primarily used to move or launder illicit money, with or without the knowledge of the individuals whose details have been used to open the account.

"Fake site visit reports and business verification were created by the bank officials to facilitate opening of these current accounts in the names of fictitious firms," the agency FIR alleged.

The central probe agency said all the 13

firms in whose names the said current channels and digital platforms, the FIR accounts were opened were non-existent and created solely to open and operate these current accounts using forged and

fabricated documents. "These accounts were subsequently used to route, layer and transfer proceeds of cyber-crime and other illicit activities. The transaction amount involved... is about Rs. 1084.00 crore," the agency alleged.

The CBI said accused persons, including Wadhwa, made illicit gain for themselves and corresponding "wrongful reputational loss" to the Punjab & Sind Bank.

"Besides this, if the allegations of money laundering are made out, the accused persons have also exposed the bank to the risk of penalties, thereby placing the bank in a position where it is likely to suffer financial loss on account of such penalties as well," the CBI FIR alleged.



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NEWS BOX

India vs Bangladesh, U19 World Cup Live Streaming: All you need to know

New Delhi. (Agency)

India U19 and Bangladesh U19 clash in a pivotal Group B encounter of the ICC U19 World Cup 2026 on Saturday, January 17, at Queens Sports Club, Bulawayo. This high-stakes match could prove decisive in setting the tone for both teams' campaigns as they aim to assert early dominance in the tournament. India began their campaign strongly, overpowering USA U19 in a rain-curtailed match. USA were restricted to 107, with Nitish Sudini top-scoring with 36. Henil Patel starred with a five-wicket haul for just 16 runs, while RS Ambrish and Khilan Patel provided crucial support.

In reply, India paced their chase carefully, anchored by an unbeaten 42 from Abhigyan Kundu. Contributions from captain Ayush Mhatre and Vihaan Malhotra ensured a



comfortable six-wicket win with 118 balls to spare, showcasing both their bowling depth and batting resilience.

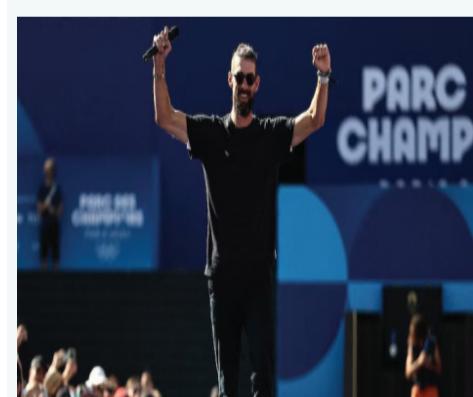
BANGLADESH IN GOOD FORM

Bangladesh U19 arrive with strong momentum, having produced disciplined performances in the ACC U19 Asia Cup. They reached the semi-final, including a thrilling three-wicket win over Afghanistan U19, and won back-to-back U19 Asia Cup titles in 2023 and 2024, defeating India by 59 runs in the 2024 final. These achievements highlight their consistency, depth, and ability to perform under pressure. Both teams will be eager to secure a top spot in Group B, making this match a crucial early test. India will look to reinforce their dominance, while Bangladesh will aim to continue their winning form and establish themselves as serious contenders. Fans can expect an intense and competitive encounter with significant implications for the rest of the tournament.

The Michael Phelps protocol: Swimmer reveals how he programmed himself for success

NEW DELHI. (Agency)

Michael Phelps spent most of his life inside systems. Systems of training, recovery, sleep and repetition. Systems that turned a talented teenager from Baltimore into the most decorated Olympian of all time. Long after his final race, Phelps has laid out the framework that powered his career, a philosophy rooted in discipline, accountability and daily habits rather than motivation or inspiration. The principles he followed were not limited to swimming. They are transferable to any area of life, whether it is building a career, mastering a skill, managing a business, or raising a family. Anyone could apply the same approach of defining a dream, making a plan, and following through with consistent daily actions. At the heart of it is a simple



three-step process he lived by: dream, plan, reach. "One of the things that I really live by is dream plan reach," Michael Phelps said on Raj Shamani's Figuring Out podcast. "We all have a dream. It's something that we're trying to accomplish. And if you don't have a plan that goes along with that dream, then you're gonna be lost." For Phelps, ambition without structure was meaningless. Dreams only mattered if they were backed by action, and action had to begin immediately. "It's what can you do right now," he said. "It's not yesterday, it's not tomorrow. It's right now." That mindset shaped his earliest career decisions. As a teenager, Phelps dropped all other sports to focus solely on swimming, a choice he admitted came with fear. "Was I afraid to drop all of my other sports and just focus on swimming? Of course," he said. "But I also was able to learn that it was the best decision for me."

New Delhi. (Agency)

"Even a spare tyre is not used as much as Rahul," Navjot Singh Sidhu joked in his trademark tongue-in-cheek style during the Champions Trophy in 2025. In one line, he summed up the kind of cricketer KL Rahul has become. A five-in-one solution. An emergency opener. An anchor when the top order collapses. A middle-order floater. A wicketkeeper. A stand-in captain when required. Versatility has always been Rahul's greatest strength. It is also the reason he is so easy to overlook. He does not complain. He does not demand clarity. He does not publicly push back when roles change. He

NEW DELHI. (Agency)

Star India batter Virat Kohli offered prayers at the Shree Mahakaleshwar Temple in Ujjain ahead of the third ODI against New Zealand. Kohli has been in rich form

over the past few years, and he carried his consistency into the ongoing series in style with a match-winning knock of 93 in the first ODI in Vadodara. With the series now level at 1-1, following New Zealand's emphatic seven-wicket victory in the second fixture, Kohli went to seek divine blessings ahead of the series decider scheduled to be played on January 18 at the Holkar Cricket Stadium in Indore. In a viral video circulating on social media, Kohli can be seen inside the temple walking alongside the priests as he hails the almighty Lord Shiva by chanting 'Jai Shree Mahakal'. Meanwhile, Kohli has been plundering runs with his bat, and his outstanding run of form has taken him back to the top of the ICC Men's ODI Batting Rankings for the first time since July 2021. He overtook team-mate Rohit Sharma following his match-winning innings in the opening ODI in

simply does what the team asks, often without fuss and without acknowledgement. That trait, inevitably, brings back memories of another stalwart with the same first name, from the same city.

TWO RAHULS TWO DESTINIES

It would not be an exaggeration to say that what Rahul Dravid once represented for Indian cricket, his namesake now attempts to replicate in a modern, far more impatient era.

When KL Rahul bats, the similarities are subtle. Dravid's drives were defined by a pronounced backlift and a wristy flourish. Rahul's bat moves in a smaller, gentler arc. He does not lean as low over the ball. The result is a minimalist elegance, particularly when he drives straight down the ground. Dravid, of course, was part of the Fab Four alongside Sachin Tendulkar, Sourav Ganguly and VVS Laxman. His career was woven into a golden era of Indian Test cricket. While he was often underappreciated in his playing days, history has been kind to him. Rahul, quietly, is walking a similar path. Performing without noise. Without fuss. Without demanding the

spotlight. It is remarkably easy to take KL Rahul for granted. Indian cricket has done exactly that for years. Discussions around the Indian team tend to orbit around superstars. Players who



dominate headlines and social media trends. In that churn, Rahul often slips through unnoticed. He is rarely the headline act. But whenever the team needs stability, he is the one they turn to. Technically sound. Tactically aware. Willing to take responsibility regardless of role. Opening the batting. Shuffling into the middle order. Keeping wickets. Leading the side when

Virat Kohli prays at Ujjain temple day before ODI series finale vs New Zealand. Watch

Vadodara.

It is the 11th occasion that Kohli has risen to the No.1 position in the ODI batting rankings, driven by a series of commanding



performances at the highest level. The former India captain has crossed the fifty-run mark five times in his last six innings. Kohli has accumulated 492 runs in his last six matches at an exceptional average of 123 and a strike rate of 107.18, registering two centuries and three half-centuries. His recent scores include 23, 93, 135, 102 and an unbeaten 65 during the home series against South Africa in

November–December, along with a fluent 74 not out against Australia in the third ODI in Sydney in October.

Courtesy of his remarkable form, Kohli now sits at the top of the rankings with 785 rating points to his name. Kohli first climbed to the summit of the rankings in October 2013 and has now accumulated a total of 825 days at No.1 — the most by any Indian batter. He currently ranks 10th on the all-time list, which is headed by West Indies legend Vivian Richards, who spent an extraordinary 2,306 days at the top.

Kohli endured a rare failure during the second ODI against New Zealand, where he was dismissed for 23 off 29 balls by Kristian Clarke. The right-handed batter struck two boundaries

during his stay at the crease but was eventually dismissed after chopping a delivery back onto his stumps. With the series on the line in Indore, India will be hoping for another match-winning innings from Kohli's bat. The star batter, who has been a pillar of consistency for the side, will next be seen in India colours later this year in June after the conclusion of the current series.

NEW DELHI. (Agency)

For nearly two decades, men's tennis was a kingdom ruled by the Big Three. Roger Federer and Rafael Nadal defined eras, shattered records, and then bowed out, content with legacies carved in stone. Today, they exist mostly in exhibition lights and farewell tributes. One name, however, still refuses to fade into nostalgia — Novak Djokovic.

At 38, with his 39th birthday approaching, Djokovic remains very much alive and kicking. The fire that fuelled his rise has not dimmed, even as time has tightened its grip. He has already conquered everything the sport can offer: 100 ATP titles, a record 24 Grand Slams, and the one medal that once eluded him — Olympic gold. There is nothing left to prove, and yet, everything left to defend. In 2026,



Djokovic finds himself fighting a battle of existence — not against rivals, but against age, expectation, and inevitability. He may no longer possess the relentless physical edge of a 20-year-old, but what he still owns is belief, experience, and an unmatched competitive mind. And what better stage to begin than Melbourne, his personal fortress. 10 Australian Open titles stand as proof of his mastery there. Whether 2026 becomes another chapter of defiance or the start of a graceful sunset remains uncertain. But one thing is clear: counting Djokovic out has never been wise. THE HUGE HURDLES

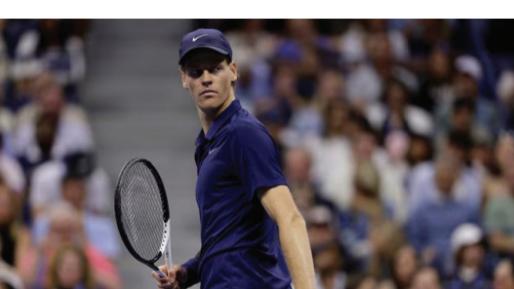
Going into 2026, Djokovic faces one of the defining phases of his career, confronted by the twin challenges of Jannik Sinner and Carlos Alcaraz. As Djokovic approaches 40, the physical gap between him and the new generation has become increasingly evident. While his skill, experience and mental strength remain unmatched, modern tennis now demands relentless athleticism, recovery and endurance — areas where younger rivals hold a natural edge.

Doping controversy behind, Sinner sets his eyes on 3-peat at Australian Open

New Delhi. (Agency)

Defending champion Jannik Sinner said he arrived at the Australian Open stronger in body and mind after navigating what he described as the most difficult period of his career, with the Italian now focused on winning a third successive title at Melbourne Park. Sinner entered last year's Australian Open under the cloud of an unresolved doping case, with uncertainty following him on and off the court. Despite the situation, the 24-year-old defended his title but later admitted the strain had weighed heavily on him. Last year was definitely a much more difficult situation," Sinner said on Friday. "At that moment last year I didn't know exactly what was going to happen. I tried still to enjoy it when going out on the court, but you still have it in your head. The Italian said the period had been challenging not just for him but also for those close to

him. "It was difficult for me, but also for the family," he said. "I tried to stay with the people I really love, which at times worked



very well. At times it was a bit disappointing too." Sinner later served a three-month ban, which gave him time away from the tour. He returned to produce the most successful season of his career, winning his maiden Wimbledon title and

lifting the ATP Finals crown to cap the year. The four-time Grand Slam champion said the experience had helped him mature and change the way he viewed the sport.

"It got me even stronger as a person," Sinner said. "The person I've become is much more mature because I see things, when they're not going in the right direction, in different ways." He added that results no longer defined him in the same way. "Whatever comes on court, result-wise, that's all an extra," he said. "I live the sport in a very different way now, which is relaxed, but I give everything I have. It's a balance of everything." Australian Open: Alcaraz's warning for Sinner Second seed Sinner opens his campaign against France's Hugo Gaston in the first round and is favourite among bookmakers to complete a third successive Australian Open title, slightly ahead of Carlos Alcaraz.

Axar way ahead of Jadeja, don't know why he's not in ODI squad: Former India batter

Former India cricketer-turned-commentator Mohammad Kaif has questioned the selectors for not picking Axar Patel in the squad for the ongoing ODI series against New Zealand. Kaif hailed Axar's batting and bowling prowess better than Jadeja.

NEW DELHI. (Agency)

Former India cricketer-turned-commentator Mohammad Kaif has lashed out at the selectors for not picking all-rounder Axar Patel for the ongoing ODI series against New Zealand, calling him a better player than Ravindra Jadeja. Axar last played the 50-over format during the Australia tour in October 2025 and has since been overlooked

for the subsequent South Africa and New Zealand series. As he finds himself out of the ODI team, veteran all-rounder Ravindra Jadeja's form has come under scrutiny due to his diminishing returns with both bat and ball. Jadeja has failed to justify his place in the team over the past few months because of his inability to take wickets and finish innings. Amid his poor form, Mohammad Kaif questioned the selectors for not picking Axar, hailing his ability to hit sixes and bowl effectively in the powerplay. "If you have to choose one of the two, Axar is way ahead of Jadeja, even in one-day cricket. His strike rate, batting ability and ability to hit sixes — Jadeja does not have that. We have seen this in the IPL as well. In white-ball cricket, Axar is way ahead in batting. Even in bowling, he is ahead. Axar can bowl in the powerplay as well. I do not know why he is not even in the squad. Why are you backing Reddy against New Zealand, who are weak against spin? Anyway, you already have Arshdeep sitting out, so there are four pacers already," Kaif said on his YouTube channel. I want Jadeja

— they are — but both have different styles of bowling. Jadeja comes on after the powerplay. Axar can take the new ball. He is the best bowler with the new ball. He took wickets with the new ball in the Champions Trophy as well," he added. In his last five ODIs, Jadeja has managed just one wicket, averaging a staggering 257 with the ball while conceding runs at an economy rate of 6.11. With the bat, he has scored 87 runs from four innings at a modest strike rate of 90.62. On the other hand, Axar fulfilled his duties as an all-rounder during his last series in Australia, scoring 75 runs from two innings at an average of 37.50 and chipping in with three crucial wickets at an impressive economy rate of 4.45. However, with the World Cup just a month away, he has been rested from the ongoing series. With India not playing many matches in the lead-up to the 2026 ODI World Cup, Jadeja is in a race against time to prove his worth in the ODI side.



and Axar to play together. If Axar was there in the last game instead of Reddy, there would have been more balance. There is a difference in the bowling styles of Jadeja and Axar. People say both are left-arm spinners

AI to obesity drugs: McKinsey identifies 18 sectors for next wave of global growth

Kolkata.(Agency)

Where can growth come from? Growth worshippers from industrialists to government to economists to policymakers are all in search of growth areas of the future. Global management consultancy firm McKinsey has identified 18 industries which could generate \$29-48 trillion in annual revenue by 2040. Let's have a look at what these are and which are the areas where India can profit from.

While drawing up this chart, the consultancy firm has focussed on exceptional growth. It has found that e-commerce can expand to represent the biggest growth sector in the world. McKinsey has also noted how e-commerce revenues jumped from \$15 billion in 2005 to more than \$1 trillion in 2023. 18-34% of global growth

McKinsey has highlighted breathtaking numbers to underscore the potential of these following sectors. It has said, "The 18 future arenas could generate \$29-\$48 trillion in revenues, or 18-34 percent of total GDP growth." An interesting mention in this list is that of autonomous vehicles, which are self-driving or driverless cars. Another in drugs for obesity and related conditions.

WEF economists expect global economic conditions to weaken in 2026 over mounting debt, geopolitics

New Delhi.(Agency)

Around 53 per cent of World Economic Forum chief economists who were surveyed expect global economic conditions to weaken in the year ahead, down from 72 per cent in September 2025, even as they acknowledge the relative resilience of the global economy amid turbulence. The global economic outlook has improved modestly but remains uncertain, with asset valuations, mounting debt, geoeconomic realignment and rapid artificial intelligence deployment creating both opportunities and risks, according to the World Economic Forum's latest Chief Economists' Outlook, published on January 16. Although 53 per cent of chief economists expect global economic conditions to weaken in the year ahead, this marks a significant improvement from the 72 per cent who held this view in September 2025.

Uncertainty around technology remains high, with 52 per cent expecting AI-related stocks to decline and 40 per cent expecting gains. When it comes to the potential expected returns from AI, there is wide variation across regions and sectors. Roughly four in five chief economists expect productivity gains within two years in the US and China. Chief



economists expect the information technology sector to adopt AI fastest, with nearly three-quarters anticipating imminent productivity gains. Financial services, supply chain, healthcare, engineering and retail follow as "fast-movers", with one to two-year timelines. On growth, expectations diverge by region, with economists expecting strong momentum in South Asia and East Asia and weak to moderate growth in Europe. On macroeconomics, nearly a third of respondents are concerned about sovereign debt crises in advanced economies and nearly half in emerging economies; over 60 per cent expect governments to rely on higher inflation and tax revenues to manage elevated debt.

EPF Withdrawal Via UPI By April EPFO Subscribers To Get Direct Bank Transfers Without Filing Claims

New Delhi.(Agency)

In an effort to ease living for salaried employees, subscribers of the Employees' Provident Fund will soon be able to withdraw their EPF money directly into their bank accounts using the Unified Payment Interface (UPI), doing away with the time-consuming claim-filing process.

According to a PTI report citing a top source, the new facility is expected to be rolled out by April this year, allowing members to access their provident fund balances through a UPI payment gateway. According to the report, the labour ministry is working on a system under which a certain portion of the EPF balance will be frozen, while a substantial part will be made available for withdrawal directly into members' bank accounts using UPI. The subscribers will be able to see the eligible EPF balance available for transferring into their seeded bank accounts. Explaining how the system will work, the source told PTI that members will be allowed to use their linked UPI PIN to complete transactions, ensuring a secure transfer of money. Once credited to bank accounts, the funds can be freely used for digital payments or withdrawn through ATMs using debit cards. The source said the Employees' Provident Fund Organisation is currently resolving software-related issues to ensure smooth implementation of the UPI-based withdrawal system, which is expected to benefit nearly eight crore EPFO members.

Capital gains tax was meant to be simpler. Here's why it feels harder now

Selling a long-held asset used to be a fairly predictable exercise. Inflation was factored in through indexation, the tax rate was known, and the final bill rarely came as a shock. That sense of certainty has faded.

New Delhi.(Agency)

Long-term capital gains taxation was meant to become simpler. Instead, it has left many investors second-guessing their decisions. Selling a house, redeeming gold or exiting a long-term investment should be a milestone decision. For many investors today, it has become a source of anxiety. As Budget 2026 approaches, long-term capital gains taxation remains

one of the most misunderstood parts of India's tax system. Selling a long-held asset used to be a fairly predictable exercise. Inflation was factored in through indexation, the tax rate was known, and the final bill rarely came as a shock. That sense of certainty has faded. Financial advisers say investors are delaying decisions, second-guessing calculations and, in some cases, walking away from sales simply because they are not confident about the tax impact.

REAL-LIFE CONFUSION ON THE GROUND

Abhishek Kumar, Sebi-registered investment adviser and founder of Sahaj Money, says the confusion is not limited to one asset class. "This confusion is primarily around real estate, gold, debt mutual funds and bonds, because these were traditionally the categories where indexation gave a clear and often substantial tax advantage over time," he says. Investors, he adds, are struggling to understand when the new 12.5% long-term capital gains rate

without indexation applies, when they can still choose 20% with indexation for older property, and how to compare post-tax outcomes across different holding periods and purchase dates. The uncertainty is



affecting real decisions. Kumar says many clients are holding back sales simply because they do not want to make a costly mistake.

"Many clients are indeed postponing sales of property and gold because they worry about making an irreversible decision without fully understanding the tax cost,"

Budget 2026: Will Markets Be Open On February 1 Full Details Inside

New Delhi.(Agency)

Good news for investors and market watchers! Even though February 1 falls on a Sunday this year, the Indian stock markets will remain open for trading on Budget Day. Both the BSE and NSE announced on January 16 that trading will take place as per normal market hours on February 1 for Budget 2026. This special arrangement ensures that investors can react to Budget announcements in real time, without waiting for the next trading session.

The NSE clarified the special trading arrangement in a circular, stating, "On account of the presentation of the Union Budget, members are requested to note that Exchange shall be conducting live trading session on February 01, 2026, as per the standard market timings (9:15 am-3:30 pm)," said NSE in a circular. The Union Budget for 2026 will be presented at 11 am on Sunday, February 1, the Lok Sabha Speaker confirmed on January 12. In recent years, February 1 has become the fixed date for the annual Budget presentation, a trend that

continued with the 2025 Budget as well. The upcoming Budget will also be a significant milestone for Finance Minister Nirmala Sitharaman, as it will



be her ninth consecutive Union Budget, placing her among finance ministers with the longest uninterrupted Budget tenures. Trading details for Budget Day explained

While most core market segments will remain open during regular trading hours on Budget Day, some services will stay shut. The BSE has clarified that the T+0 settlement session and the auction session meant for settlement defaults will not be operational. At the

same time, the NSE confirmed that trading in capital markets and derivatives will continue as usual.

Stock market holiday list remains the same. The stock market holiday calendar for 2026 remains unchanged, with Indian exchanges observing 16 public holidays apart from weekends. The next scheduled market closure this month will be on January 26. In the first half of the year, markets will remain shut on key occasions such as Holi (March 3), Ram Navami (March 26), Mahavir Jayanti (March 31) and Good Friday (April 3). Trading will also be suspended on Ambedkar Jayanti (April 14), Maharashtra Day (May 1) and Bakri Id (May 28). In the second half of the year, markets will close on Muharram (June 26), Ganesh Chaturthi (September 14), Gandhi Jayanti (October 2), Dussehra (October 20), Diwali Balipratipada (November 10) and Guru Nanak Jayanti (November 24). Christmas, on December 25, will be the final market holiday of 2026.

Trump sanctions fail to stop inflow! Some Indian refiners step up Russian crude oil intake; Indian Oil, Nayara boost purchases

New Delhi.(Agency)

State-run Indian Oil Corp and Rosneft-backed Nayara Energy have increased their purchases of Russian crude in January. This comes even as India's overall imports from Russia have declined under US sanctions. Reliance Industries, India's largest buyer over the past year, along with several other refiners, has not received any supplies this month. This leaves Indian Oil, Nayara and Bharat Petroleum Corporation (BPCL) as the main importers so far, according to ET.

India's imports of Russian oil averaged 1.18 million barrels per day in the first half of January, down about 30 per cent from both the same period last year and the 2025 average, according to Kpler, a global real-time data and analytics provider. Imports were roughly 3 per cent lower compared with December 2025.

US sanctions have significantly narrowed the buyer pool for Russian crude, restricting shipments to just a few Indian refiners. Indian Oil received about 500,000 barrels per day, accounting for nearly 43 per cent of total Russian crude shipped to India. This was Indian Oil's highest average intake since May 2024 and 64 per cent higher than its 2025 average.

Nayara Energy, which has become fully reliant on Russian oil since being sanctioned by the European Union last year, was the second-largest buyer in January. Its imports of approximately 471,000 barrels per day—about 40 per cent of Russian volumes shipped to India this month—were the highest in at least two years and 56 per cent above its 2025 average intake. BPCL received around 200,000 barrels per day, slightly above its average of 185,000 barrels in 2025.

Other major refiners, including Hindustan Petroleum Corporation, HPCL-Mittal Energy Ltd, Mangalore Refinery & Petrochemicals Ltd and Reliance Industries, did not receive any Russian cargoes in the first half of January. Reduced demand from some Indian and Chinese buyers has prompted Russian suppliers to increase discounts on crude. Industry executives said discounts on Russia's flagship Urals crude for delivery to Indian ports now trades at \$5-6 per barrel, up from \$2 before US sanctions on Rosneft and Lukoil last October. Indian Oil has increased its intake this month to take advantage of these discounts. Indian refiners began recalibrating their strategy on discounted Russian crude after the US criticised India's purchases last year and threatened additional tariffs. Some refiners moderated imports after an additional 25 per cent tariff took effect in late August on Indian exports to the US.

Mutual Fund: Sebi's new rules to kick in from April 1; know how it affects you

Kolkata.(Agency)

Come April 1, and the new rules of Sebi in mutual funds will kick in. SEBI has notified the SEBI (Mutual Funds) Regulations, 2026, making major regulatory changes for the mutual fund industry. In short, the new rules are aimed at reducing the burden of expenses on investors, increasing transparency of costs and establish accountability for asset management companies and also trustees. The changes got the nod of the Sebi board on Dec 17 and the notification has now come for the implementation to take place.

Reducing cost for investors via TER
From the point of view of the investors, the most significant aspect of the new rules is related to the Total Expense Ratio or TER. In future only

those expenses which are permitted by the regulator can be charged to investors under TER and these are base expense ratio, permitted brokerage costs, transaction costs related to trade execution, statutory levies, and exit loads. Apart from these no other expenses should be borne by the investor. All other expenses have to be borne by the AMC. More responsibility for trustees, independent directors

The old regulatory framework for mutual funds has been virtually discarded paving the way for an expanded role for trustees and independent directors who will need to keep a close vigil on the investment management agreement, remuneration paid under the scheme, service contracts entered into with related parties and fees charged to investors. Trustee have to identify

deficiencies and inform the AMC in writing and ensure their timely rectification.

Trustees and independent directors have been handed over another important governance-related function. They must ensure that the remuneration structure does not create conflicts of interest with investors. Annual reports have to mandatorily include detailed commentary from the trustees on the scheme's performance, historical data per unit, and clear information related to expenses and valuation. The AMC has to provide scheme-wise digital annual reports to unitholders within a stipulated time window. Investor-friendly steps

The new measures have been drawn up keeping the interest of the investor at the centre of the exercise.

Revamped Foreign-Exchange Management Rules To Promote Ease Of Doing Biz

The RBI retained the existing 15-month timeline for realisation and repatriation of export proceeds. It extended the window to 18 months where exports are invoiced or settled in Indian rupees.

New Delhi.(Agency)

The Reserve Bank of India (RBI) has said that the recently issued Foreign Exchange Management (Export and Import of Goods and Services) Regulations, 2026 will come into force from October 1 — easing compliance for smaller traders and strengthening digital monitoring.

"The regulations are primarily principle based and intended to promote ease of doing business, especially for small exporters and importers. They are also intended to empower Authorised Dealers



to provide quicker and more efficient service to their customers," an official statement said. The regulations, announced on January 13, will replace the 2015 export rules empowering authorised dealer banks to manage routine trade matters under their internal policies. As per the RBI notification, exporters of goods will continue to declare shipment values through the Export Declaration

Form (EDF) embedded in shipping bills at (Electronic Data Interchange) EDI ports. EDI ports support customs clearance and trade documentation electronically rather than through manual paperwork. Service exporters must file declarations within 30 days of invoice issuance, with flexibility for consolidated monthly filings and bank-approved extensions. Software exports were

brought under the definition of services under the new rules, with authorised dealers and Software Technology Parks of India (STPI) recognised as specified authorities.

The RBI retained the existing 15-month timeline for realisation and repatriation of export proceeds. It extended the window to 18 months where exports are invoiced or settled in Indian rupees. For smaller transactions up to Rs 10 lakh, exporters and importers can close outstanding entries in the RBI's monitoring systems through self-declaration, including quarterly bulk submissions, easing procedural burdens for MSMEs and service exporters.

"An Authorised Dealer shall ensure that the charges levied for handling transactions and associated processes are reasonable and proportional to the services rendered," it said. The RBI further said that the authorised dealer must not levy any charges or penalty on its constituent (exporter or importer or merchant trader) for any regulatory delay or violation by the constituent.

Janhvi Kapoor

Calls Rani Mukerji's *Mardaani* 3 Character 'Strongest', Says 'Can't Wait'

Janhvi Kapoor has joined the list of celebrities praising Rani Mukerji's *Mardaani* 3. The makers dropped a trailer that grabbed attention. Janhvi Kapoor called the actress the best and also mentioned that she is eagerly waiting for the film to release. *Mardaani* 3 is all set to release on January 30. Taking to her Instagram stories, Janhvi Kapoor shared the trailer and wrote, "30 years of iconic Rani Mukerji! Thank you for the movies, the magic and the iconic inspiring performances, can't wait to see one of you strongest characters back on the big screen #Mardaani3"

What celebrities said

Ananya Panday shared the trailer and wrote, "Queen there is no one like you. What a trailer, you are the best thanku for 30 years of treating us....Can't wait to watch 300 more years of you ruling the screen #ranimukerji." Katrina Kaif also praised the trailer and wrote, "#30Years of Queen #RaniMukerji irreplaceable, unstoppable undefinable." Kiara Advani wrote, "30 years. One Rani, Endless power. From timeless grace to fearless *Mardaani*. She still rules the screen. Can't wait to watch #Mardaani3." Earlier, Kareena Kapoor also shared the trailer, "Dynamite..Rani meri jaan love you always..killing it." Alia Bhatt also wrote, "30 years of unforgettable performances and now one more. Cannot wait to watch *Mardaani* 3." And guess what? Filmmaker Siddharth Anand has also turned to social media to praise the 'FANTASTIC' trailer. Impressed by the powerful clip, the filmmaker shared the link on X (formerly Twitter) and called it a must-watch. He wrote, "#Mardaani3Trailer is FANTASTIC! Hits you like a bolt of lightning! Rani is GOLD! And Mallika Prasad playing Amma is terrifying! Abhiraj, you've nailed this one! Mohit, what a trailer you've cut, again!! Guys, watch it now!"

Mardaani 3 Trailer

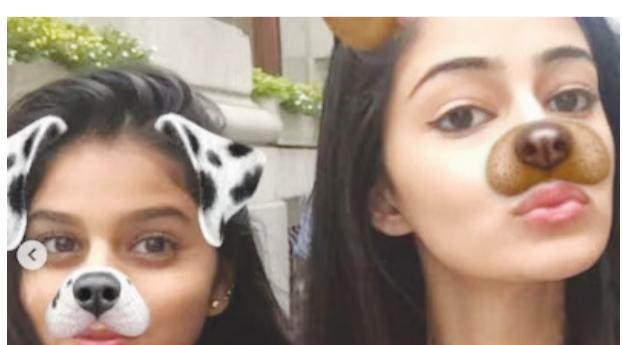
The makers of Rani Mukerji's hard-hitting cop franchise *Mardaani* have unveiled the trailer of its third instalment, bringing back the actor as the relentless and fearless IPS officer Shivani Shivaji Roy. Staying true to the franchise's uncompromising tone, *Mardaani* 3 promises another disturbing, socially rooted narrative that places Shivani in the middle of a race against time. This time around, Shivani is seen joining the National Investigation Agency (NIA) and taking charge of a chilling case involving the kidnapping of two young girls. As Shivani digs deeper into the investigation, the case spirals into something far more sinister. The trailer reveals a nationwide human trafficking network run by an elderly woman named Amma, played by Mallika Prasad.



Ananya Panday

Drops Unseen 2016 Throwback Pics With Ahaan Panday And Suhana Khan

Ananya Panday recently took fans on a nostalgic trip down memory lane as she shared a set of unseen throwback photos from 2016 featuring her cousin Ahaan Panday and close friend Suhana Khan. The pictures instantly caught attention and sparked excitement among fans, offering a rare glimpse.



Taking to her Instagram handle, Ananya Panday shared a series of photos from the year 2016. The photos feature her school days, celebrating Rakhi with Ahaan Panday and also goofy photo with Suhana Khan. "2016 was really it man," read the caption. Fans also commented. One of the fans wrote, "she just like us". Another wrote, "miss this age".

Ananya Panday Spotted In No-Makeup

Look During City Outing

Ananya Panday recently caught everyone's attention as she stepped out in the city sporting a fresh no-makeup look, and the video of her outing has since gone viral on social media. The actress impressed fans by embracing a natural, effortless vibe during her casual day out. In the video, shared by Filmmygyan, we can see Ananya Panday in a no makeup look coming out of a building. She is wearing casual clothes and looking stylish. The actress also noticed paps. The video went viral.

Ananya has not started shooting for her next and her last release, *Tu Meri Main Tera Main Tera Tu Meri*, with Kartik Aaryan, received mixed response.

Ananya Seeks Blessings At Gurudwara

Ananya's spiritual visits are often shared on Instagram. Recently, the actress shared a glimpse of her visit to Bangla Sahib Gurudwara in Delhi with Kartik Aaryan through a collaborative post. The duo was seen posing together in front of the Gurudwara and the post crossed over 2 million likes.



Karan Johar Buys Rs 8.05 Crore Apartment In Mumbai's Khar West; Deal Registered In November 2025



Filmmaker and producer Karan Johar has invested in a premium residential apartment in Mumbai's Khar West, shelling out ₹8.05 crore for the property. According to property registration documents accessed by Square Yards from the Maharashtra Inspector General of Registration (IGR) website, the transaction was officially registered in November 2025.

Inside the Property: Size, Building and Registration Details

The apartment is situated in the Pali Vintage building, a residential development in Khar West. As per official records, the unit has a carpet area of 1,060.13 sq ft (98.49 sq metres) and includes two exclusive car parking spaces. The purchase attracted a stamp duty of ₹48 lakh, along with registration charges amounting to ₹30,000.

Why Khar West Continues to Attract Premium Buyers

Khar West remains one of Mumbai's most established and desirable residential neighbourhoods, known for its blend of connectivity and urban lifestyle. The area is well-connected through major arterial roads including Linking Road, SV Road and the Western Express Highway, enabling easy movement across the city.

Connectivity to Business Hubs and Neighbouring Areas

The locality is served by the Khar Road railway station on the Western Line, offering suburban rail access. Its strategic positioning allows convenient travel to nearby areas such as Bandra, Santacruz and Andheri. Additionally, the Bandra-Worli Sea Link provides smoother connectivity to South Mumbai as well as business districts like Bandra Kurla Complex (BKC) and Lower Parel.

A Mature Residential Ecosystem

Over the years, Khar West has evolved into a sought-after residential address featuring a mix of premium apartments and boutique developments. The neighbourhood is surrounded by retail outlets, restaurants, entertainment spaces, reputed educational institutions and healthcare facilities, making it a preferred choice for professionals and families alike.

Dhanush To Marry Mrunal Thakur On Valentine's Day? Here's What We Know



Dhanush and Mrunal Thakur, who have been dating each other for a long time now, are planning to get married soon. If a latest report is to be believed, the couple is planning to tie the knot on Valentine's Day (February 14) this year. As reported by the Free Press Journal, Dhanush and Mrunal's alleged wedding would be a private ceremony, attended by close family members and friends. While the rumours of Dhanush and Mrunal's wedding have left fans excited, it should be noted that neither of the actors has issued an official statement yet, either confirming or denying the rumours.

Is Mrunal Thakur Dating Dhanush?

Rumours of Mrunal Thakur and Dhanush's romantic relationship have been making headlines for a long time now. It all started in August 2025 when the two actors were spotted at the premiere of Mrunal's film *Son Of Sardaar 2*. Prior to this, Mrunal's presence at the wrap party of Dhanush's film, *Tere Ishq Mein*, also raised eyebrows.

Interestingly, Mrunal also follows Dhanush's sisters, Dr Karthika Karthik and Vimala Geetha, on Instagram. Previously, a well-placed source exclusively confirmed News18 Showsha about Dhanush and Mrunal's dating and said, "Yes, it's true that they are dating. But it's too new and they've no plans of making their relationship official before the public or the media. At the same time, they're unfazed about going out and about and being spotted."

Friends are truly rooting for them as they're quite similar and compatible when it comes to their values, choices and thoughts."

However, Mrunal addressed their dating speculations last year when she clarified that Dhanush is "just a good friend".

Dhanush's Previous Marriage

As for Dhanush, he was previously married to Aishwarya Rajinikanth for 18 years before they announced their separation in 2022. The former couple met on the set of his 2003 film, *Kadhal Kondaen*. They share two sons – Yatra and Linga.

Compact space solutions for interiors

While, we all complain of builders wasting spaces and the very fact that most houses in Mumbai are anything but spaced-out, not many people experiment with compact interior solutions.

Big-size couches, antique dining tables that take up a lot of space and unnecessary shelves and cupboards that leave our homes with little place to walk, is how most houses look. Here's a look at some compact housing solutions that can be easily adapted without making major changes along with being pocket-friendly.

The foldables

One of the best ways to save space is to have a lot of foldable furniture in the house. Hydraulics is the solution; and it is the best option for those who face the challenge to accomodate more in less. From hydraulic beds with internal storage that can be folded to fit into a wardrobe, to foldable tables can be brought down whenever needed, you have several choices. In fact, these foldable furniture pieces, if properly made, can look extremely stylish. Although, it is mostly wrought iron that is used to design hydraulic furniture, considering it's safe, wood, too, can be used to make lighter stuff like tables, etc.

Drawers et al

We all have a fetish for collectibles, however, it becomes slightly difficult to give every piece its right visibility, due to lack of space. This is when drawers come



to the rescue. You can make drawers anywhere in the house, be it your TV cabinet to the gaps in your couch. In fact, a very smart way to store a large number of things is to make a floor drawer. Just give a slight elevation to a certain section of your house, either for the sitting area or the dining space, and the elevation can be converted into a spacious drawer. Solid wood seaters with storage can also be used to store stuff like cushion covers and coasters while chests can be used as coffee tables.

Adjustable kitchen

Service windows are a great way to save space because not only do they serve as a quick option to transfer food from the kitchen to the dining area, but also serve as a potential dining table when needed. Attach a foldable table to your service window and it can well serve as a dining table. Bring in a few chairs and you are set. Two long-stem bar chairs can also be accommodated inside a cabinet that fits right under your kitchen service window to make it a live bar counter when required. Also, make sure you have several layers of shelves and drawers in your kitchen, so the you utilise the horizontal as well as vertical space properly.

Bring it in

Remove flower beds and accomodate them in the room, this will help proper utilisation of space, as walls use a considerable amount of space. You can either have a single chair hammock in the extension, that overlooks the surroundings or single cane baithaks that use less space. Moreover, you can also use it to store things that are less important like bills, envelops, etc. by setting up vertical wall-mounted hydraulic drawers that take very less space and can be easily hidden behind side curtains.

Wardrobe wall-function

We all like stylish wardrobes, however, a wardrobe is something that occupies a lot of space. A wall cavity is a smart solution

to accomodate a huge wardrobe. It would hardly take two to three inches of floor space for the doors (preferably sliders) and would allow enough usage of space. You can make a smilar set-up for your washing machine and dishwasher, especially if you are not blessed with extra drying space. A wall cavity either in your kitchen or the corridor next your bathroom can accomodate them easily, without restricting movement.

Inside out

This is the most interesting piece of compact furniture. A set of round or square coffee table and four well fitted seaters inside it will help you make the right utilisation of space. You can either sit down and use it as low dining or coffee table or just pull out the seaters (with storage of course) when you have more heads.

Tip: Make sure you have large French windows in every room. They make the house look spacious and beautiful since they usually overlook the surroundings outside. Also, use colours like ivory white or beige, as they attract sunlight to make you home look visibly bigger.



7 things to help organise Your living area

However, if do not want to spend a lot and still want your house to look organised, then here's a tip. Just get rid of these seven simple things and you can change the look of your living room instantly.

1. Bills, envelopes and invites

Most living rooms have a stack of unimportant papers lying everywhere. From various utility bills to credit card statements, and from envelopes to wedding invites, we always tend to dump all this on our coffee table or our TV cabinet in the living room. Get rid of empty envelopes and bills older than three years, and organise the rest in drawers, so that they're hidden.



your living rooms with cushions, limit them to your couch or a baithak. Don't overdo it by keeping them on chairs, window seats, recliners or by simply increasing their number.

3. Big-size music system and CDs

That big four-CD-changer home theatre system with four massive speakers covering a complete wall of your living room, might have emotional value, but it definitely adds to the clutter. Simply replace it with a sleek sound bar that would be hardly noticed but has effective sound quality, and you will notice that the room looks less cluttered.

4. Candles

You definitely had a romantic evening in mind when you picked up those scented candles. However, they are now lying unattended in various corners coated with loads of dust. Get rid of those candles and buy lights that are easy to clean and can be

used for a longer duration. Make sure they are all hanging lights so that the floor remains de-cluttered.

5. Bean bags

A lot of people buy bean bags to create a relaxed sitting arrangement, however, they are rendered redundant after a while as they trigger back problems. They then just lie there in clumps, occupying a lot of space and we end up dumping things on bean bags which adds to the clutter. Make way for a smart pair of antique wooden or recliners that will occupy less space and will prove useful as well.

6. Artificial plants

This is one of the most useless things in anybody's living room, as they do not add any charm to the room whatsoever. In fact, Feng Shui and vastu experts warn about keeping artificial plants in homes as they have some kind of negative energy. Get rid of them as they attract a lot of dust and occupy unwanted space. Invest in real plants instead.

7. Miniature artifacts



Not many people can maintain art-house like interiors, as it needs a lot of cleaning. Miniature artifacts and handicrafts enhance the look of your living room and make it look arty. These objects makes your house look

dingy and unkempt if they are not dusted and maintained from time to time. If de-cluttering your house means having a clear space, then miniature artifacts need to be got rid off. In fact, a less-cluttered house looks bigger and better.