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From file disposal to output, Union Secretaries now get a report card each

New Delhi.(Agency)

IN A first, the Cabinet Secretariat has sent "administrative scorecards" to Secretaries in the Central government, showing the percentage of marks obtained by them, based on their individual performance as well as that of their departments, The Indian Express has learnt.

The scorecards assess the Secretaries and their departments on about a dozen parameters, with a total of 100 marks, and include "negative marks" and "discretionary marks".

It is learnt that Cabinet Secretary Dr T V Somanathan sent the first set of these "administrative scorecards", for the months of September, October and November 2025, to the Secretaries in the first week of

January this year.

Among the parameters, file disposal carries the maximum marks of 20, followed by output/ activities, and expenditure on schemes and capital expenditure, both with 15 marks each. The other parameters include public grievance redressal, Cabinet notes, timely completion of projects being monitored by the Project Monitoring Group (PMG), timely disposal of bills by Pay and Accounts Office (PAO) and Chief Controller of Accounts (CCA) (see chart).

The scorecards also carry 12 negative marks, which, it is learnt, would be imposed for "excessive expenditure" on foreign visits or events, abnormal pendency of files at the



level of Secretary and above, and delayed payments to Micro, Small and Medium Enterprises.

Besides, the scorecards also have a provision for 5 "discretionary marks", which will be awarded by the Cabinet Secretary for exceptional work or contributions made by

a Secretary or department. The concept of scorecards is learnt to have been introduced after Prime Minister Narendra Modi, on several occasions, highlighted the need to eliminate delays at various levels in the government.

The purpose, it is learnt, is to assess administrative performance and efficiency of Secretaries and their departments, in absolute and relative terms, based on an objective and a fair methodology. These "administrative scorecards" will be used to compare a department's performance — with itself as well as other departments.

Explaining the need to issue scorecards, the Cabinet Secretary, in a communication to Secretaries, is learnt to have conveyed that

"the fact that something cannot be measured with perfect accuracy does not mean that it should not be measured at all".

In this context, he is learnt to have pointed out that the Civil Services Examination has a provision for comparing a History student's marks with a Physics student's marks.

He is learnt to have underlined that "the public and the government expect results, not excuses". The Cabinet Secretary has also sought feedback and suggestions from the Secretaries. In 2024, the Cabinet Secretariat had introduced changes in the practice of "monthly demi-official letters" written by Secretaries to the Cabinet Secretary, by adding ministry-specific quantitative performance indicators.

Government believes in dialogue to resolve problems: Chief Minister

The Sikh Times

Lucknow, 9 February: Chief Minister Yogi Adityanath spoke to media persons on Monday before the start of the budget session. The CM said that the Uttar Pradesh Legislature is starting the budget session from today. This is the 10th budget of our government. CM appealed to all members and said, "The Legislature is an important pillar of democracy. If any member has to raise any issue, then instead of disrupting the proceedings, they should hold a dialogue, because the government believes in dialogue to resolve problems". CM also added, "In accordance with parliamentary traditions, it will start with the Governor's address. There are two important agendas in the budget session. First, the Honourable Governor's address and second, the general budget. The Governor's address is a document of the government's achievements and major action plan, which is dedicated to the public through the House. Today the Governor will deliver the address to the joint House through an address". CM said, the general budget for 2026-27 will be presented on 11 February. After this, there will be a discussion on it. The budget session will run from 9 February to 20 February. CM also informed, "Immediately after the Governor's address, the Uttar

Pradesh economic survey will also be presented in the House. For the first time, a state government will take this step regarding its economic achievements". Informing about the achievements CM said, "We have rescued UP from BIMARU status and established it as a 'breakthrough' of India's econ-

House. This report will be an important document for presenting data to members and for discussion. CM added by saying, the Legislature is an important pillar of democracy. It runs not by disrupting proceedings, but by dialogue. If any member has to raise any issue, they should hold a dialogue, because the government believes in dialogue to resolve problems. Along with accepting the valuable suggestions of every member, the government is always ready to take necessary steps in the interest of the state while discussing every issue. The CM appealed to the opposition members not to disrupt the proceedings and to avoid unnecessary uproar CM said, over the last 9 years, new records of proceedings have been established in the Legislature. The budget session will be observed by the state and the country. It will also become a platform for Honourable Members to raise their important issues. The

budget session will play a major role in further accelerating the pace of Uttar Pradesh's development. The CM appealed to members of all parties to take forward meaningful discussion on the issues related to the public in the Legislature. During this, both the Deputy Chief Ministers Keshav Prasad Maurya and Brajesh Pathak, Cabinet Ministers Suresh Khanna, Swatantra Dev Singh and Rakesh Sachan, Minister of State Baldev Singh Aulakh etc. were present.

omy. The representatives and the public also have the right to know all these factors and the journey of UP's economic progress. How much economic progress we have made, what increase has taken place in per capita income in UP, what is the situation of employment generation, how we have established UP as a revenue surplus state continuously for the last five years by managing finances even in adverse circumstances". On all these points, the economic survey report will also be presented in the



India announces USD 175 million economic package to Seychelles

New Delhi.(Agency)

India on Monday announced USD 175 million as development assistance to Seychelles after Prime Minister Narendra Modi held wide-ranging talks with the island nation's President Patrick Herminie.

The two sides also agreed on a broad vision to expand cooperation in areas of sustainability, trade and economy and security. Herminie is on a six-day visit to India. Seychelles is a key maritime neighbour for India in the Indian Ocean Region.

"India and Seychelles are connected not just by geography, but by history, trust and a shared vision for the future," Modi said in his media statement. The prime minister said the development partnership has been the strong foundation of India-Seychelles relations.

"All our efforts have been based on Seychelles' priorities and needs. Moving forward in this direction, today we are going to announce a special economic package of USD 175 million," he said.

Modi said this package will support "concrete projects" in areas such as social housing, mobility, vocational training, health, defence, and maritime security. In his remarks, Modi also touched upon people-to-people ties between the two nations. "The greatest strength of India-



Seychelles relations is our people-to-people ties. The Indian community settled in Seychelles has made a remarkable contribution to the social and economic life of Seychelles," he said.

"At the same time, they have also strengthened our friendship from generation to generation," he added. After today's talks, it is clear that India-Seychelles relations are entering a new phase, he noted.

Opposition To Move No-Confidence Vote Against Speaker Om Birla: Sources

New Delhi.(Agency)

A no-confidence vote will be moved against Lok Sabha Speaker Om Birla, sources told Monday morning, in a development that underlines the deep distrust between the ruling BJP and those in the opposition in every recent Parliament session. In line with the rules the motion requires a 14-day notice period, which means it will likely be tabled in the second half of this budget session. The first half began January 28 and is scheduled to end on February 13. The second begins on March 9 and will run till April 2. That distrust — expressed today by two adjournments in the opening half of the day, with the opposition insistent Congress MP Rahul Gandhi be allowed to speak — culminated in a ferocious showdown last week that led to Prime Minister Narendra Modi cancelling his Lok Sabha speech.

Congress MP Shashi Tharoor hit out at the government for appearing uninterested in the House. "I came to speak on the budget... but it looks like the government and Speaker are not interested in running the House. The Finance Minister was not even in the House... I think she knew..."

In the few minutes the Lok Sabha functioned this morning there were repeated disruptions by the opposition benches, still fuming over last week's showdown, in which the Speaker denied Rahul Gandhi, the Leader of the Opposition, permission to read excerpts from an unpublished book by ex-Army chief General MM Naravane on the China border stand-off in Ladakh in 2020.

The opposition then had insisted he be allowed but senior BJP MPs, including Defence Minister Rajnath Singh and Home Minister Amit Shah protested vehemently and were backed by Birla.

Gandhi was initially told unauthenticated documents could not become part of parliamentary record. He then submitted a note taking responsibility for the accuracy of the content but was still denied permission. That kicked off ferocious protests and repeated adjournments.

Punjab Govt approves Punjab Cricket League to channel youth towards sports, away from drugs: CM Mann

The Sikh Times

CHANDIGARH, 9th February: Determined to confront Punjab's drug crisis by reclaiming its sporting legacy, the Bhagwant Mann Government on Monday approved the launch of the Punjab Cricket League (PCL), positioning sports as a strategic intervention for youth empowerment rather than a token outreach programme. Planned on the Indian Premier League (IPL) model with district and regional teams and backed by institutional partnerships with the Board of Control for Cricket in India (BCCI) and the Punjab Cricket Association (PCA), the league is intended to systematically identify, groom and channel young talent into professional pathways, while simultaneously building a wider ecosystem of district and state-level leagues across multiple sports to pull the state's

youth decisively away from drugs and towards discipline, opportunity and national representation. Sharing a few snippets from the following meeting, CM Bhagwant Singh Mann wrote: "Today in Chandigarh, held a meeting with senior officials of the Department of Sports and Youth Services to discuss various issues, with a focused deliberation on promoting sports culture across the state. All officials were directed to make their maximum contribution towards encouraging youth to take up sports, with the objective of building a healthy and fit society. The government is consistently working to restore sports culture in Punjab and to reconnect the youth with playgrounds across

the state." Chairing a review meeting of the Sports Department, CM Bhagwant Singh Mann stated that the state government would tie up



with the Punjab Cricket Association and the Board of Control for Cricket in India to organise the league with the objective of grooming young talent from

across Punjab. "The state government will collaborate with the Punjab Cricket Association and the Board of Control for Cricket in India to organise the Punjab Cricket League for grooming the youth of the state," Bhagwant Singh Mann said. Drawing inspiration from global examples, the Chief Minister stated that such initiatives had played a transformative role in world cricket. "Cricketers like Imran Khan and Arjuna Ranatunge gave several renowned players to world cricket through similar initiatives, and this league will go a long way in emerging Punjab as a nursery of cricketing talent," he said. Explaining the structure of the proposed league, CM Bhagwant Singh Mann said

that it would be organised on the lines of the Indian Premier League, with teams constituted on the basis of districts and geographical regions. "The Punjab Cricket League will be organised on the lines of the Indian Premier League, and teams will be formed on the basis of districts and geographical regions such as Majha, Doaba and Malwa to compete in the tournament," he said. The Chief Minister said that the initiative would help create a strong pipeline of talented cricketers for both national and international competitions. "This league will help in producing a talented pool of cricketers for national and international level cricket tournaments," CM Bhagwant Singh Mann said. At the same time, he underlined the need to promote other sports across the state.

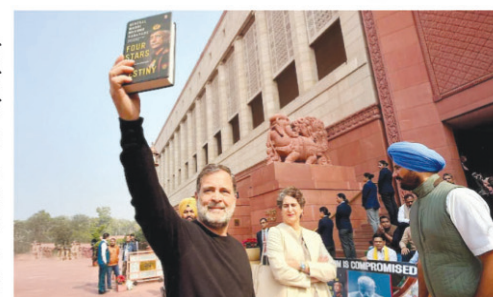
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unpublished book by Gen Naravane?

An unpublished book has reached Parliament, and it was by none other than former Army chief General MM Naravane (Retd) who oversaw one of the biggest India-China clashes since 1962. Did the publisher go ahead with printing Gen Naravane's Four Stars of Destiny even before the Defence Ministry approved the manuscript? How did Rahul Gandhi get a copy of the "unpublished" book?

New Delhi.(Agency)

In 2024, Four Stars of Destiny, the memoir of former Army Chief General MM Naravane (Retd) was set for release, with bookstores taking pre-orders and readers pre-booking it online. However, the launch was halted. It is now 2026, and the book remains unpublished. But a hardback copy of Gen Naravane's book surfaced last week, not in the black markets, but in Parliament, in the hands of Leader of the Opposition Rahul Gandhi. What he was waving wasn't a manuscript, but a



printed hardcover copy of the book.

The question is obvious: how did a book, which was not meant to go to press without clearance from the Ministry of Defence (MoD), and which Union Defence Minister Rajnath Singh said "does

not exist", reach Rahul Gandhi?

Just like you and I, millions asked this question. We tried to talk to people and understand the publishing process. While there is no clear answer yet, connecting the dots leads us somewhere.

A memoir chronicling four decades of service of Gen Naravane in the Indian Army, the book was packed with details from the retired top military man's journey — from a Second Lieutenant to a General who oversaw India's biggest military confrontation with China since the 1962 Indo-China war. The

publisher of the book is Penguin Randomhouse India.

During the post-Budget session of Parliament, as Prime Minister Narendra Modi was set to move the Motion of Thanks after the Union Budget, the Lok Sabha was rocked by the contents of a magazine article, based on Gen Naravane's unpublished memoir, read out by Rahul Gandhi.

Gandhi spoke for less than five minutes. Yet, BJP's top brass, including Union Home Minister Amit Shah and Defence Minister Rajnath Singh, launched a barrage of attacks on the Leader of the Opposition over the material he was quoting.

News box

Caught on cam: Group drags man out of car, assaults him on Golf Course Road in Gurgaon

Faridabad.(Agency)

A group of youths allegedly dragged a man out of his car and assaulted him on Golf Course Road on Saturday. The incident took place near Sector 42 Rapid Metro station between 11pm and midnight, when traffic was moving normally on the main road. The incident was caught on a camera.A white SUV abruptly blocked a black Skoda car, forcing it to stop. The video showed two youths stepping out of the SUV, grabbing the driver of the Skoda car by his collar, pulling him onto the road and assaulting him with kicks and punches while he lay on the ground. Another person was also present at the spot. Vehicles continued to pass by amid the assault in the middle of the road. While some motorists slowed down to watch, none of them intervened or alerted the police. The video was recorded by a passer-by from inside a car. An officer said the police took suo motu cognizance of the video.The cyber cell and local police teams were tasked with identifying the accused. Police said no written complaint was received from the man till Sunday evening.The area witnesses heavy traffic even at night and is frequently patrolled by PCR vans. Local residents said "reckless driving, loud music, and aggressive behaviour" by youths in high-end vehicles are common.

In its 7th drive in two weeks, Greater Noida seals 9 illegal shops

Noida.(Agency)

Continuing its anti-encroachment drive, Greater Noida Authority on Saturday sealed nine shops built on disputed land in Shahberi and removed encroachment from around 5,000 sqm of govt land in Amarpur — in the seventh major enforcement drive in the past 17 days. In the six drives prior to Saturday's action, the authority had reclaimed more than 54,000 square metres of encroached land across five villages since Jan 20. Officials said the drive covered Kheda Choganpur, Bhanota, Haibatpur, Chipiyana Khurd and Rohillapur. According to officials, the shops in Shahberi were constructed without approval on land where commercial activity is not permitted. After verification of land records and land use, the authority sealed all units. Officials said the action was part of an ongoing campaign to curb unauthorised construction, particularly in areas where violations increased in recent months.In a parallel operation, encroachments were cleared in Amarpur with the support of the police and district administration. Officials said some local residents were attempting to illegally occupy govt land, which led to a dispute between two groups in the village. The authority intervened and cleared the land, the value of the reclaimed land was estimated at around Rs 10 crore, Officials said it will now be fenced and secured to prevent any fresh attempts at encroachment. The latest actions are part of a larger enforcement campaign launched by the authority in the second half of Jan. Officials said operations were aimed at checking illegal construction and unauthorised plotting, including in environmentally sensitive zones along Hindon floodplain, where construction is restricted.

Realtor owes Rs 1.8 crore, buyers at Shivalik Homes wait a decade for registry

Noida.(Agency)

More than 350 buyers at Shivalik Homes in Greater Noida's Surajpur have spent over a decade waiting for the basic paperwork that proves their legal ownership. Though families moved in years ago, property registries have remained frozen because the developer has not cleared lease rent dues of about Rs 1.8 crore and failed to submit mandatory documents required for occupancy and completion certificates.The project, developed by Cosmos Infraestate Private Limited and launched in 2010, has four residential towers. Residents said buyers were given fit-out possession in phases — Tower D in 2015, Tower B in 2016, and Towers A and C in 2017. But mandatory certificates and registries were never issued, leaving residents in a prolonged limbo despite living in the society for years.Cosmos is supposed to pay the lease rent amount to UP State Industrial Development Authority (UPSIDA), which has made it clear that deeds and registries would be processed only after a completion certificate is issued.According to UPSIDA records, the authority issued more than 15 formal notices to Cosmos between 2020 and 2025, warning the developer about pending dues.On Dec 16 last year, UPSIDA wrote to the district magistrate, seeking recovery of the outstanding amount as govt arrears. Acting on the request, the Dadri tehsildar issued a recovery certificate against the developer.With the amount still unpaid and documents pending, UPSIDA took punitive action on Dec 17, 2025, sealing nine unsold flats in the project. A subsequent order also halted sale and purchase of these units. Himanshu Shekhar Jha, a resident who recently filed a complaint on the govt's IGRS portal over the delay, said a review meeting was held on Jan 12 this year, when the developer assured officials that all pending land dues would be cleared and required OC-CC documents submitted by March.Residents said the absence of completion certificates and registered sale deeds had caused serious financial and legal hardships to them, including difficulties in securing bank loans, selling flats, or obtaining civic approvals. Many also questioned how possession was handed over without the mandatory clearances.Jha said he was not convinced by the latest assurance. "The developer has been making promises for years, but has not pay the dues required for registries," he added.

10 years on, no occupancy certificate: Gurgaon's Ansal Heights families seek action against realtor

Gurgaon.(Agency)

Over 300 families residing in Ansal Heights in Sector 92 have appealed to the department of town and country planning (DTCP), Haryana, seeking urgent intervention after alleging that the housing project has been occupied for nearly a decade without mandatory occupancy certificate (OC). According to a release issued by the residents on Sunday, the developer began offering fit-out possession in 2015, assuring buyers that the OC would be obtained within six months. However, nearly 10 years later, the certificate is yet to be secured, raising concerns about safety, legality of occupation and regulatory enforcement. An occupancy certificate is a statutory requirement confirming compliance with approved building plans, safety norms, and regulations. In the absence of the certificate, residents said they face legal vulnerability, possible penalties, and difficulties in obtaining



individual electricity and water connections.They also flagged issues related to property registration, resale, home loans, and compliance with fire and structural safety standards.

Residents claimed they were repeatedly given assurances over the years, but no clear timeline or transparent update on the OC application has been shared. They stated that despite paying the full

purchase amount along with maintenance and statutory charges, they continue to live in uncertainty due to the developer's failure to complete legal formalities."This is not just a contractual dispute; it is a matter of public safety and governance. Hundreds of families cannot be left in legal limbo for years while authorities look the other way," a resident said in the statement.

The residents have demanded immediate public disclosure of the status of the certificate, a binding and time-bound commitment for obtaining it, and accountability for the prolonged delay and what they described as misleading assurances. They have urged DTCP and the Haryana real estate regulatory authority (RERA) to enforce compliance and ensure early resolution. The residents said they will pursue legal remedies if the issue remains unresolved. The developer could not be contacted for comment.

Gurgaon's 32nd Avenue CEO Dhruv Dutt Sharma held in Rs 500-crore fraud case; accused of selling same floor to 25 buyers

Gurgaon.(Agency)

Gurugram Police arrested Dhruv Dutt Sharma, founder, CEO and managing director of the 32nd Avenue commercial project, he allegedly defrauded approximately Rs 500 crore, after selling a floor of a building to over 25 people, police said.He was produced before a local court, which remanded him to six days' police custody on Friday.Police said Sharma is accused of defrauding investors of nearly Rs 500 crore by allegedly selling the same commercial floor to multiple buyers.The arrest was made by the Economic Offences Wing following an FIR registered at the Civil Lines police station.The case originates from a complaint filed in January by Tram Ventures Private Limited, which alleged that in 2021 it was offered Unit No. 24 — a 3,000 sq ft floor on the first level of the 32nd Milestone complex — for Rs 2.5 crore as reported by news agencyI. Although the amount was paid and an agreement to sell executed, the conveyance deed was never registered in the complainant's name. Subsequent inquiry revealed that the same floor had allegedly been sold to at least 25 other individuals between 2022 and 2023.

Police said the floor was later taken on lease for 30 years from those buyers in the name of another firm, Growth Hospitality Private Limited. Interrogation of the accused is underway.Judicial Magistrate First Class Devanshi Janmeja on February 5 issued notice on an application filed by investor Arvind Gupta and directed the police to submit an action-taken report. The matter has been listed for further hearing on March 13.The plea seeks registration of an FIR and stringent action against 32nd Vistas Private Limited, Growth Hospitality LLP and their promoters, including Dhruv Dutt Sharma, Shirin Sharma and Mamta Sharma.It also seeks freezing of bank accounts, attachment of assets, a forensic audit of finances, suspension of passports and issuance of look-out circulars.

Haryana targets 22% cut in average air quality index by year end under CAQM plan

Gurgaon.(Agency)

Haryana has firming up its air quality plan. Air quality index (AQI), PM2.5 and PM10 targets for the state and dust control, bus expansion and EV charging plans for the city — these form part of the measures. Under its annual action plan — with special focus on NCR — submitted on Sunday to Commission for Air Quality Management (CAQM), Haryana has set a target to reduce average AQI levels by 21.5% by the year-end. The action plan also includes a city bus augmentation component for Gurgaon and Manesar combined. As per the data, the total requirement is 1,000 city buses, while 150 buses are currently available — a gap of 850 buses. According to the plan, "Haryana's annual average AQI, which stood at 138 in 2024, is projected to be brought down to 120 by end of 2026. For particulate matter, the

state has set longer-term targets, with annual average PM2.5 to be reduced to 58 µg/m³ and PM10 to 106 µg/m³, both with a target year of 2030."For Gurgaon, the action plan lists city-specific implementation measures focused on road dust control. The city identified 294 roads to be covered in 2026, with month-wise targets ranging between 22 and 27 roads. The plan also specifies that 50km of road length per month is to be covered for dust control throughout the year.As for monitoring infrastructure, Haryana, which currently operates 29 continuous ambient air quality monitoring stations (CAAQMS), has proposed increasing the number to 41 by March 31, indicating a gap of 12 stations. Manual air quality monitoring stations already met the target at 46. The plan records that Gurgaon has 18 mechanical road sweeping machines at

present, against an assessed requirement of 42 machines. It notes that, under MCG, eight works are currently ongoing on minor and narrow roads, with manual sweeping carried out by 4,910 workers against an assessed requirement of 5,426. The plan states that 100% coverage of the identified roads can be achieved after three months.The plan says that the expansion of city bus services is proposed based on requirements assessed under ministry of housing and urban affairs guidelines. To address the shortfall, the plan sets a monthly target of adding 100 buses in March 2026 and 100 buses in Oct 2026, with an expected status of 200 additional buses by Dec 31, 2026.As for electric mobility infrastructure, the plan records that two electric substations for govt buses are currently available in Gurgaon as of Dec 31, 2025.of 20 charging points by.

Most injured were rescuers when swing crashed again at Surajkund fair

Gurgaon.(Agency)

One friend stepped on to the giant swing, the other stayed back, uneasy about its moves. By the end of the evening at Surajkund fair, 21-year-old Prashant, a third-year BTech student at IIT-Delhi, was in intensive care with severe injuries after the swing malfunctioned and came crashing down in stages on Saturday.It left more than a dozen injured — many of them those who rushed in to pull trapped riders to safety. Prashant, a resident of Dholpur in Rajasthan, was seated on the swing when a key component on the left side detached, causing the structure to tilt and partially collapse.He escaped with injury in the first failure, but was later struck on the head when another section broke off and fell during rescue efforts.Prashant is under observation in the ICU. "He suffered head injuries and spinal trauma, and received 12 stitches on the head. Doctors are conducting MRI scans to assess possible pelvic injuries," said his relative Rohitash,

a compounder at a private hospital in Gurgaon.He had come to the fair in the afternoon with his friend Prateek, also an



IIT-Delhi student. Prateek said he did not board the ride."I was too scared to get on it. After the first collapse, my friend was still conscious and not badly injured. But when people climbed up to rescue others, another part of the ride fell and hit him on the head.

"Prashant's father, an assistant sub-inspector with Rajasthan Police's crime branch,

reached Faridabad with family members early on Sunday morning.Talking to visitors and witnesses, TOI learnt that most of the injured were not riding the swing, but were rescuers caught in the second collapse.Abrar Ali (26), a state-level boxer from Tughlakabad in Delhi, said he climbed the damaged structure after hearing screams.Abrar, who runs a biscuit and VR goggles stall at the mela and has worked there for the past three years, said he is the sole breadwinner of his family "I saw people screaming. So, I just threw my things aside and climbed up. I managed to pull seven to eight people out."He suffered leg and shoulder injuries when a railing section gave way."I also knew the assistant sub-inspector who died. He used to come to our stall and talk to me. It is unfortunate how he died," he added.Sunil, a 22-year-old toll tax booth worker from Sohna, said he ran towards the ride after hearing cries for help.

Amusement zone sealed after swing crash, but Surajkund craft fair sees heavy footfall

Faridabad.(Agency)

The amusement park section has been shut but the fair continues. Surajkund mela on Sunday continued to attract steady crowds, a day after a deadly joyride collapse claimed the life of an inspector and injured several visitors. On Sunday alone, around 2.2 lakh visitors reached the fairgrounds, marking one of the highest single-day footfalls so far, according to officials. Meanwhile, the incident has triggered both safety concerns among visitors and a livelihood crisis for hundreds of families dependent on the ride and stall operations. Authorities have sealed the entire amusement park area following the accident, have barred public entry and have deployed security personnel around the site. The closure of

the amusement park has severely impacted vendors operating in the area. The section included about 14 rides and nearly 72 stalls, employing hundreds of workers and supporting around 1,000 families. Vendors said they had invested heavily, paying advance fees and taking loans to set up businesses for the duration of the mela. Many claimed they had not yet received clarity from the tourism department regarding refunds or alternative arrangements. Haryana Tourism managing director Parth Gupta said the "park will remain closed till the mela concludes". Daily safety inspections were conducted by a designated committee, including on the day of the incident, but strict action would be taken if "lapses were found", Gupta said. The rest of the mela,

however, remained open, with craft stalls, cultural performances and food courts witnessing regular footfall. Visitors continued to explore the venue, though conversations frequently turned to the tragedy and questions about safety measures at large public events. 'Record-breaking crowds' Officials said Surajkund mela has witnessed record-breaking crowds this year, attracting a total of 7.2 lakh visitors within the first nine days. The event picked up strong momentum during the second weekend, with more than 3.20 lakh visitors attending, bringing cheer to artisans, craftsmen, weavers and shopkeepers. The tragedy has left a lasting impact — the accident occurred around 6pm on Saturday.

According to sources, the left-side shaft rod, about 50mm in

width, of the 'tsunami' ride suddenly broke, causing the structure to lose balance. Around 18 to 20 people were on the ride at the time. During rescue efforts, the opposite side of the structure also collapsed. Haryana Police inspector Jagdish Prasad died while attempting to save visitors, while at least 12 others sustained injuries and were rushed to nearby hospitals.Many visitors expressed mixed emotions. Ravi Kumar, a Faridabad resident visiting with his family, said the mela remained lively but safety had become a major talking point. Another visitor, Neha Sharma from Delhi, said she initially felt uneasy after hearing about the accident but felt reassured seeing the sealed-off area and additional security arrangements. Some visitors admitted they came partly out of curiosity to

observe how authorities were managing the situation.

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NEWS BOX

France's former culture minister resigns over Epstein-linked tax fraud investigation

PARIS. (Agency)

France’s former Culture Minister Jack Lang has resigned as head of a Paris cultural center over alleged past financial links to convicted sex offender Jeffrey Epstein that prompted a tax investigation.He is the highest-profile figure in France impacted by the release of Epstein files on January 30 by the U.S. Department of Justice. He is known for his role as a culture minister under Socialist President François Mitterrand in the 1980s and 1990s.Lang, 86, was summoned to appear at the French Foreign Ministry, which oversees the Arab World Institute, on Sunday, but he submitted his resignation.He “is very sad and deeply hurt to be leaving a position he loves,” his lawyer Laurent Merlet said Sunday on RTL radio.

“He put the interests of the Arab World Institute first,” Merlet said, adding that his client denied the allegations and called them inaccurate.The Foreign Ministry confirmed his resignation Saturday evening.The financial prosecutors' office said it had opened an investigation into Lang and his daughter, Caroline, over alleged “aggravated tax fraud laundering.”French investigative news website Mediapart reported last week on alleged financial and business ties between the Lang family and Jeffrey Epstein through an offshore company based in the U.S. Virgin Islands in the Caribbean Sea.

Jack Lang's name was mentioned more than 600 times in the Epstein files, showing intermittent correspondence between 2012 and 2019. His daughter was also in the released files.

Japanese Prime Minister Sanae Takaichi's party secures supermajority in lower house in landslide victory

TOKYO. (Agency)

The governing party of Prime Minister Sanae Takaichi secured a two-thirds supermajority in a key parliamentary election Sunday, Japanese media reported citing preliminary results, earning a landslide victory thanks to her popularity.

Takaichi, in a televised interview with public television network NHK following her sweeping victory, said she is now ready to pursue policies that would make Japan strong and prosperous.

NHK, citing results of vote counts, said Takaichi’s Liberal Democratic Party, or LDP, alone secured 316 seats by early Monday, comfortably surpassing a 261-seat absolute majority in the 465-member lower house, the more powerful of Japan's two-chamber parliament. That marks a record since the party's foundation in 1955 and surpasses the previous record of 300 seats won in 1986 by late Prime Minister Yasuhiro Nakasone.

A smiling Takaichi placed a big red ribbon above each winner's name on a signboard at the LDP's headquarters, as accompanying party executives applauded.Despite the lack of a majority in the other chamber, the upper house, the huge jump from the preelection share in the superior lower house would allow Takaichi to make progress on a right-wing agenda that aims to boost Japan’s economy and military capabilities as tensions grow with China and she tries to nurture ties with the United States.

Takaichi said that she would firmly push forward her policy goals while trying to gain support from the opposition.

How Jamaat-BNP Contest Will Decide Bangladesh's India, China Ties

Dhaka. (Agency)

Bangladesh is holding its most important election in recent times this week, and the two main parties, the Bangladesh Jamaat-E-Islami and the Bangladesh Nationalist Party (BNP), are leaving no stone unturned to engage with the voters amid a tight contest. For years, under ousted premier Sheikh Hasina's rule, the opposition in the South Asian country had little presence on the streets during polls, either boycotting them or being sidelined by mass arrests of senior leaders.

Now, ahead of Thursday's vote, the roles have reversed. With the official deadline for the end of campaigning at 7:00 am on Tuesday, Monday is the last chance for parties to reach out to voters. With Hasina's ouster and the subsequent ban on her party-- Awami League-- by the Muhammad Yunus-led interim government, Bangladesh saw the emergence of once allies Jamaat and BNP as the principal players in its politics.

The Bangladesh Nationalist Party (BNP) is widely expected to win, although a coalition led by the Islamist Jamaat-e-Islami is putting up a strong challenge. A new party driven by Gen-Z activists under the age of 30 has aligned with Jamaat after failing to translate its anti-Hasina street mobilisation into an electoral Analysts believe Jamaat may spring a surprise, as the party is expected to post its best-ever performance in the February 12 polls. Jamaat gained a position of strength following the overturn of the ban on its activities soon after the Yunus government took over in 2024, and its subsequent return to politics with the Election Commission in Bangladesh restoring its registration.However, the return of Tarique Rahman to the country after 17 years in political exile has reinvigorated the BNP cadre. The death of former Prime Minister Begum Khaleda Zia has also created a sentiment in favour of the BNP. This situation has made this election a tight contest, with the Jamaat and the BNP taking potshots at each other during the campaign rallies.

Singapore's Tamil news presenter gets lifetime achievement award

The prestigious accolade recognises her remarkable contributions to Tamil broadcast journalism in a career that has spanned over four decades and left an indelible mark on Singapore's media landscape.

SAN DIEGO. (Agency)

Singaporean news presenter Pavalakantham Azhagarsamy has received the Lifetime Achievement Award at Mediacorp's Pradhana Vizha 2026 in recognition of her contributions to Tamil broadcast journalism in Singapore.The prestigious accolade recognises her remarkable contributions to Tamil broadcast journalism in a career that has spanned over four decades and left an indelible mark on



Singapore's media landscape.The award was presented during the 21st edition of the annual ceremony, which honours excellence in Singapore's Indian entertainment, said Mediacorp in a news release on Sunday."As a respected news presenter, mentor and industry stalwart in a

career spanning more than four decades, she continues to mentor new generations of Tamil media professionals in the radio and television industry in Singapore today," said Singapore's national media network. The event, held at The Theatre at Mediacorp on Saturday, featured 19 awards across

performance and programme categories, celebrating outstanding achievements in television, audio and digital content.The night also saw horror drama Karuvanam emerging as a huge winner with five awards, including Best Actor, Best Supporting Actor and Best Supporting Actress, while mystery drama Pithamagan was named Best Drama Series.The audience also had a say, casting their votes for the most popular male and female personalities.Winners Guruu and Nisha Kumar were crowned fan favourites, having won the hearts of the fans.Mediacorp's chief customer and corporate development officer Angelina Poh said: "Pradhana Vizha 2026 has brought together talents across generations in a compelling showcase of production excellence, while celebrating the achievements of those who dared to dream." "As the ceremony marks its 21st edition, it not only reflects how far the industry has come, but also signals the exciting future ahead," Channel News Asia quoted Poh as saying.

New Zealand's Christchurch mosque killer appeals against life imprisonment without parole

WELLINGTON. (Agency)

A white supremacist who shot and killed 51 people at two New Zealand mosques in 2019 launched an appeal Monday seeking to overturn his conviction.Brenton Tarrant, an Australian former gym instructor, admitted carrying out New Zealand's deadliest modern-day mass shooting before being sentenced to life in jail in August 2020.But the convicted killer now argues "torturous and inhumane" detention conditions during his trial made him incapable of making rational decisions when he pleaded guilty, according to a court synopsis of the case.Tarrant is being held in a specialist unit for prisoners of extreme risk at Auckland Prison, seldom interacting with inmates or other people.He appeared in the Court of Appeal in Wellington via video link, his head shaved and wearing black glasses and a white button-up shirt.

"I did not have the mind frame or mental health required to be making informed decisions at that time," Tarrant told the court, according to the New Zealand Herald.Tarrant said his state of mind was such that he had considered trying to implicate US President Donald



Trump in the crime.Life without parole"What I said at the time is 'perhaps I could go out and say there was a second shooter on the roof, perhaps I could say it was Donald J Trump'," he said, according to national broadcaster RNZ.If the Court of Appeal in Wellington upholds Tarrant's conviction, it will also need to consider an appeal against his sentence.If his conviction is overturned the case will be sent to the High Court for a retrial.His penalty of life imprisonment without parole was the stiffest in New Zealand history.Armed with an arsenal of semi-automatic weapons, Tarrant attacked worshippers at two mosques in Christchurch on March 15, 2019. He published an online manifesto before the attacks and then livestreamed the

killings for 17 minutes.Not prepared'There are heavy restrictions on who can be in court during Monday's appeal hearing, with only counsel, media and court officials allowed.Families and friends of those killed or wounded in the attacks have been invited to watch proceedings in Christchurch remotely by video with a one-hour delay.Members of the public are also able to watch the hearing by video link with a one-hour delay at a separate courtroom in Wellington.Entry to the court, which stands opposite New Zealand's main government building, the Beehive, is only permitted if people surrender their cellphones.Aya Al-Umari, whose brother Hussein was killed by Tarrant inside Linwood mosque, told Christchurch's The Press newspaper she had thought "this is the end of it" when Tarrant was sentenced.Little did you know that you are allowed to do this six years later. I was not prepared to do this," she The hearing is being held before three Court of Appeal judges.In most Court of Appeal hearings the judges reserve their decision to be published at a later date, meaning a verdict is unlikely this week.

What to know about Jimmy Lai's Hong Kong journey from media mogul and activist to convict

HONG KONG. (Agency)

To his supporters, former Hong Kong media mogul Jimmy Lai is a fighter for democracy. To the government, he is a traitor to his motherland.The 78-year-old outspoken critic of China's ruling Communist Party was sentenced Monday to 20 years in prison for conspiring to commit sedition and collude with foreign forces.Observers say his trial came to symbolize a crackdown that began in 2020 on press and other freedoms that has changed Hong Kong, the former British colony that returned to China's control in 1997.The Hong Kong government insists Lai's case has nothing to do with press freedom, but instead is an example of righteousness upheld by the law.

A migrant from mainland China, he



made a fortune in the garment industry in Hong Kong and later founded the Apple Daily newspaper, where he ended, at least for the moment, in prison.

Astowaway founds a clothing giant

Lai was born in 1947 in the southern Chinese city of Guangzhou, once known as Canton, two years before the communists came to power. He was just 12 when he stowed away on a fishing boat to Hong Kong, about 135 kilometers (84 miles) from Guangzhou. Like many other Chinese of that era, Lai hoped for a better life in the British colony. Working as a child laborer in a glove factory served as his introduction to the garment industry.In 1981, he founded Giordano, an affordable casual clothing chain that has grown into an international brand with 1,600 retail outlets in 30 countries, according to its website.

wrote articles criticizing the Chinese and Hong Kong governments for limiting freedoms. The publication eventually was shuttered and his words became trial evidence. Here is what to know about his unusual journey to political activism that has

FBI claims not enough evidence to prove Jeffrey Epstein was running a sex trafficking ring, files show

CAIRO. (Agency)

The FBI pored over Jeffrey Epstein’s bank records and emails. It searched his homes. It spent years interviewing his victims and examining his connections to some of the world’s most influential people.But while investigators collected ample proof that Epstein sexually abused underage girls, they found scant evidence the well-connected financier led a sex trafficking ring serving powerful men, an Associated Press review of internal Justice Department records shows.

Videos and photos seized from Epstein’s homes in New York, Florida and the Virgin Islands didn’t depict victims being abused or implicate anyone else in his crimes, a prosecutor wrote in one 2025 memo.

An examination of Epstein’s financial records, including payments he made to entities linked to influential figures in academia, finance and global diplomacy, found no connection to criminal activity, said another internal memo in 2019.

While one Epstein victim made highly public claims that he “lent her” to his rich friends, agents couldn’t confirm that and found no other victims telling a similar story, the records said.Summarizing the investigation in an email last July, agents said “four or five” Epstein accusers claimed other men or women had sexually abused them. But, the agents said, there “was not enough evidence to federally charge these individuals, so the cases were referred to local law enforcement.”The AP and other media organizations are still reviewing millions of pages of documents, many of them previously confidential, that the Justice Department released under the Epstein Files Transparency Act and it is possible those records contain evidence overlooked by investigators.

But the documents, which include police reports, FBI interview notes and prosecutor emails, provide the clearest picture to date of the investigation — and why U.S. authorities ultimately decided to close it without additional charges.Dozens of victims come forward

The Epstein investigation began in 2005, when the parents of a 14-year-old girl reported she had been molested at the millionaire’s home in Palm Beach, Florida.

Police would identify at least 35 girls with similar stories: Epstein was paying high school age students USD 200 or USD 300 to give him sexualized massages.fter the FBI joined the probe, federal prosecutors drafted indictments to charge Epstein and some personal assistants who had arranged the girls’ visits and payments. But instead, then-Miami U.S. attorney Alexander Acosta struck a deal letting Epstein plead guilty to state charges of soliciting prostitution from an underage girl. Sentenced to 18 months in jail, Epstein was free by mid-2009.

Thailand's Anutin rides wave of nationalism to election victory

BANGKOK. (Agency)

Thailand's caretaker premier Anutin Charnvirakul was preparing for coalition talks Monday after his conservative Bhumjaithai Party surged to a stunning election victory on a wave of nationalism.

The pro-military and pro-monarchy party had its best electoral performance ever in polls that took place after border clashes with Cambodia during two rounds of deadly fighting last year.But Anutin, the scion of a construction dynasty, will need to tackle anaemic economic growth and manage fallout over multibillion-dollar cyberscam networks operating from the region.

"Thailand will move like it moved in the past three months. We will see nationalism, a strong position on Cambodia and economic policies. Nothing changes," said Virot Ali, politics lecturer at Thammasat University. Bhumjaithai was forecast by local media to have won almost 200 seats in Sunday's

vote, well ahead of others but short of an outright majority in the 500-member lower house.The reformist People's Party trailed with around 120 seats, while Pheu Thai -- the party of jailed former prime minister Thaksin Shinawatra -- came in third.

Voters appeared to turn their backs on the two parties, with their vote shares diving compared to the last poll in 2023, according to preliminary results from the election commission.Pheu Thai had its worst showing since Thaksin founded his political dynasty, after his daughter Paetongtarn was felled as prime minister over her handling of the Cambodia border dispute.Thaksin is serving a one-year prison sentence for corruption in office, but many observers expect him to be released earlier than scheduled alongside a political agreement.

Phone call scandal

Paul Chambers, an associate senior fellow at



ISEAS-Yusof Ishak Institute in Singapore, told AFP that Bhumjaithai achieved victory by "emphasizing its commitment to nationalism and the king".The conservatives also benefitted from the "continuing unpopularity of Pheu Thai" following a leaked phone call in which Paetongtarn referred to Cambodia's former leader Hun Sen as "uncle" and described a Thai military commander as her "opponent".The leak sparked public and political backlash, and she was later

dismissed from office by the constitutional court on an ethics complaint.Still, Pheu Thai is seen as a likely coalition partner for Anutin, as they were allies until Bhumjaithai pulled out over the border dispute scandal.Anutin, who took office in September, declined to be drawn Sunday on potential coalition talks, noting the election results remained unofficial."We will wait until it's more clear, and every party has to meet their executive board to discuss the position," he said.Political analyst Napon Jatusritipak expected Bhumjaithai to "move quickly" to form a government in which its interests would prevail.The conflict with Cambodia, which killed scores of people on both sides and displaced around a million altogether, was top of mind for voters.Soon after becoming premier following Paetongtarn's removal, Anutin authorised the armed forces to take whatever action they saw fit on the border.

NEWS BOX

Maha: Gold chain stolen in Nashik

Nashik. (Agency)

A gold chain weighing 250 gram was allegedly stolen by two motorcycle-borne men in broad daylight in front of the Shani temple in Lasalgaon, causing a stir in the area.

Yesterday, at around 4:35 PM, while a woman from Lasalgaon was going to a Brahmin's house to show wedding invitations, two unknown individuals on a motorcycle snatched the gold chain from her neck and fled the scene. The entire incident was captured on CCTV cameras in the area, and the Lasalgaon police have started an investigation based on the footage.



The woman was shocked after the theft, and local residents immediately informed the police.

The Lasalgaon police station filed a theft case late last night. Police are working on identifying the suspects by examining the CCTV footage on a war footing. Meanwhile, the fact that such an incident could occur despite a large number of people being present in the Shani temple area has created an atmosphere of fear among the citizens.

Tripura: Farmer injured while fleeing elephant herd in Teliamura forest



Agartala . (Agency)

A local farmer sustained serious injuries last evening when he confronted an elephant herd while tending to his cattle in Champlai area of the Chakmaghat forest range of Teliamura in Tripura's Khowai district.

Police said the injured individual has been identified as Dhananjay Biswas (60), a resident of the area. He had entered the forest that afternoon to graze his cattle when he was unexpectedly charged by the herd of tusker elephants. In a frantic effort to escape, Biswas leaped into a forest ravine, resulting in severe injuries across multiple areas of his body.

After the incident, he was reported missing for several hours. An intensive search conducted by family members and local community members ultimately led to his discovery in an unconscious state.

He was swiftly transported to Teliamura Sub-Divisional Hospital, where he is now receiving medical attention. The issue of wild tusker elephants in Teliamura and its surrounding forest regions is not a new occurrence.

For many years, herds of elephants have frequently wandered into populated areas, causing significant destruction to crops and leading to reports of multiple fatalities resulting from elephant encounters. Frustrated residents have expressed their anger, claiming that despite numerous incidents, the Forest Department and local authorities have failed to implement any lasting or effective solutions.

They are calling for immediate action, including the establishment of designated elephant corridors, warning that without proper intervention, the likelihood of further serious incidents remains high.

The recent event in Champlai has underscored the escalating threat posed by wild tusker elephants, which has become a significant risk to the safety and livelihoods of local inhabitants.

Congress to hold Raj Bhavan march on Feb 16

Agartala.(Agency)

The Tripura Pradesh Congress Committee (TPCC) announced plans to hold a Raj Bhavan march on February 16, during which a memorandum will be submitted to the Governor to emphasise the need to protect and strengthen the MGNREGA scheme.

TPCC president Ashish Kumar Saha said this campaign aligns with the All India Congress Committee's 45-day nationwide struggle to save MGNREGA, which commenced on January 10, and emphasised the active participation of Tripura Pradesh Congress in protest programs across the state.

Saha also shared that successful district-level programs were held on February 6, with mass deputations submitted to district magistrates in nearly every district except West Tripura.

He mentioned the formation of a state-level coordination committee to oversee the campaign and noted that the decision to hold the Raj Bhavan march was finalised during a meeting on Sunday.

The party is anticipating widespread participation in the February 16 program from supporters across the state, for the critical role of MGNREGA for rural workers, and expressing determination to continue the struggle for its preservation.

The Congress leadership emphasised that the campaign aims to expose the alleged neglect of the MGNREGA scheme and to mobilise public support to safeguard employment opportunities for rural households.

Top brass must clear air on power tussle in Karnataka: Home Minister G Parameshwara

“Only the chief minister, deputy CM and the Congress high command know what transpired between them over the issue. If the high command is silent, what are we supposed to understand?” he said.

BENGALURU. (Agency)

Home Minister Dr G Parameshwara on Sunday indirectly suggested that the Congress high command clear the air over the change in leadership tussle in Karnataka as Chief Minister Siddaramaiah's MLC son Dr Yathindra and the DCM D K Shivakumar camp are setting their own narratives.

“Only the chief minister, deputy CM and the Congress high command know what transpired between them over the issue. If the high command is silent, what are we supposed to understand?” he told reporters.

On Dr Yathindra's statement that “Siddaramaiah will be the CM for five years”, Parameshwara clarified that “that is his personal



opinion”. “We are relying on the high command, who said that there is an agreement on power

sharing. Did the high command say this? Shivakumar may have said it, that is his opinion. We do

not know what he knows,” he said.

“If there is an agreement, the high command can say or take action. There is no point in questioning us without central leaders taking any decision. The high command knows very well what to do and how to handle it. The final decision lies with it. Many people can make statements, but they are just statements.

All issues will be resolved only when the high command takes a call,” he said.

Meanwhile, he defended the government's decision to purchase Artificial Intelligence-powered social media analytics software at a cost of Rs 67 crore to tackle misinformation and hate speech.

Prehistoric human skeletons excavated in Karnataka's Ballari district

Clear evidence of a burial practice involving the placement of stones over the bodies has also been observed, offering valuable insights into the social and cultural customs of the period.

BALLARI. (Agency)

Researchers have found two prehistoric human skeletons during an ongoing excavation at Gaudra Moole Hill in Tekkalakote town of Ballari district. The excavation is being carried out by a team led by Dr Namita S Sugandhi, a professor at Hartwick College in the US who is also the co-director of the project.

During excavation work last week, human bones were initially noticed beneath the soil. Further digging led to the unearthing of two complete human skeletons, each measuring approximately 5.5 feet in length, found lying side by side. Skeletons were found in well-preserved condition

Remarkably, the skeletons were found in a well-preserved condition. Clear evidence of a

burial practice involving the placement of stones over the bodies has also been observed, offering valuable insights into the social and cultural customs of the period. Pottery fragments, microlithic tools and evidence related to early human tool usage were found around the skeletons. These findings suggest that the Tekkalakote may have been an important human settlement during the Neolithic or prehistoric period.

Experts estimate that the skeletons could date back between 3,000 and 5,000 years. Officials have decided to subject the remains to carbon dating tests to determine their precise age. State archaeology



department deputy director and director of the excavation R Shajeshwar, visited the site and inspected the findings. He said the

responsibility of preserving such a rare archaeological site for future generations rests with everyone. Dr Sugandhi first visited Tekkalakote for excavation work in 2019.

In 2025, she made her second visit with the objective of preparing a research paper and presented a study titled Man and Environment Tekkalakote. She is currently engaged in the excavation for the third time.

In 1964, noted archaeologist MS Nagaraja Rao had conducted excavations at Tekkalakote, bringing global attention to the region's historical significance.

It served as an inspiration for Dr Sugandhi and motivated her to select Tekkalakote for research.

After electoral setback & SC rejection, PK embarks on state-wide tour

Patna. (Agency)

After failing to make an electoral impact in the 2025 Bihar Assembly elections and the Supreme Court's rejection to entertain the plea to cancel the Bihar Assembly elections, Jan Suraj Party founder Prashant Kishor, also known as PK, has launched a state-wide tour to strengthen the organisation at the grassroots. Launching the “Bihar Navanirmaan Yatra” today from Bagaha in West Champaran



district of Bihar, he said that the objective is to strengthen the organisation in every district by reconnecting with old associates, bringing new people into the organisation, and strengthen the organisational structure at the grassroots level.

On this occasion, Prashant Kishor appealed to Prime Minister Narendra Modi, union Home Minister Amit Shah and Bihar Chief Minister Nitish Kumar to ensure that every woman entrepreneur who had applied for the ‘Mukhyamantri Mahila Rozgaar Yojana’ gets Rs2 lakh to further expand their businesses, as per the promise made before the elections.

He said that the party will go door-to-door to ensure that every woman receives this amount. He said

that if the government fails to fulfil this promise, it will become clear that the announcement was made only for electoral gains.

Responding to questions about the poll outcome, Prashant Kishor said that the people of Bihar have defined everyone's role -- the NDA has got the mandate to run the government, RJD has been assigned the role of Opposition in the Assembly, and Jan Suraj Party has been entrusted with the

responsibility of working among the people on public issues. “We are carrying out that responsibility with complete sincerity,” he added.

Recently the Jan Suraj Party had also filed a petition in the Supreme Court challenging the 2025 Bihar Assembly elections seeking fresh

elections in the state, alleging misuse of a welfare scheme to influence voters.

In the petition, the decision of the Bihar government was challenged, under which Rs 10,000 each was allegedly transferred to women beneficiaries under the ‘Mukhyamantri Mahila Rozgaar Yojana’ (Chief Minister's Women Employment Scheme) after the announcement of the election schedule, in violation of the Model Code of Conduct.

Hidden cameras in ‘concealed cabin’: Bijnor restaurant sealed, FIR registered against manager for filming, blackmailing young couples

Lucknow .(Agency)

The Uttar Pradesh Police Saturday sealed a restaurant in Bijnor and registered an FIR against one of the employees of the eatery for allegedly filming private moments of young couples.

The accused used to discreetly ask young couples to sit in a concealed cabin located beneath the staircase of the restaurant and film them through hidden cameras.

The matter came to light after locals staged a protest T h u r s d a y , alleging that the recorded footage was being used in an attempt to blackmail the couples. After verifying the allegations, the police registered an FIR against Satendra, a restaurant employee and manager, under Section 77 (Voyeurism) of the Bharatiya Nyaya Sanhita (BNS) at the police station concerned.

Following the registration of the case, Satendra went absconding. Police teams have launched raids at multiple locations to trace his whereabouts. Krishna Gopal Singh, Additional Superintendent of Police, Bijnor, said the prima facie allegation was found to be true, after which the restaurant was sealed.

“We are conducting continuous raids



to locate Satendra, who has gone underground. Attempts are being made to recover the mobile phone in which the recorded footage is suspected to be stored,” said the officer in charge of the police station concerned.

A swing seat where power equations shift with every election

If the voting pattern of the recent local body polls is any indication, a few of the assembly seats are set for interesting contests. In the run-up to the assembly elections.

THIRUVANANTHAPURAM. (Agency)

In Vattiyoorkavu, electoral loyalty has never been set in stone. Carved out as an assembly constituency post the 2008 delimitation, this seat in Thiruvananthapuram has since evolved into a political swing zone, where voters have consistently re-evaluated their choices in tune with changing political moods and emerging power equations.

In the 2011 assembly election in the newly-formed constituency, Congress heavyweight K Muraleedharan emerged victorious, securing over 50% of the votes polled. However, the 2014 Lok Sabha election was a landmark in Vattiyoorkavu's political trajectory. The BJP-led NDA's vote share saw a phenomenal three-fold increase, from

11.98% in 2011 to 37.05%, and O Rajagopal took pole position in the assembly segment, signalling the BJP's growing footprint in the constituency. In the 2016 assembly election, Vattiyoorkavu swung back to the UDF, bucking the statewide LDF wave.

Though Muraleedharan retained the seat, his vote share dropped by nearly 13%, even as the NDA finished second. The assembly segment again backed the UDF in the 2019 Lok Sabha election, with the NDA narrowly missing pole position by around 3,000 votes. The inflection point came in the 2019 bypoll, necessitated by Muraleedharan vacating the seat after being elected to the Lok Sabha from Vadakara. LDF's V K Prasanth wrested Vattiyoorkavu, pushing the NDA to third



place. In 2021, Prasanth was re-elected amid an LDF resurgence, with the NDA bouncing back to second position. The 2024 Lok Sabha election saw Vattiyoorkavu once again tilting heavily in favour of the NDA that recorded its highest ever vote share of 41.7% in the assembly segment.

The 2025 local body elections signalled a UDF resurgence in Vattiyoorkavu, with the

Congress-led front matching the NDA ward for ward in the corporation. The LDF lagged far behind owing to a strong anti-incumbency wave. According to sources, the LDF is likely to field Prasanth again, while Muraleedharan is set for a third showdown from the UDF camp. The BJP, meanwhile, is weighing an established vote-puller, with former state president K Surendran's name emerging strongly in preliminary discussions. Sitting MLA Prasanth said the LDF will foreground the Rs 1,500-crore worth of development projects in the campaign. “The Peroorkada flyover project, redevelopment of Vattiyoorkavu Junction, and the widening of key road stretches will be major vote drivers for the LDF,” he said.

The Doomsday Clock ticks on

Had the polar chill eased its grip on America’s eastern seaboard and if a hydrogen leak had not intervened, Artemis II would have lifted off from Cape Canaveral, US this weekend to put four-member crew in orbit around the moon, a preliminary step to putting astronauts on the lunar surface. The serially-delayed Artemis mission has now been pushed to March. But there is no sense of disappointment in the space industry, the US government or enthusiasts worldwide. What does this signal?Apollo 11, which put the first men on the moon in 1969, was a mission driven by Cold War rivalry. The space race was on, the USSR had put a dog, a man and a woman in orbit, and the US needed to pull a more dramatic stunt. Such a sense of urgency is missing today in a project that initially was to take flight in November 2024.

Perhaps it’s because space is no longer a State monopoly and its role as a marker of national prowess is diluted. Perhaps the US doesn’t believe it is in a contest, or feels it has anything to prove. That is what the present administration in Washington had said when it sought election, before it became embroiled in tariff wars and other shows of strength. But there’s the human factor: what do the majority expect from a moonshot when things are falling apart? Days before the Artemis II launch was deferred, the Doomsday Clock was set forward to 85 seconds to midnight-the closest it has ever been to that hour. The clock, created by the scientists who built the first nuclear weapons, is a visual expression of the proximity of the human race to self-annihilation, graphically represented by the clock striking midnight. In 2025, it was set to 89 seconds to midnight as “national leaders and their societies” had failed to change course away from the precipice. The Doomsday Clock was originally set to seven minutes to midnight in 1947, after World War 2 was ended by nuclear bombings and the colonial era began to unravel. It was advanced to three minutes to midnight in 1949, when the USSR tested its first atom bomb at Semipalatinsk, and it held steady in 1950 despite the Korean War. It was advanced by a minute in 1953, after the US tested a hydrogen bomb at Bikini Atoll and the USSR matched its achievement nine months later.

In the 1960s, as the world agreed upon the importance of limiting nuclear weapons and testing, the clock moved back again to 7 minutes and even 12 minutes to midnight in the early 1970s-marking the end of atmospheric testing and the era of SALT I, the anti-ballistic-missile treaty, and the Nuclear Non-Proliferation Treaty.In 1974, Indira Gandhi ordered the Pokhran I test and the clock jittered forward to nine minutes to midnight. It reached three minutes to midnight in 1984, when the Reagan administration sought space-based anti-ballistic-missile systems. The collapse of the Soviet Union lulled threat perceptions, and the next spike was provided by the Vajpayee government’s Pokhran II test in 1998, and Pakistan’s answer. The clock was again at nine minutes to midnight, and it was blamed on the leadership failure of the US and Russia in disarmament. The two countries had the largest nuclear weapon inventories. This is still the case, and the clock has again been moved forward due to their leadership failure. Meanwhile, China and India have acquired strategic and economic importance to enter the lists, and their leadership isn’t in great health either.Last year, the Science and Security Board of the Bulletin of the Atomic Scientists, which sets the Doomsday Clock, had warned of multiple threats facing human civilisation-what the World Economic Forum acknowledges as a ‘polycrisis’. They include immediate threats like the US abdicating its leadership responsibility in climate action and choosing fossil fuels. Also, AI companies should have been regulated instead of being treated like freestyle prize-fighters in an international technology tournament. Relatively distant concerns also figured, like ‘mirror life’, based on molecules that are chirally opposite to those found in nature-such life forms can run amok, but they don’t exist yet.

Much ado about a book and a film

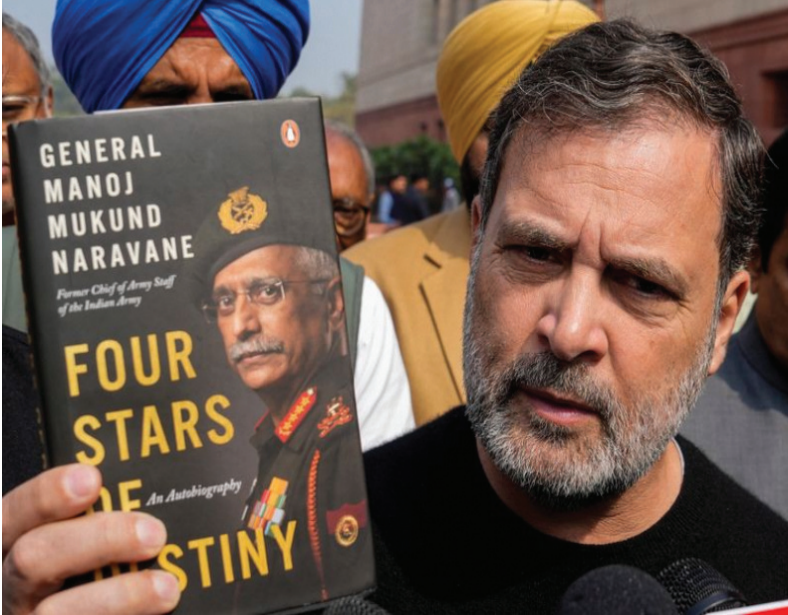
THE GREAT GAME: The ability to control information around “strategic affairs” is critical in a democracy

A film and a book have been at the heart of the national debate this week, with Netflix agreeing to change the name and withdraw all promotional material of a film called “Ghooskhor Pandat,” or, the Bribe-Taking Pandit, after angry middle-aged men in saffron gear protested the “casteist” slur, an FIR was lodged at the Hazratganj police station in Lucknow, the National Human Rights Commission complained to the Information & Broadcasting Ministry — at the end of which BJP leader Gaurav Bhatia declared victory, saying, “insults to Sanatan Dharma will not be tolerated.”

We are committed to taking the strictest possible action against those who demean any caste or community for commercial gains,” Bhatia said, adding, “Sabka Saath, Sabka Vikas and Sabka Vishwas is our guiding principle.”It’s not clear whether the BJP leader was aware that he was also celebrating the death of irony, apart from squelching the underside of humour. Certainly, slapstick headlines must be removed from fashion.Or perhaps it doesn’t matter that much, anymore, not when half the week has been taken up by repeated adjournments in the Lok Sabha. Congress leader Rahul Gandhi has persisted with asking questions over a book written by former Army Chief, Gen Manoj Mukund Naravane. The ruling BJP has stood equally firm, refusing to allow any discussion, arguing that the book has not been published and therefore cannot be debated in Parliament.

What doesn’t exist cannot be discussed, right? Except, Rahul has been brandishing a pre-publication copy inside and outside the House. Moreover, the PDF is available for all the world to read. But the government is also right. The book is not available in the market. The Ministry of Defence (MoD) is still checking whether its contents are kosher.Gen Naravane’s autobiographical account has some interesting details. These include the India-China standoff in Galwan in Ladakh in June 2020 — when 20 Indian soldiers lost their lives, as did four Chinese soldiers, although foreign news agencies like Russia’s Tass said 45 were killed — as well as the action a couple of months later in the Kailash range. There are conversations with Bhutan’s influential former King, Jigme Singye Wangchuk, popularly known as K4; messages from Defence Minister Rajnath Singh; as well as meetings with the PM.On the face of it, the paragraph that has lit the political storm is almost harmless, and in fact makes the former Army Chief look a bit out of sorts — a paragraph Rahul is said to have cottoned on to. Which is that when four Chinese PLA tanks were coming

towards the Indian soldiers who had taken the Kailash heights, east of Finger 4, Gen Naravane called Raksha Mantri and asked him for orders as to what to do. After some hours, Rajnath Singh is said to have called him back, allegedly after speaking to the PM.In the press note sent by the book publisher more than a year ago, quoted by PTI, Naravane writes, “I conveyed the criticality of the situation to the RM, who said he would get back to me, which he did, by about 2230 hours. He said that he had spoken to the PM and that it was purely a military decision. ‘Jo ucchit samjho woh karo’ (Do whatever you deem is appropriate). I had been handed a hot potato.



With this carte blanche, the onus was now totally on me. I took a deep breath and sat silently for a few minutes.”Come to think of it, isn’t that what a Prime Minister or a Defence Minister is supposed to tell his Army Chief? That he’s the Chief because he knows best the lay of the land, especially when the enemy is advancing, and therefore he should do what is best by the country.We all know what happens when politics gets involved in military matters, and vice-versa. India’s neighbourhood is littered with pretenders in both fatigues and civilian clothes. But everyone knows that in the separation of powers that is the backbone of any democracy, the thumb rules are clear and apparent to both sides.Rahul Gandhi’s argument is that national security has been the government’s leitmotif since it came to power and that when a crisis took place, in Ladakh in 2020, the PM did not properly advise his Army

Chief.

This is certainly a debate worth having. Which is, why were the Chinese able to push you around in Galwan, leading to the death of 20 Indian soldiers? What was the role of the corps commander Lt Gen Harinder Singh in that fracas? How did the Army commander, Lt Gen YK Joshi (Jo, in the book) handle it? What are the lessons learnt from the Galwan tragedy?For sure, national security is a holy cow and operational details can’t be revealed — certainly that’s why the book has been held by the MoD. But that point has become moot because the book’s PDF is now being widely read. Everyone knows what the MoD didn’t want known.

Which brings us to the most critical lesson of this teacup storm — because there will doubtless be something else next week — that the ability to control information around that compendium word, “strategic affairs,” which is everything from foreign affairs to domestic security, is critical in a democracy. How much to tell the public, is a question every government grapples with. But know that in the Age of Information, despite Donald Trump becoming a bit of an international joke with his 59th claim that he brokered the end of the India-Pakistan conflict at Op Sindoor, the ability to remain credible is at the heart of the argument.

Kargil was a great lesson in what is sometimes called a “media war”. Both Op Snow Leopard (the Ladakh face-off) and Op Sindoor, on the other hand, took another tack, which is to shut down the enemy’s channels of information — websites, TV and video — and propagate your own. And while that may be necessary when the conflict is kinetic, or live, it can become

counter-productive when things return to normalcy. People are curious, especially when they belong to 5,000-year-old civilisations, and own historical memories around both blood-letting and reconciliation. So when Chief of Defence Staff, Gen Anil Chauhan, admitted to Bloomberg TV that India had lost a fighter jet during Op Sindoor, mere weeks after the end of the operation, the questions followed thick and fast. How many? When? How? What really happened?

Back in the day, when the world was still divided into two power blocs by the Cold War, the former Eastern Bloc had a word called “samizdat”, where everything that was banned by the state, whether newspapers or prose or poetry, was copied by hand and distributed amongst the people. Both “Ghooskhor Pandat” and Naravane’s book would qualify. Sometimes you wonder if the unfancied PDF is its modern-day version.

Aquifers in peril: Policy correction needed in Haryana

The Tribune Editorial: This is not a sudden failure but the cumulative outcome of policy choices that rewarded extraction while neglecting conservation

HARYANA’s groundwater crisis has crossed from warning to emergency. With nearly 64% of the state’s blocks now classified as overexploited, extraction far exceeds natural recharge. The situation threatens agriculture, drinking water security and economic stability. This is not a sudden failure but the cumulative outcome of policy choices that rewarded extraction while neglecting conservation. At the heart of the problem lies cropping patterns. Paddy cultivation, promoted through assured procurement and free or subsidised electricity, has locked farmers into a water-intensive cycle in a semi-arid state. Tubewells have replaced canals as the primary irrigation source, pushing aquifers beyond recovery levels. In several districts, groundwater withdrawal has reportedly reached over 130% of the annual recharge, a point that guarantees future scarcity.What makes the condition more alarming is the silent nature of groundwater depletion. Unlike floods or droughts, falling water tables do not command immediate political



attention. The costs emerge gradually — deeper borewells, higher energy consumption, saline intrusion

and, eventually, the collapse of farm viability and rural drinking water systems. Urban centres, too, are increasingly dependent on overdrawn aquifers, spreading the risk beyond agriculture.

Policy responses so far have focussed disproportionately on supply-side solutions — recharge structures, ponds and check dams — without addressing demand. Crop diversification away from paddy, rational pricing of electricity, micro-irrigation incentives and enforceable groundwater regulation must move to core policy. Equally important is decentralised governance. Groundwater is a local resource and its management requires community participation, transparent data and district-level accountability. Without empowering panchayats and users to monitor and regulate extraction, state-level targets will remain cosmetic. Unless water is treated as a finite ecological asset, today’s overexploitation will translate into tomorrow’s water drought. The window for corrective action is narrowing.

From panic to protocol : Tackling bomb scare in schools

Only with parental trust can the system shift from reflexive reaction to assessment-led response in cases of bomb scares in schools.

The bomb scares on January 28 that swept through Chandigarh schools did more than disrupt a school day; it exposed how fragile normalcy has become in the age of anonymous digital threats. Within minutes, Chandigarh’s education hub was transformed into a security grid. No explosive device was found. But the absence of a bomb did not diminish the scale of what had occurred. A single anonymous email had succeeded in paralysing the administration, displacing thousands of children, and pushing parents, teachers, and authorities into hours of panic.What unfolded in Chandigarh reflects a wider national and global pattern. Globally, school threats have risen by about 44% over the past two years, yet over 99.8% of mass-emailed threats are hoaxes, creating a paradox in which every message must still be treated as real. Reports from the Ministry of Home Affairs, NCRB classifications, state police briefings and media coverage together suggest a sharp rise since early 2024, with a roughly 300% increase over the past. Law-enforcement reports note the rise of “cluster threats”, where identical messages are sent to large numbers of schools within minutes, sharing a clear digital fingerprint and typically routed via encrypted email services and offshore, VPN-masked IP addresses, making attribution difficult.

The magnitude of this drain was also evident a few months back in India’s aviation sector, where similar hoaxes imposed a loss of about Rs 600 crore in just nine days. In schools, however, the cost is far harder to measure: it involves children; and for parents, the anxiety cannot be monetised, while the impact appears in lost instructional hours, disrupted board exams, and the logistical nightmare of evacuating tens of thousands of children simultaneously.These incidents have brought two issues into focus: how threats were handled collectively by the city administration, schools and parents, and how

communication among them shaped confusion and public anxiety. They also underscore the need to shift from a reactive to a resilient posture, with protocols drafted and enforced at the district level rather than left to individual schools. At least during sensitive periods, precaution must begin well before any threat is received, including decentralised anti-sabotage checks. International best practice supports routine pre-arrival visual sweeps of classrooms, boundary areas, footpaths



and parking zones to establish a baseline of normalcy, making genuine anomalies easier to detect during an incident.Against this backdrop, the debate over school responses to bomb threats has narrowed to two contrasting models: the reflexive ‘react-and-assess’ approach and the evidence-backed ‘assess-and-react’ framework. Research shows that react-and-assess, which triggers immediate evacuation before credibility checks, amplifies panic without improving safety. Since over 80% of school bomb threats lack operational specificity, automatic evacuations often push students into open, predictable spaces, creating crowd targets and logistical chaos, with injuries more frequently

arising from stampedes and traffic disorder than from explosives themselves.By contrast, the assess-and-react model relies on a brief, structured evaluation, conducted by school authorities in coordination with security agencies, before any large-scale movement. Evidence shows that credible threats contain actionable detail, while mass emails typically do not. Schools using assess-first protocols report fewer unnecessary evacuations, lower disruption and reduced post-incident anxiety, demonstrating that evidence-guided restraint improves both physical and psychological safety.Communication is equally critica. Research shows panic is driven less by the threat itself than by information gaps between administrations, schools and parents. Pynoos et al (2018) found that parental anxiety spikes when no official update is issued within the first 10 to 15 minutes, a reaction intensified by vague messages citing “unforeseen circumstances.” Rave Mobile Safety reports that nearly 80% of parents experience peak panic when emergency alerts lack context, triggering gate rushes, identified as the most dangerous secondary risk, where a hoax can act as bait to draw vulnerable crowds outside schools, effectively turning them into sitting targets. In Chandigarh, delayed and opaque communication drew parents to school gates, disrupted traffic and obstructed emergency response vehicles.To mitigate this, research supports a ‘strategic transparency’ approach using a two-stage alert system. Stage one is an immediate internal alert to police within minutes of a threat. Stage two consists of regular, clear updates to parents during the “Golden Hour,” the first 60 minutes, delivered through the school’s official app, explaining that a non-specific digital threat is being managed under a controlled protocol. This reduces panic-driven calls, school rushes and communication or traffic congestion,

while allowing authorities to operate without crowd pressure. Evidence further shows that post-incident feedback explaining what worked and why decisions were taken reduces residual anxiety and that situation is best managed through staggered school transport rather than chaotic gate pickups.Across research produced by the Educator’s School Safety Network, the RAND Corporation, the World Health Organisation’s psychosocial risk studies, Cornell University’s threat assessment research and guidance from allied security agencies, one consistent finding stands out: reflexive action combined with silence amplifies panic, while assessment-led response supported by clear, timely communication contains it. These bodies converge on the conclusion that proportional decision-making and information flow are as critical to safety as physical security measures themselves.In the Indian context, however, the challenge is not a lack of policing or protocol, but the social ecosystem in which those protocols operate, particularly parental expectations. Schools and administrators function within a deeply ingrained instinct to react first and demonstrate visible action to “make everyone safe”, even when the statistical probability of harm is extremely low. This instinct, shaped by collective psychology and public pressure, makes assess-and-react models difficult to sustain unless parents understand and trust the logic behind them. Without parental alignment, administrators default to immediate evacuation to avoid backlash, despite contrary evidence. The present moment is, therefore, the right time to educate parents and treat them as informed stakeholders, because only with their trust and participation can the system shift from reflexive reaction to an assessment-led response, allowing composure, rather than fear, to guide collective action.

Himachal govt trapped in economic mess, running 'lie factory': BJP State Chief

Dharamshala.(Agency)

Himachal Pradesh BJP president Dr Rajeev Bindal on Monday accused the Sukhu-led Congress government of being "trapped in an economic quagmire" after three years in power and misleading the public through what he termed a "lie factory".

Addressing a press conference here, Dr Bindal alleged that the Congress government came to power based on "fake guarantees" made during the 2022 Assembly elections, including monthly financial aid to women, large-scale job creation, and free electricity, none of which were fulfilled.

He said the government was now shifting blame onto the BJP while continuing to mislead people. Dr Bindal contrasted this with the Centre's support, claiming the Narendra Modi-led government had provided substantial financial assistance and restored Himachal's Special Category Status, boosting development.

Alleging misuse of public funds and mounting debt under the present regime, he said development had come to a standstill despite heavy borrowing. He also criticised the government for shutting institutions and halting development works, calling it a "lockdown government".

RDG closure signals financial emergency in Himachal, Vikramaditya Singh calls for unity

Shimla.(Agency)

Congress leader and PWD Minister Vikramaditya Singh described the decision to close the Revenue Deficit Grant (RDG) as the beginning of a serious financial crisis for Himachal Pradesh and urged people to join hands with the state government to face the challenge collectively.

In a social media post on Monday Mr Singh stated in a strongly worded statement that RDG closure would have far-reaching consequences for development works, education, healthcare, and basic amenities in the coming years. He cautioned that the issue goes beyond party politics and directly affects the future of every Himachali, including the security of employees and pensioners, livelihoods of farmers and labourers, employment prospects for youth, and education of children.

Calling the situation a "financial emergency," Singh asserted that Himachal, being a hilly and disaster-prone state, is constitutionally entitled to special financial protection from the Centre. He said the state government would continue to demand its rightful share through democratic and constitutional means, backed by facts, stressing that such support is a right and not a favour. At the same time, he said the government is committed to strengthening the state's own resources by fully harnessing hydropower potential, promoting tourism and horticulture, expanding the service sector, and exploring new revenue streams.

Singh underlined that strict curbs would be imposed on wasteful expenditure to ensure that every rupee is spent in the public interest.

Reassuring employees and pensioners, he said there would be no compromise on salaries, pensions, dignity, or future security. He appealed to the people to avoid rumours and despair, remain informed, and raise their voices responsibly.

"Himachal has always shown resilience in difficult times. With unity, determination, and public support, we will overcome this crisis and make the state economically stronger and self-reliant," Singh said, appealing to citizens to stand firmly with the government during this challenging phase.

Ocong guarantees exposed as Himachal faces financial crisis: Jairam Thakur

Dharmshala. (Agency)

Former Chief Minister and BJP leader and leader of opposition in the Himachal Pradesh assembly, Jairam Thakur, launched a sharp attack on the Congress leadership and the Chief Minister, questioning whether the government was unaware of the state's financial condition while making "false and unrealistic" guarantees to the people.

He said this during the party campaign at Nagrota Bagwan on Monday, that "senior Congress leaders repeatedly asserted that they had a clear roadmap, claiming they had done all necessary research and knew exactly how the promises would be fulfilled. However, the present financial crisis has exposed these claims," Thakur alleged.

He recalled that until a week ago, the Chief Minister was projecting an image of making the state the most prosperous in the country through "so-called systemic changes."

The Opposition questioned whether the Chief Minister was unaware of the real financial position of the state at that time.

Terming the situation "deeply unfortunate," Jairam Thakur said that even after serving as Chief Minister for over three years, continuing to raise hopes about fulfilling guarantees reflected a lack of seriousness and credibility. The BJP leader demanded that instead of making hollow claims, the government should come clean on the state's financial health and focus on governance and fiscal discipline.

Warring criticises IAS officers' suspension: AAP making them scapegoats for its own failure

According to sources, the state government suspended the two IAS officers on Saturday, allegedly over "a delay in procuring smartphones for Anganwadi workers under the Centre's Poshan Abhiyan".

Chandigarh . (Agency)

Punjab Congress president Amrinder Singh Raja Warring on Sunday criticised the Aam Aadmi Party (AAP) government for placing under suspension two senior IAS officers, Kamal Kishore Yadav and Jaspreet Singh, without assigning any reasons.

"It is obvious that the two officers apparently refused some illegal diktats of the AAP government," Warring was quoted in a statement issued here. "It is good that the officers have started standing up to the illegal diktats of the AAP government, which has always tried to misuse bureaucracy and police."

Warring said the AAP should have assigned reasons for suspending the officers, which it did not, apparently because there were none that would warrant such punitive action.

According to sources, the state government suspended the two IAS officers on Saturday, allegedly over "a delay in procuring smartphones for Anganwadi workers under the



Centre's Poshan Abhiyan".

The vendor selected by the government to provide smartphones had approached the court for the delay, they further said. Warring alleged that the AAP was either "trying to make the officers scapegoats for its own incompetence and failures" or was "trying to arm-twist and intimidate them and force them to do illegal things" in the last year of its tenure when its countdown had already begun.

Warring said the two officers were suspended to convey a message to others, and also that they either fall in line or face the consequences. "AAP is grossly mistaken as these intimidating tactics will only boomerang on the government, which in any case is on its way out," he said.

"It is not for the first time that the AAP has used coercive and punitive measures against its own officers, as it did this in the past, too, only to withdraw these later," the PCC president pointed out. "This reflects very badly and quite poorly on the competence of the government that it has to resort to intimidation of officers with suspension just because they apparently refused to carry out illegal orders", he remarked.

Sounding a note of caution, Warring urged the officers that they must not get intimidated as the AAP government will "desperately try to use them to do so many illegal and unacceptable things". "Stand up your ground," he urged the bureaucracy, expressing his complete solidarity against any victimisation or intimidation.

Houselisting data and housing survey: Census 2027 in Haryana to be in 2 phases

Recognising evolving lifestyles and increasing digital penetration, the notification provides for collection of data on household assets and connectivity. This includes ownership or access to radio or transistor, television, internet facilities, laptop or computer, and telephone, mobile phone or smartphone.

Chandigarh.(Agency)

The Haryana government has issued a detailed notification prescribing the scope and procedure for collection of data during the Houselisting and Housing Census in connection with the Census of India 2027. The notification has been issued by Financial Commissioner, and State Nodal Officer for Census 2027, Dr. Sumita Misra, in exercise of the powers conferred under the Census Act, 1948. Census 2027 shall be conducted in two phases, first phase i.e., Houselisting and Housing Census and the second phase i.e., Population Enumeration. Mobile Apps, Census Management and Monitoring Portal and Self Enumeration Portal for the first phase of the Census have been developed, she added. As per the

notification, all Census Officers appointed under the Census Act are authorised, within their respective local jurisdictions, to collect detailed information from all persons during the houselisting phase through prescribed census schedules. This houselisting and housing census will serve as the foundation for the population enumeration to be undertaken as part of Census 2027.

The data to be collected will include identification details such as the building number assigned by municipal or local authorities or the census number, the census house number and the household number. Information will also be gathered on the predominant materials used for the floor, walls and roof of the census house, the

principal use of the house, its physical condition and the ownership status. Census Officers will further record the number of dwelling rooms exclusively in



possession of the household.

Details relating to household composition will include the total number of persons normally residing in the household, the name and sex of the head of the

household, whether the head belongs to Scheduled Caste, Scheduled Tribe or other categories, and the number of married couples living in the household. The house listing exercise will also capture comprehensive information on basic amenities and living conditions. This will include the main source and availability of drinking water, the source of lighting, access to sanitation facilities and the type of latrine, arrangements for waste water disposal, and the availability of bathing and kitchen facilities. Information regarding LPG or PNG connections and the main fuel used for cooking will also be recorded.

Union Minister Shri Ashwini Vaishnaw inaugurates New Passenger Facilities at Guwahati Railway Station; flags off Sairang-Silchar Passenger Train Service

The Sikh Times

Maligaon, 09th February: Hon'ble Chief Minister of Mizoram, Shri Lalduhuma and Hon'ble Union Minister for Railways, Information & Broadcasting and Electronics & IT, Shri Ashwini Vaishnaw today inaugurated the New Passenger Facilities at Guwahati Railway Station, Assam and flagged off the Sairang-Silchar New Train Service. The auspicious occasion was also joined by Shri Kanad Purkayastha, Hon'ble Member of Parliament (Rajya Sabha), Assam and Shri Parimal Suklabaidya, Hon'ble Member of Parliament (Lok Sabha), Shri TBC Lalvenchunga, Hon'ble MLA, Mizoram and other dignitaries. The initiatives mark an important step towards strengthening rail connectivity and improving passenger amenities across the Northeast region. The New Passenger Facilities at Guwahati Railway Station have been developed to enhance the overall travel experience of passengers by providing clean, safe and comfortable resting facilities, including modern lounges and sleeping pods. The facility also ensures dedicated, hygienic and secure amenities for women travellers and contributes to an improved, passenger-friendly station environment in

the Northeast. The Sairang-Silchar



Passenger Train will significantly strengthen rail connectivity between Mizoram and Assam. The service will benefit the people of Silchar as well as Mizoram by improving access to education, healthcare, markets and administrative centres. It is expected to boost tourism, facilitate easier movement of goods between the two states, enable the supply of goods manufactured in Mizoram to markets in Silchar and reduce dependence on road transport, particularly in the hilly terrain. Addressing the gathering, the Hon'ble Chief Minister of Mizoram stated that the launch of the new Sairang-Silchar

train service represents a major boost to rail connectivity for Mizoram, offering passengers a reliable, comfortable and affordable travel option. He further noted that the service would promote tourism and local economic activities while improving access to education and advanced medical facilities in Silchar, thereby greatly benefiting students and patients from Mizoram. Shri Ashwini Vaishnaw, in his address, stated that extensive work is underway to improve connectivity in Assam and the entire Northeast, with several new projects being taken up and many long-pending projects already completed. He noted that over the past 11 years, nearly 1,900 kilometres of new Railway tracks have been constructed across Northeast, marking a transformational phase for rail infrastructure in the region. The Union Minister highlighted that the train service flagged off today between Silchar and Sairang adds a new dimension to the benefits being extended to the people of Mizoram and Assam. He observed that the extension of Railway connectivity to Sairang had been inaugurated a few months ago by the Hon'ble Prime Minister Shri Narendra Modi, followed by the introduction of new train services and that the Government has been receiving pos-

itive feedback from citizens regarding improved connectivity to Mizoram. Shri Vaishnaw further stated that the Hon'ble Prime Minister and the Hon'ble Finance Minister have taken a decision to bring a bullet train corridor up to Siliguri via Varanasi and Patna. He noted that this corridor opens up future possibilities for extending high-speed rail connectivity further towards Guwahati. Emphasising the long-term vision for the Northeast, the Union Minister stated that multiple Railway projects are underway which will completely transform connectivity in the region. He highlighted proposed new Railway lines from Kokrajhar to Gelephu and from Banarhat to Samtse to strengthen connectivity with Bhutan, and informed that work on the Sevak-Rangpo Railway line is progressing at a fast pace. Shri Ashwini Vaishnaw reiterated that the Hon'ble Prime Minister firmly believes in the development of Purvodaya, and in line with this vision, a historic railway budget allocation of Rs.11,486 crore has been provided for the Northeast. He stated that this enhanced allocation is accelerating the execution of several important railway projects and will play a key role in driving economic growth, mobility and integration of the region with the rest of the country.

Taking shape at Sabarmati Ashram: A throwback to Gandhi's time

Outside the five-acre area of the Sabarmati Ashram where Mahatma Gandhi and Kasturba resided, a space that promises to take one back in time is taking shape. Work on many of the 28 original buildings chosen for restoration is nearly complete, using traditional techniques. Parimal A Dabhi writes on the Rs 1,200-crore Sabarmati Ashram redevelopment project in Ahmedabad, jointly implemented by the Centre and Gujarat government.

Ahmedabad. (Agency)

In sharp contrast to the highrise concrete buildings around it, neat white lime plastered cottage-like buildings with terracotta tiled roofs, largely single-storeyed, are being restored or rebuilt in their original form. The redevelopment project of the Gandhi ashram is taking shape largely on the space on the opposite side of the present day Sabarmati Ashram in Ahmedabad. The busy motorable road through the expanded space has been closed and is soon going to be a cobblestone pathway, with heavy machines unloading bundles of granite cobblestones blocks.

The Mahatma Gandhi Sabarmati Ashram Memorial Trust (MGSAMT) is implementing the Rs 1,200-crore Sabarmati Ashram Redevelopment project, which is largely drawn from the original plan when the ashram was built in 1917 spread over 55 acres that comprised residences for

ashramvasis, prayer area, school, hostel, a guest house and so on.

The plan follows a 'concept note' drafted by the Sabarmati Ashram Preservation and Memorial Trust (SAPMT) to maintain Gandhian principles in the process.

An average tourist, who spends around one-and-a-half hours touring the five-acre space of the Gandhi Ashram under SAPMT, might have to reserve a full day to complete a seamless tour of the redeveloped 55-acre ashram.

"So much work has been done and there is so much to see in the form of restored buildings



in the redeveloped space that a visitor will have to spend at least four to five hours to visit all the places and just take a cursory look. Adding other times during the visit like

having snacks or taking pictures etc, one would need close to a full day to visit the entire Ashram," said a regular visitor.

No cement: Building materials sourced from 'kitchen' The permanent closing of the busy 800-metre stretch of the Ashram Road from Cargo Motors to Batrisi Bhavan near Ahmedabad Collector Office in November 2024 was a major development that gave the project shape and meant the city getting a new road connecting northwards through Ranip bus stop. "That closure

paved the way for visualising the ashram as a collective unit. Before that, it was divided by the road.

40 patients attempt to escape from govt de-addiction centre, guards block door

Mohali . (Agency)

Around 40 patients attempted to escape simultaneously from the Government De-addiction Centre in Sector 66, Mohali, on Sunday. According to information, the incident occurred around 3:15 pm when patients gathered at the time of medication and tried to force open a wooden door to flee.

However, security guards stationed outside quickly sensed the situation and blocked the door from outside, preventing it from opening. Meanwhile, two police personnel deployed at the centre shifted the patients towards the rear ward and locked the iron gate from outside, bringing the situation under control. The matter was later reported to the police station, and the Phase 11 police has recorded a daily diary report (DDR) in the case.

Door remained locked, preventing escape

Fortunately, the wooden door had been latched from outside, which prevented it from opening despite repeated pushing by the patients. Doctors and staff were present outside at that time. Officials said that had the door opened, the patients could have escaped and possibly caused harm while fleeing.

Staff raise security concerns, seek more police protection

Staff members at the centre said several patients are NDPS Act accused undergoing treatment and often try to escape as they do not wish to stay at the facility. They warned that such attempts can also pose a threat to staff safety. Currently, only two police personnel are deployed for security at the centre.

They added that a similar incident had occurred earlier when patients created a ruckus at night and even assaulted security guards, with two patients reportedly escaping through the roof.

Who is Lamborghini crash accused Shivam Mishra, tycoon's son linked To 2024 I-T raids?

New Delhi.(Agency)

A high-speed Lamborghini crash in Uttar Pradesh's Kanpur has once again brought Shivam Mishra and his father K K Mishra, owner of the Banshidhar Tobacco Group, into national focus, reviving attention on a business family that has figured prominently in recent controversies.

The Mishras head one of the country's major tobacco suppliers. K K Mishra leads the Kanpur-based Banshidhar Tobacco Group, a key raw material provider to several leading pan masala and tobacco brands. While rooted in Uttar Pradesh, the group's commercial presence extends across Delhi, Mumbai, Gujarat and other states.

A LEGACY BUSINESS WITH NATIONAL REACH

Established nearly 90 years ago, Banshidhar Tobacco is counted among Kanpur's oldest industrial houses. Over decades, it has emerged as a significant player in the tobacco supply chain, servicing some of the biggest names in the industry.

In recent years, Shivam Mishra has taken on a central role in the company's operations. Widely regarded as the face of its current management, he is involved in key decisions related to expansion, production and overall strategy, driving the group's national growth.

INCOME TAX RAIDS AND SUDDEN PROMINENCE

The group entered the national spotlight in March 2024 after the Income Tax Department conducted searches at more than 20 locations linked to Banshidhar Tobacco Group and its promoters.

The operation covered multiple states, including Uttar Pradesh, Delhi, Mumbai and Gujarat.

During the searches, officials claimed to have recovered large amounts of cash, documents related to luxury vehicles and high-value diamond watches from premises associated with Shivam Mishra, including his residence in Delhi. Investigators alleged

evidence of tax evasion amounting to crores of rupees and undisclosed assets, bringing Shivam Mishra widespread attention.

WHO IS SHIVAM MISHRA

Shivam Mishra is a director at Banshidhar

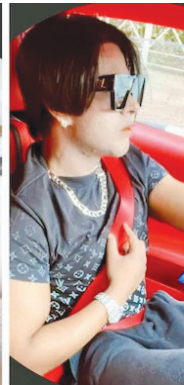
manufacturing, supply chain management and financial planning, and has played a key role in expanding the group's footprint across India.

CONTROVERSY DURING RAIDS

Another episode during the income tax action added to the controversy. Officials alleged that a licensed pistol was briefly pointed at them by Shivam at the Delhi residence before their identity was clarified and the situation brought under control. After identifying themselves as Income Tax Department officials, Shivam calmed down, putting his arm away. The incident drew considerable attention at the time.

A TASTE FOR LUXURY

Shivam Mishra is also known for a luxury-heavy lifestyle. Reports have linked him to ownership of several high-end vehicles, including Rolls-Royce, Lamborghini, Ferrari, McLaren and Porsche. He is also said to possess a collection of diamond jewellery and premium watches valued at crores of rupees.



Tobacco Private Limited and oversees the company's daily functioning. He operates between Kanpur and Delhi's Vasant Vihar area. Within the organisation, he handles

Labourer held days after biker's death in Delhi Jal Board pit

New Delhi.(Agency)

Delhi Police on Sunday apprehended a labourer from Firozabad in Uttar Pradesh in connection with the death of a 25-year-old biker who fell into an uncovered 15-foot-deep pit dug for sewer work in west Delhi's Janakpuri, officials said.

The labourer allegedly fled the spot without informing the police or emergency services. The subcontractor involved in the project has already been arrested. The labourer, identified as Yogesh, was apprehended for allegedly failing to report the incident to the authorities and for misleading the victim's family when they arrived at the spot searching for him, an officer said.

"Yogesh informed the sub-contractor, Rajesh Kumar Prajapati, about the incident during the night but did not alert the police or any emergency agency. When the victim's family reached the spot later that night, Yogesh misled them," the officer said. The duty magistrate granted one day of police custody to Prajapati for further probe, he added. According to police, an eyewitness first informed a guard stationed near the site that someone had fallen into the pit. The guard then informed Yogesh, who subsequently alerted Prajapati. However, no information was shared with the police at that time. Police were finally informed around 8 am on Friday after receiving a PCR call from a woman, by which time the biker had already died.

DCP (West) Darade Sharad Bhaskar said sub-contractor Rajesh Kumar Prajapati was arrested under Section 105 (culpable homicide) of the BNS. "Based on technical surveillance, we identified eyewitness Vipin Singh, who saw the motorcycle fall into the pit and alerted a guard," Bhaskar said.

500 new e-buses launched in Delhi, CM Rekha Gupta says 14,000 by 2028

New Delhi.(Agency)

The Delhi government on Sunday launched 500 electric buses, taking the total electric vehicle (EV) fleet of the Delhi Transport Corporation (DTC) to over 4,000, Chief Minister Rekha Gupta said. She added that the government aims to increase the total number of electric buses to 7,500 by the end of 2026 and expand the DTC fleet to 14,000 buses by 2028.

"This step will not only boost transportation and connectivity in the city but will also help reduce air pollution. These EV buses will improve air quality while



meeting the transport needs of Delhi. They are air-conditioned, low-floor buses equipped with panic buttons and other modern features," the Chief Minister said at the launch event, which was attended by BJP National President Nitin Nabin.

Gupta said that for the first time in Delhi's history, 500 electric buses had been inducted into the public transport system at one go, making the capital the city with the largest electric bus fleet in the country. She also announced the launch of a new electric bus route between Delhi and Panipat to provide safe, convenient and pollution-free travel.

Meanwhile, the Chief Minister said the Delhi government has approved a grant of Rs 1,200 crore for DTC. Of this, Rs 1,100 crore has been earmarked for payment of salaries, pensions and statutory dues of DTC employees and pensioners.

The remaining Rs 100 crore will be used for developing an advanced traffic management system and commercial EV charging infrastructure, the officials said. "The grant reflects our commitment to the dignity and financial security of DTC employees and pensioners," Gupta said, adding that the initiatives align with the government's vision of a clean, technology-driven public transport system.

Supreme Court sends Unnao rape convict Kuldeep Sengar back to High Court

New Delhi.(Agency)

The Supreme Court on Monday asked the Delhi High Court to give an "out-of-turn" hearing to former Uttar Pradesh MLA Kuldeep Singh Sengar's appeal against his conviction and 10-year sentence in the custodial death case of the Unnao rape victim's father, and said the matter should be decided within three months.

The Court directed that the victim's appeal seeking enhancement of Sengar's sentence be heard together with his appeal.

A Supreme Court bench comprising Chief Justice of India Surya Kant, Justice Jyomalya Bagchi and Justice N V Anjaria heard a petition filed by former MLA Kuldeep Singh Sengar

challenging the Delhi High Court's January 19 order refusing to suspend his sentence in the custodial death case.



Senior Advocate Siddharth Dave, appearing for Sengar, submitted that he has already served 7 years and 7 months of actual imprisonment out of the 10-year sentence. Solicitor General Tushar Mehta, representing the CBI, informed

the court that the main appeal against Sengar's conviction is listed for hearing on February 11, 2026, and suggested it be taken up expeditiously on an out-of-turn basis.

Advocate Mahmood Pracha, appearing for the victim, submitted that an appeal has been filed seeking conversion of Sengar's conviction from Section 304 IPC to Section 302, which would entail enhancement of the sentence to life imprisonment.

Senior Advocate Siddharth Dave argued that in cases involving a fixed-term sentence, suspension of the sentence during the pendency of an appeal is generally the norm. However, the bench observed that Sengar is already serving a life sentence in a separate case related to the rape of the Unnao girl.

Student shoots classmate dead, then turns gun on himself at Punjab college

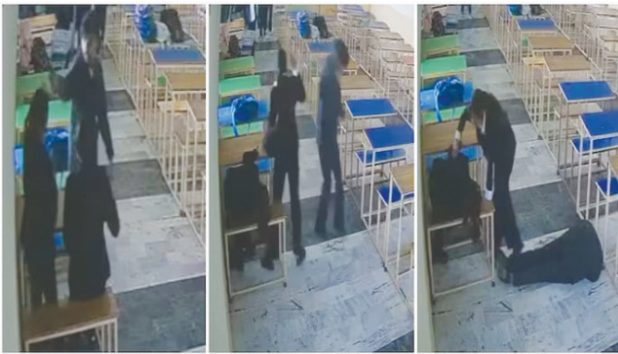
New Delhi.(Agency)

A student shot and killed his woman classmate at a college in Punjab's Tarn Taran district on Monday before turning the gun on himself. The shooting was captured on the classroom's CCTV camera.

The incident occurred at Mai Bhago Law College in Usma. The shooter was identified as Prince Raj, a resident of Mallian village, while the woman was identified as Sandeep Kaur, of Naushehra Pannuan. Kaur died on the spot, while Prince Raj is critical and undergoing treatment, a senior police official said.

CCTV footage shows Prince Raj walking into the classroom with a bag slung over his back. He approaches Kaur and another woman classmate, speaking

briefly with them. The three then move to seats at the back of the classroom and continued talking.



Moments later, the video shows Prince Raj abruptly standing up and opening his bag with his back to the two women. He pulls out a gun, turns around and shoots Kaur point-blank. Kaur collapses to the floor as the other classmate recoils in

shock. Prince Raj then puts the gun to his temple and fires, crumpling to the ground. Students inside the classroom can be seen panicking and running out of the room immediately after the shots were fired, the footage shows.

A senior police official said the incident transpired just as classes were about to begin. Sandeep Kaur's body was sent for post-mortem. The motive behind the shooting was not immediately known. Senior police officials said footage from CCTV cameras is being examined as part of the investigation.

Sandeep Kaur's mother questioned how Prince Raj was allowed to walk into the college with a gun. She demanded the strictest action be taken against him. Further details are awaited.

hoaxes, officials said. "A total of 15 schools received bomb threats today. Fire service teams immediately reached the premises. Checking is underway," a DFS official said.

A screenshot of the mail doing rounds on the social media read, "Delhi will become Khalistan. In memory of Afzal Guru." The mail also threatened of a blast in the Parliament on February 13 at 1.11 pm.

The schools included Loreto Convent School in Delhi Cantonment, Cambridge School, Srinivasपुरi in South Delhi, Venkateshwar School, Rohini in North West Delhi, CM School and Bal Bharati School in Rohini, Cambridge School, New Friends Colony in South Delhi, The Indian School, Sadiq Nagar in South Delhi and DTA School, INA.

The schools were evacuated as a precautionary measure. Bomb detection and disposal squads, along with dog squads, are carrying out extensive searches.

Senior police officers said cyber teams have been pressed into service to trace the origin of the email, while security arrangements across sensitive locations in the capital have been reviewed. No suspicious object has been recovered so far from any of the school premises, officials said, adding that searches were continuing and further details were awaited.



Ghaziabad sisters' suicide: Father's lies about third wife surface amid probe

New Delhi.(Agency)

The investigation into the deaths of three minor sisters who jumped from the ninth floor of a high-rise in Ghaziabad is getting murkier, with police uncovering contradictions in their father's statements, unclear marital ties, and troubling details about the children's lives at home and school.

With every round of questioning, police say new details are emerging about the girls' father, Chetan Kumar, his three marriages, shifting statements, money troubles and the life the children were living behind closed doors.

A WOMAN CALLED TINA, AND TWO DIFFERENT STORIES

Chetan told police that in 2018 he worked in Ghaziabad arranging credit card services. During that time, he hired a young woman named Tina. According to police sources, the two later grew close and Chetan married her, making Tina his third wife.

Tina is believed to be around 22 years old

and has a three-year-old daughter with him. What has puzzled investigators is that Chetan had earlier told police that Tina was not his wife but his sister-in-law. This contradiction has now become a key part of the probe.

THREE MARRIAGES, AND A TIMELINE THAT DOES NOT FIT

Chetan has admitted that he married Sujata in 2010 and Hina in 2013. But police say the timeline raises questions. His eldest daughter from Sujata is 16 years old, which casts doubt on his claim that he married again because his first marriage did not result in children.

Police are now trying to verify the sequence of marriages through documents. This has been difficult, as both Sujata and Hina are illiterate and have been unable to provide marriage dates or paperwork.

A THREE-BEDROOM FLAT, BUT ONE ROOM FOR EVERYONE

Another detail that has drawn police attention is the family's living arrangement.

It was part of their usual routine. Investigators say this explanation has raised more questions than it has answered.

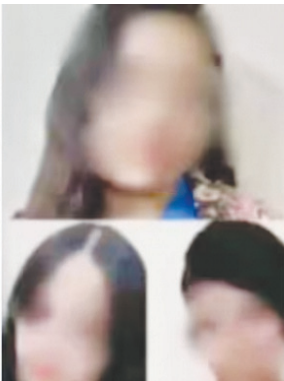
SCHOOL STOPPED, CHILDHOOD CUT SHORT

Police questioning has also revealed that the girls had not gone to school for several years. The family has blamed financial hardship for stopping their education.

Officers are now trying to find out which schools the girls attended earlier, how much they studied and what led them to drop out. Police will also check claims that the girls were weak in their studies or failing repeatedly.

PHONES SOLD, SILENCE LEFT BEHIND

Police have found that the girls had two mobile phones earlier. Chetan sold both due to debt, one around six months ago and the other just 15 days before the incident.



NEWS BOX

Like Sachin Tendulkar, fast-track Vaibhav Sooryavanshi to Team India: Shashi Tharoor

NEW DELHI. (Agency)
After Vaibhav Sooryavanshi’s towering hundred in the U19 World Cup final against England, Congress MP Shashi Tharoor has advocated fast-tracking the prodigious batter into the senior Indian side. Tharoor took to X to state that Vaibhav is a generational talent and drew parallels with legendary Sachin Tendulkar.Sachin, back in the late 1980s, was himself fast-tracked into the Indian team after showing extraordinary potential on the maidans of Mumbai. Vaibhav Sooryavanshi, on the other hand, made his name through age-group cricket before announcing himself in spectacular fashion with a remarkable debut season in the 2025 Indian Premier League.Vaibhav Sooryavanshi deserves to be fast-tracked into higher honours. The last time we had a 14-year-old genius at the crease, his name was Sachin Tendulkar. And we didn’t keep him waiting long,” Tharoor wrote on X while reacting to an advertisement featuring the young batter.

U19 Final: Vaibhav’s Superhuman Innings
Fourteen-year-old Vaibhav Sooryavanshi rose to the occasion for India in the U19 World Cup final. Batting on a testy pitch in Harare, Vaibhav weathered the early spells from



England’s fast bowlers before responding with breathtaking shot-making of his own.The left-hander tore into the English spinners around the end of the first powerplay and maintained the momentum for the remainder of his innings. He brought up his century in just 55 balls and soon surged to 175 off 80 deliveries before finally being dismissed.Vaibhav’s extraordinary knock propelled India to a record total of 411 in a U19 World Cup final, a target that the Ayush Mhatre-led side went on to defend successfully.

Sachin Tendulkar’s Fast-Tracking to Team India
Sachin Tendulkar’s rise to the Indian national team remains one of the most remarkable fast-tracks in cricket history. Born in 1973, Tendulkar was just 16 when he was selected for India’s tour of Pakistan in 1989, an age when most cricketers are still finding their feet in junior cricket. What set him apart was not only prodigious talent, but an uncommon composure that convinced selectors he was ready for the highest level.

March of the underdogs: How associate nations are adding flair to World Cup

NEW DELHI. (Agency)
On the field, it came down to a last-ball shoot out. In our minds, it came down to the oldest rivalry in storytelling.On Sunday, England were defending 184 against Nepal in their opening T20 World Cup match. The Himalayan Kingdom needed six off the last ball. Sam Curran had the ball. Lokesh Bam had the bat. Karan KC was at the other hand.Sam vs Bam. David vs Goliath. Wham Bam, Good night Sam? The Wankhede crowd held its breath, and a question.In 2024, David had defied expectations. Nepal had lost to South Africa by just one run. Will the underdog win today?The signs till the last over were promising. Jofra Archer, Luke Wood and Adil Rashid had been beaten out of shape by Nepal’s batters. Just 10 were needed. But Curran’s low yorkers held their shape.When the final delivery thudded into the fielder’s hands at deep cover, the entire



Wankhede could hear England exhale. England escaped by four runs, the scoreboard said defeat. But the stadium, the analysts, and the cricketing world knew better.

Something had shifted.

That over, those six balls, was the moment the T20 World Cup stopped being a tournament about favourites and became a story about disruption.THE DISRUPTION

The first week of the T20 World Cup has shattered one of cricket’s oldest assumptions: that there are minnows in international cricket. As Namibia captain Gerhard Erasmus declared, it is high time the tags Associate and minnows were removed.In a tournament featuring 10 Associate nations, teams like Nepal, USA, and Netherlands have delivered performances that blur the line between established powers and emerging forces. All of them came within striking distance against England, India and Pakistan, losing only because of dropped catches, or defeat-defying brilliance of Curran and Suryakumar Yadav.

ROM YAWN TO YARN
When the tournament draw was announced, featuring 10 Associate nations.

Liverpool's Slot slams referee for Szoboszlai red-card vs City: Where's the rule book

Liverpool boss Arne Slot slammed the match officials after Dominik Szoboszlai's late red card in the chaotic 2-1 defeat to Manchester City at Anfield. Slot instead highlighted Marc Guehi's foul on Mohamed Salah.

NEW DELHI. (Agency)
Liverpool head coach Arne Slot hit out at the match officials after Dominik Szoboszlai was shown a late red card in the dramatic closing stages of Manchester City’s 2-1 comeback win over the Reds at Anfield. The defeat dented Liverpool’s push for a Champions League spot, while City’s victory brought them within six points of Arsenal at the top of the Premier League table.The flashpoint came in stoppage time when Szoboszlai was sent off following VAR intervention. Speaking at the post-match press conference, Slot refused to dwell on the Hungarian’s dismissal and instead pointed to an earlier incident involving Mohamed Salah as the bigger talking point.

“That isn’t the incident we should talk about,”



Slot said. “Maybe he should have left it for a goal as it is, but if that is the rule that is what we have to accept.”If there is any incident we should talk about, it’s when Mo Salah is one on one with the goalkeeper. Anyone who has been to this stadium in the last seven or eight years, that is a goal for Salah. Once again, the referee decides not in our favour. They have to do their job.”The incident Slot heated up about came when Liverpool appealed for a red card after Marc Guehi pulled down Salah outside the box as the forward surged

towards goal. Pawson awarded only a yellow card, with VAR confirming the decision as there was deemed to be a covering defender. Why did Szoboszlai get a red-card vs City?Szoboszlai’s red card arrived in the 90th+10 minute with Liverpool chasing a late equaliser and Alisson Becker pushing upfield. Manchester City substitute Rayan Cherki struck a long-range effort towards an empty net, with Erling Haaland racing clear to retrieve the loose ball.Szoboszlai pulled Haaland back in an attempt to stop him, and

while Pawson initially allowed play to continue and awarded the goal, VAR overturned the decision. The goal was disallowed and Szoboszlai was sent off for denial of a clear goalscoring opportunity.

What did Man City and Haaland say?Haaland admitted he felt sympathy for the Liverpool midfielder, suggesting the outcome was harsh.“Of course, the referee had to follow the rules but this will give him three games,” Haaland said. “In the end I feel bad for him because he gets three games.”Just give the goal, don’t give a red card. Simple as that. It’s the rules and how it is.”Manchester City manager Pep Guardiola also questioned the decision-making, arguing the officials could have simply allowed the goal to stand.“We won the game and now Szoboszlai cannot play,” Guardiola said. “I know he pulled him, but many pulls are there in a game where the referee says ‘play on’, ‘play on’, ‘play on’?”

“So give a goal, 3-1, Szoboszlai can play and we are happy.”City were also awarded a penalty after Alisson clattered into Matheus Nunes, a call that was again checked and upheld by VAR.Ultimately, City’s 2-1 win reshaped the title race at the top, while Liverpool’s loss leaves them sixth, five points off the Champions League places.

ICC meeting with Pak done, Shehbaz Sharif to decide on India match: Report

NEW DELHI. (Agency)
The Pakistan Cricket Board is reportedly set to clarify its stance on the proposed boycott of its T20 World Cup 2026 match against India within the next 24 hours, following a marathon meeting with senior ICC officials in Lahore. With the mega India vs Pakistan, T20 World Cup group-stage match on February 15 just around the corner, the issue has quickly turned into one of the biggest talking points in world cricket.The discussions took place at Lahore’s Gaddafi Stadium and stretched beyond five hours, involving PCB chairman Mohsin Naqvi, ICC Deputy Chairman Imran Khwaja, and Bangladesh Cricket Board president Aminul Islam. The urgency is obvious, with the ICC keen to avoid a situation where the tournament’s most high-profile fixture is left hanging in uncertainty.

According to reports, the PCB is now expected to consult Pakistan’s federal government before taking a final call. Officials believe the next 24 hours could prove decisive, as the board weighs both political direction and the wider consequences of stepping away from cricket’s most watched rivalry. Naqvi is also likely to address a press conference today, with clarity expected soon after.What was the ICC-PCB meeting

about?
At the heart of the Lahore meeting was Pakistan’s decision to skip its scheduled group match against India on February 15 in



Colombo. The boycott announcement, made on February 2 with the World Cup less than a week away, escalated tensions and forced the ICC into urgent negotiations.

Bangladesh’s presence in the talks added another layer. BCB President, Aminul Islam, had landed in Lahore just hours before the meeting, signalling that Bangladesh and Pakistan have found common ground as the ICC works to broker a compromise. Sources told India Today that both boards have aligned their positions during these discussions.

The ICC’s primary focus has been to prevent the situation from spiralling into a full-

blown crisis, one that could impact scheduling, governance, and the commercial structure of the tournament.

Naqvi, meanwhile, is set to brief Prime Minister Shehbaz Sharif on the matters discussed, underlining just how significant the decision has become beyond cricket alone.

Why does ICC want an IND vs PAK match at T20 World Cup?
Simply put, no fixture in cricket comes close to India vs Pakistan in terms of global attention and financial value. It is the sport’s biggest revenue driver, powering broadcast rights, sponsorship deals, advertising interest, and worldwide viewership.Broadcasters pay a premium largely because marquee games like this are guaranteed audience magnets. If Pakistan were to withdraw, the ICC’s broadcast package would immediately lose value, creating a knock-on effect across the tournament’s finances.The effect will stretch out in problematic extent, as reduced revenues would eventually affect annual payouts to member boards, including Pakistan, Bangladesh, and even India.With the clock ticking and the World Cup already underway, the next 24 hours could shape whether cricket’s fiercest rivalry takes centre stage or becomes the biggest absentee of the tournament.

Italy opt to bowl against Scotland on T20 World Cup debut



NEW DELHI. (Agency)
Italy skipper Wayne Madsen won the toss and opted to bowl against Scotland in a T20 World Cup match at the Eden Gardens here on Monday.Italy are making their World Cup debut and Madsen said his team was looking to "enjoy" the contest and "express themselves" on the big stage.

Scotland captain Richie Berrington made one change to the side that lost to the West Indies in the opener, bringing in Brad Wheal in place of Safyaan Sharif.Teams: Italy: Anthony Mosca, Justin Mosca, JJ Smuts, Wayne Madsen (c), Harry Manenti, Ben Manenti, Grant Stewart, Gian-Piero Meade (wk), Marcus Campopiano, Crishan Kalugamage, Ali Hasan.

Scotland: George Munsey, Michael Jones, Brandon McMullen, Richie Berrington (c), Tom Bruce, Matthew Cross (wk), Mark Watt, Michael Leask, Oliver Davidson, Brad Wheal, Brad Currie.



to stabilise a fracture reported in her left leg," the Ca' Foncello hospital said in a statement.

The U.S. Ski Team said Vonn was "in stable condition and in good hands with a team of American and Italian physicians."

"She'll be OK, but it's going to be a bit of a process," said Anouk Patty, chief of sport for U.S. Ski and Snowboard. "This sport's brutal and people need to remember when they're watching (that) these athletes are throwing themselves down a mountain and going really, really fast."Breezy Johnson, Vonn's teammate, became only the second American woman to win the Olympic downhill after Vonn did it 16 years ago. The 30-year-old Johnson held off Emma Aicher of Germany and Italy's Sofia Goggia on a bittersweet day for the team.

Who is Dhakshineswar Suresh India's Davis Cup star who left Netherlands stunned

Dhakshineswar Suresh announced himself as India's newest Davis Cup hero, sweeping all three rubbers against the Netherlands. The 25-year-old's stunning weekend powered India into Qualifiers Round 2 for the first time since 2019.

New Delhi, (Agency)
Dhakshineswar Suresh was not supposed to be the headline act of India’s Davis Cup weekend. Tennis, after all, loves its rankings, its familiar names, its predictable scripts. And yet, by Sunday evening, the 25-year-old had flipped the entire tie on its head and walked away as the player everyone was talking about.

India’s World Group I clash against the Netherlands had the feel of a tricky test, the kind of tie where you hope to hang in and maybe steal it late. Instead, it turned into a stage for one man’s breakout. Suresh, known affectionately as “DK”, produced a performance that belonged to the Davis Cup’s greatest hits.He won all three rubbers he played. Both singles matches, plus the doubles alongside Yuki Bhambri. That clean sweep powered India to a memorable 3-2 victory and booked their place in Qualifiers Round 2, a milestone the team has not reached since the Davis Cup adopted its new format in 2019.He makes us feel mortal," Bhambri said about Suresh after the crowning moment.The defining moment arrived in the decisive fifth rubber. With the tie on a knife-edge, DK faced Guy de Ouden and played with remarkable calm, taking it 6-4, 7-6(4). When the final forehand landed, he dropped flat on his back, equal parts exhausted and relieved, before being mobbed by teammates who knew they had just witnessed something special.Who is

Dhakshineswar Suresh?
So who exactly is this new Indian Davis Cup hero who left the Netherlands stunned? Dhakshineswar Suresh is a 6-foot-5 right-hander from Madurai, Tamil Nadu, and his rise has taken a slightly different route



compared to the traditional Indian tennis pathway. While India’s Davis Cup history often brings up images of crafty volleyers and soft-handed net play, DK looks every bit like a modern power-baseliners.His game is

built around a booming serve, heavy forehands, and the ability to dictate rallies from the back of the court. When he finds his rhythm, the angles he creates off his first delivery can make returning feel like a guessing game.What makes his story even more interesting is where he was shaped. DK is very much a product of the American college tennis system, a route that has quietly become a launching pad for several emerging players. He first made his mark at Georgia Gwinnett College, winning multiple NAIA titles and developing a reputation as someone who thrives in big-match situations.

What Dhakshineswar Suresh's early career looked like

From there, he stepped up to NCAA Division I tennis with Wake Forest University, one of the strongest programmes in the United States. The grind of college tennis, with its relentless schedule and team-driven pressure, helped sharpen both his physical base and his temperament.

Adani Energy secures Japanese funding for 6,000 MW green power project

Mumbai.(Agency)
Adani Energy Solutions Ltd (AESL) has raised long-term funding from a group of Japanese banks for its flagship high-voltage direct current (HVDC) transmission project, the company said in a press release. The project is designed as a green evacuation corridor to support the growing movement of renewable power across northern India. The HVDC project will play a vital role in evacuating renewable energy from Rajasthan, one of India's most solar-rich states, and feeding it into the national grid. This will help ensure that green power generated in remote regions can reach areas with high electricity demand. Built as a ±800 kV HVDC system, the corridor will have an evacuation capacity of 6,000 megawatts (MW). Spanning about 950 km, it will connect Bhadla in Rajasthan to Fatehpur in Uttar Pradesh. The project is scheduled to be commissioned by 2029. Once operational, the transmission link is expected to become a major green power artery, helping integrate large volumes of renewable energy while improving grid stability for energy-intensive cities and industrial hubs in northern India. Kandarp Patel, Chief Executive Officer (CEO), AESL, said, “This project marks a defining step in building India's green transmission backbone. The continued support from our Japanese partners -- including leading banks and Hitachi -- reflects the depth of the India-Japan partnership and our shared commitment to enabling a sustainable energy future...”

Adani Group's clean energy ecosystem
The transmission asset is part of the Adani Group's broader clean energy platform. Rajasthan remains a key generation base for Adani Green Energy Limited (AGEL), whose renewable projects already supply power to AESL's subsidiary, Adani Electricity Mumbai Limited (AEML), the press release said. AEML currently sources over 40 per cent of its electricity from renewable energy, placing Mumbai among the world's major cities with significant green power usage. India-Japan collaboration
The funding has been led by Japanese banks MUFG Bank Ltd and Sumitomo Mitsui Banking Corporation (SMBC).

Gold price prediction today: Will gold prices continue to be volatile in the near term Check outlook

New Delhi.(Agency)
Gold price prediction today: Gold prices are likely to remain volatile this week, says Manav Modi, Senior Analyst, Commodity Research at Motilal Oswal Financial Services Ltd. The expert shares his outlook for gold prices in the near term:
Gold and silver witnessed another volatile yet constructive last week, with prices rebounding sharply after aggressive liquidation at the start of this month, as forced unwinding eased and value buying emerged across both metals. The earlier correction—triggered by a sharp dollar rebound, shifting Fed expectations, easing geopolitical risk premiums and heavy speculative positioning—appears to have run its course for now, allowing bullion to stabilise and recover.
Gold rebounded decisively from the ₹141,000 zone, forming a clear V-shaped recovery on daily charts, while prices continue to sustain well above the key momentum pivot of ₹138,000, keeping the broader trend positive. Bollinger Bands, which had compressed during the correction, have begun to expand again with prices moving towards the upper band, signalling a revival in directional strength supported by improving volumes.
Immediate support for gold is seen near ₹150,000 followed by ₹143,000, while the earlier target of ₹155,000 has been achieved; any sustained close above this level could open the path towards ₹165,000 and ₹171,000 from a short to medium-term perspective.Despite a relatively firm dollar and lingering policy uncertainty, safe-haven demand remains underpinned by central-bank buying, renewed geopolitical and fiscal concerns. Domestically, a rebound in USDINR from recent lows has lent support to MCX prices.

Cuba halting airline refueling as US punishment takes toll

New Delhi.(Agency)
Cuba has warned airlines it is suspending jet fuel supplies for a month because of an energy crisis prompted by the US attack on Venezuela, an official at a European carrier said Sunday.
Cuba has told carriers serving the communist-run island that starting midnight Monday into Tuesday they cannot refuel there, the official told AFP on condition of anonymity.Cuba is reeling from a US-ordered halt in oil shipments from Venezuela after Amrican troops captured Nicolas Maduro.
Planes covering long-distance flights from Cuba will now have to stop somewhere after leaving the island to get more jet fuel, this official quoted Cuban aviation officials as saying.Air France told AFP its planes would stop somewhere else in the Caribbean to refuel.The Cuban government on Friday announced emergency measures to address the island's energy crisis, including a four-day work week for state-owned companies and fuel sale restrictions.The belt tightening measures include a reduction in bus and train services between provinces and the closure of certain tourist establishments.School days will also be made shorter and universities will relax requirements on in-person attendance.
Washington has increased pressure on Cuba's communist government in recent weeks.
The United States cut off oil deliveries from Havana's key ally Venezuela following its ouster of Maduro in early January.President Donald Trump also signed an executive order allowing his country to impose tariffs on countries selling oil to Havana.

Stock markets trade higher in early trade tracking rally in Asian peers

The 30-share BSE Sensex climbed 441.77 points, or 0.53 per cent, to 84,022.17 in the morning trade. The 50-share NSE Nifty rose 129 points, or 0.50 per cent, to 25,822.70.

Mumbai.(Agency)
Equity benchmark indices Sensex and Nifty opened on a positive note on Monday amid foreign fund inflows, a rally in Asian markets and optimism following a fresh trade agreement between India and the US.The 30-share BSE Sensex climbed 441.77 points, or 0.53 per cent, to 84,022.17 in the morning trade. The 50-share NSE Nifty rose 129 points, or 0.50 per cent, to 25,822.70. Among the 30-share Sensex constituents, State Bank of India, Titan, Eternal, Kotak Mahindra Bank, Bharat Electronics Ltd, Tata Steel, Sun Pharmaceuticals, Larsen & Toubro, Adani Ports, IndiGo, Reliance

Industries and Bharti Airtel were the gainers.On the other hand, PowerGrid, ITC, Hindustan Unilever, Bajaj Finance, Trent, Infosys, ICICI Bank, Axis Bank, NTPC, Tech Mahindra, Tata Consultancy Services, HDFC Bank were among the laggards.Foreign institutional investors bought equities worth Rs 1,950.77 crore on Friday, according to exchange data. "A big positive for the market is that FIIs who were sustained sellers in the market have bought in the cash market in three out of the last four trading days. The fact that the derivatives market continues to be heavily net short might impart resilience to the market, on expectations of short covering," VK Vijayakumar, Chief Investment Strategist, Geojit Investments Ltd, said.He added that the recent 'Anthropic shock' will continue to impact sentiments in the IT sector. On the contrary, banking stocks are likely to gather strength on news of improving credit growth, which will have positive fall out for GDP growth and corporate



earnings in FY27.In Asian markets, Japan's Nikkei 225, South Korea's Kospi, Shanghai's SSE Composite index and Hong Kong's Hang Seng index trading higher.Devarsh Vakil, Head of Prime Research, HDFC Securities said Japan's ruling Liberal Democratic Party, led by Sanae Takaichi secured a decisive victory pushing the Nikkei to record highs. He noted that Indian equities stand to gain as Japanese capital pivots away from China under Takaichi's "Economic Security" policy, with billions in FDI expected to flow into Indian

infrastructure and technology sectors, he said.Vakil further said India and the US on Saturday reached an interim trade agreement ending their ten-month tariff war, with Washington reducing tariffs on Indian goods from 50 per cent to 18 per cent.India successfully protected sensitive agricultural sectors like dairy while committing to purchase USD 500 billion in US goods over five years, focusing on energy, aircraft, and defence technology.The deal strategically integrates India into the US-led "Pax Silica" initiative for critical minerals and AI supply chains, positioning India as a counterweight to China in the Indo-Pacific, he added. US markets ended more than 2 per cent higher on Friday. Brent crude, the global oil benchmark, declined 0.94 per cent, to USD 67.41 per barrel.On Friday, the 30-share BSE Sensex advanced 266.47 points to settle at 83,580.40, while the NSE Nifty climbed 50.90 points to end at 25,693.70.

Why Aadhaar biometrics locking matters How to do it in just few simple steps Explained

New Delhi.(Agency)
The Unique Identification Authority of India (UIDAI) gives Aadhaar card holder the facility for Biometric Locking and Unlocking. It is a service that allows an Aadhaar card holder to lock and temporarily unlock their biometrics. What happens with Biometric Locking? Once the biometric locking service is availed, fingerprint, iris and Face as a biometric modality will be locked. Aadhaar holder will not be able to perform the Aadhaar authentication using the biometric modalities thereafter.Locked Biometrics confirms that Aadhaar holder will not



be able to use Biometrics (fingerprints/iris/Face) for authentication, it is a safety feature to stop any kind of biometric authentication. It also ensures that any entity by any means cannot perform biometric based Aadhaar authentication for that Aadhaar holder.Once Aadhaar number holder enables Biometric Locking system their biometric remains locked till the Aadhaar Holder choses to either Unlock it (which is temporary) or Disable the Locking system. How can biometric unlock be done? The biometric unlock can be done by Aadhaar card holder either by visiting UIDAI website, enrolment centre, Aadhaar Seva Kendra(ASK), through m-Aadhaar.It must be noted that registered Mobile Number is essential to avail biometric unlock service. In case your mobile number is not registered with Aadhaar visit the nearest Enrolment Centre/Mobile Update End Point.Why Aadhaar biometrics locking matters? Aadhaar number holders who have registered mobile number may lock their biometrics. This facility aims to strengthen privacy and confidentiality of Aadhaar number holder's Biometrics Data. After locking biometrics if a UID is used for invoking any of the Authentication services using a biometric modality (Fingerprint/Iris/Face) a specific error code '330' indicating biometrics are locked will be displayed and the entity will not be able to perform the biometric authentication.

SBI share price jumps 6% to hit 52-week high. Here's why and if you should buy

New Delhi.(Agency)
Shares of State Bank of India rose sharply on Monday, jumping over 6% to hit a fresh 52-week high of Rs 1,136.85. The stock was trading at Rs 1,130.90, up Rs 64.50 or 6.05% from the previous close of Rs 1,066.40 as oif 10:10 am.

With this move, SBI emerged as the top gainer on Sensex in early trade and recorded its biggest single-day gain since June 2024. The rally came after the bank reported strong third-quarter results, which were better than market expectations.SBI shares have been on a steady rise over the past year. The stock has gained 7.54% in the last five trading sessions and 13.04% over the past one month. Over six months, the shares are up 37.35%, while the one-year gain stands at 53.50%.During Monday's session, the stock opened at Rs 1,120, touched a high of Rs 1,136.85 and a low of Rs 1,100.60. The volume-weighted average price for the day was Rs 1,126.26. The stock is now trading close to its upper price band of Rs 1,173, while the lower price band

stands at Rs 959.80. WHY SBI SHARES ROSE TODAY

The main reason behind the sharp rise was SBI's strong performance in the December quarter. The bank reported a 24% growth in net profit, beating



market estimates. It also outperformed large private sector banks such as ICICI Bank and HDFC Bank in loan growth during the quarter.SBI also raised its guidance for the next financial year, which added to investor confidence. Analysts said this showed better visibility on growth and earnings at a

time when concerns remain around credit growth in the banking sector. CLSA said sequential loan growth at SBI was much better than other public sector banks as well as large private banks. This pointed to stronger demand and better execution by the bank.

CITI said margins are expected to remain at or above 3%. It added that disciplined lending practices, along with recoveries, should support healthy asset quality in the coming quarters. Nuvama noted that SBI's core earnings have been stronger than private banks for the third straight quarter. It highlighted stable net interest margins, loan growth higher than the sector average and strong fee income as key positives.Bernstein said the combination of strong growth, improved margins and better asset quality has kept return on assets above the 1% mark and return on equity above 20%.

How is the digital shift changing UAE real estate for investors

New Delhi.(Agency)
The UAE real estate market has long been defined by speed, scale, and global appeal. What has changed in recent years is how demand is formed and validated.Investor decisions are now increasingly shaped upstream through digital discovery, data-led targeting, and algorithmic visibility well before a site visit or broker engagement occurs. Search behaviour, platform recommendations, virtual property experiences, and digitally surfaced trust signals have become central to how capital flows into the market. FROM PAPERWORK TO PLATFORMS
Real estate transactions in the UAE have rapidly moved from manual processes to digital-first systems. Government-

backed platforms now allow buyers to verify property ownership, register transactions, and complete transfers online.In Dubai alone, more than 90% of real estate transactions are processed digitally, significantly reducing processing time and minimising fraud risk.This digitisation has supported record-breaking activity. According to publicly available market data, Dubai has consistently reported hundreds of thousands of property transactions annually, with transaction values running into hundreds of billions of dirhams in recent years. For investors, particularly international buyers, this means faster deal execution, clearer audit trails, and reduced dependency on intermediaries. DATA IS BECOMING THE NEW

ASSETOne of the most important changes is how data now informs decision-making. Investors no longer rely solely on broker insights or historical averages.Digital dashboards provide real-time visibility into pricing trends, rental yields, demand by neighborhood, and future supply pipelines.Prime residential areas in the UAE continue to offer rental yields averaging between 5% and 8%, placing the region among the more competitive global real estate markets.Beyond yield, platforms increasingly capture intent data, what investors search for, compare, and shortlist before engaging.From a digital marketing perspective, this has transformed real estate into a demand-led funnel rather than a purely broker-driven process.

How Norway turned oil into a \$2 trillion fund that may never run out

Norway is more often known as one of the happiest countries in the world which has the best Northern Lights, not as a financial powerhouse. Yet behind this image of calm and comfort sits one of the most powerful financial institutions on the planet.

New Delhi.(Agency)
When people think of Norway, they usually picture snow-covered landscapes, long winters, fjords, the Northern Lights dancing across dark skies, and stories of Vikings. Norway is more often known as one of the happiest countries in the world, not as a financial powerhouse. Yet behind this image of calm and comfort sits one of the most powerful financial institutions on the planet.Norway discovered oil in the North Sea in 1969, the country faced a question that many resource-rich nations struggle with. How should sudden wealth be used without damaging the economy or short-changing future generations?

Norway's answer was not speed or scale, but restraint. Over time, that choice led to the creation of a financial institution that now stands among the most powerful investors in the world.Today, the Government Pension Fund Global is worth more than 21.2 trillion Norwegian kroner, or over \$2 trillion, which is almost half of India's GDP.It is not just a store of oil money. It is a long-term financial engine designed to support the Norwegian economy long after oil production fades. WHY THE FUND WAS CREATED
Oil revenues transformed Norway's economy quickly after the discovery of large offshore reserves. Growth accelerated, and state income rose sharply. But policymakers were also aware of the risks. Oil prices are volatile, and oil itself is a finite resource.To avoid sharp swings in the economy and protect national wealth, Norway decided early that oil income should be used cautiously. In 1990, parliament passed legislation to establish what later became the Government Pension Fund Global.The first transfer into the fund was made in



1996, once the government began running consistent surpluses from petroleum revenues.The goal was clear. Oil wealth would be saved and invested so that both present and future generations could benefit, even after oil and gas production declines. WHY THE MONEY IS INVESTED OUTSIDE NORWAY
A key decision was to invest the fund entirely abroad. This helped prevent excessive spending at home and reduced pressure on prices, wages, and the currency.As a result, the fund evolved into a global investor. As of the end of 2025, it had investments across 68 countries and

more than 10,200 individual holdings.The fund now owns close to 1.5 percent of all shares in the world's listed companies, giving it exposure to global growth rather than domestic cycles alone. WHAT THE FUND OWNS TODAY
Equities form the backbone of the fund. Shares account for about 71 percent of its total value, worth more than 15.1 trillion Norwegian kroner.These equity investments span roughly 7,200 companies across 60 countries, giving the fund small stakes in businesses across sectors and regions. Fixed income investments make up around 26.5 percent of the portfolio, valued at about 5.6 trillion Norwegian kroner. These include bonds issued by governments and companies in 48 countries, providing steady income and lower risk compared to equities.The fund also owns real assets. It holds 1,389 real estate investments across 14 countries, valued at roughly 372 billion Norwegian kroner. In addition, it has invested in renewable energy infrastructure projects in five countries, though this remains a small share of the overall portfolio



Kritika Kamra

And Gaurav Kapur To Get Married In March 2026; Wedding Details Inside



Actors Kritika Kamra and Gaurav Kapur are reportedly all set to take a big leap in their relationship. After making their romance public in December, the couple is now said to be planning their wedding, with 2026 shaping up to be a milestone year for them. According to sources, the duo is in a strong, happy space and has decided it is time to formalise their relationship.

Wedding Likely Around March-April 2026

A source close to the couple told Hindustan Times that Kritika and Gaurav are looking at a wedding around the end of March or early April, "Kritika and Gaurav are in a happy space together and ready to take their relationship to the next level. They are planning to tie the knot in March end or in the first week of April," the source said.

The wedding is expected to take place in Mumbai, keeping things close to home for both their families and inner circle.

Mumbai Reception on the Cards

While the finer details of the wedding celebrations are still being worked out, an industry reception is already on the agenda, "They are still finalising the details of the functions, but they will definitely host a reception for their industry friends in Mumbai itself," the source added.

The 'Insta Official' Moment That Started It All

Kritika and Gaurav first confirmed their relationship in December when Kritika shared a series of pictures from what appeared to be a cosy breakfast date. The understated caption, "Breakfast with," was enough to send fans into a frenzy.

The post drew warm reactions from several industry friends, including Pooja Gor, Anup Soni, Angad Bedi, Nakuul Mehta and Drashti Dhami, who flooded the comments section with congratulatory messages.

Ring in 2026 Together

The couple welcomed the New Year with a getaway to Jaisalmer, further fuelling wedding buzz. Kritika shared glimpses from the trip and captioned the post, "Fell into '26 nicely," subtly hinting at the new chapter ahead.

Pati Patni Aur Woh Do Postponed: Ayushmann Khurrana, Sara Ali Khan's Film Will Now Hit Theatres In May 2026



There has been a lot of buzz around 'Pati Patni Aur Woh Do' ever since it was officially announced. The comedy-drama, starring Ayushmann Khurrana, Sara Ali Khan, Rakul Preet Singh, and Wamiqa Gabbi, is the highly anticipated sequel to the 2019 film Pati Patni Aur Woh. Last year, the makers revealed that the film would release in theatres on March 4, 2026, during Holi. However, the film's release has now been postponed. The makers have announced a new release date, sharing that Pati Patni Aur Woh Do will now hit theatres on May 15, 2026.

Pati Patni Aur Woh Do Postponed

Trade analyst Taran Adarsh took to X (formerly Twitter) to announce the new release date of Pati Patni Aur Woh Do. "AYUSHMANN KHURRANA - SARA ALI KHAN - WAMIQA GABBI - RAKUL PREET SINGH: 'PATI PATNI AUR WOH DO' GETS A NEW RELEASE DATE... Welcome to the world of #PrajapatiPandey... #AyushmannKhurrana, #SaraAliKhan, #WamiqaGabbi, and #RakulPreetSingh team up for #PatiPatniAurWohDo. Directed by #MudassarAziz, the film will now hit cinemas on 15 May 2026. Produced by #BhushanKumar and #RenuRaviChopra, with #JunoChopra as the creative producer," read the post.

Recently, Bollywood Hungama reported that the film will not release on March 4 because the post-production is not yet complete and a song also remains to be shot. The report states that the makers did not want to rush the process and wanted to devote time and effort into ensuring that the final product turns out to be entertaining as well as enticing for the audience.

The film marks director Mudassar Aziz's return to the franchise after the first instalment, which featured Kartik Aaryan, Bhumi Pednekar, and Ananya Panday. This time, the story promises a fresh twist with a new ensemble and more outrageous comic situations.

Last year in October, the makers dropped the first poster of Pati Patni Aur Woh Do, introducing Ayushmann as Prajapati Pandey and teasing a world filled with love, laughter, and inevitable marital confusion. Mark your calendars for a joyride of emotions as Pati Patni Aur Woh Do is all set to hit the big screen on 15th May 2026!

'It Was The Perfect Moment': Priya Banerjee Recalls Prateik Smita Patil's Dreamy Wedding Proposal



Prateik Smita Patil and Priya Banerjee will mark their first wedding anniversary this year on Valentine's Day, and as the couple gears up for a grand celebration, they recalled their dreamy proposal on Propose Day today. Priya got her dreamy proposal at midnight on the eve of Prateik's birthday. Speaking to HT, Prateik recalled, "I had planned to propose to Priya at the stroke of midnight on the eve of my birthday. But we had some work the next day, for which we had to leave early in the morning, so if I had done that, we wouldn't have got time to enjoy the moment." He added, "Then, two days before, on a Sunday morning, I was sitting on my 'throne' in the bathroom, where I get some of my best ideas. I realised that we had the whole day to ourselves, and it was the perfect day to propose."

Speaking about the day she finally got her proposal, November 26, Priya recalled, "It was 8 am, and I saw Prateik crying in the corner, and I was like, what has happened? I was lying in bed with our dog, and Prateik suddenly came next to the bed and proposed to me. He was so emotional that I didn't even understand the first question he asked me."

Priya further continued and shared that it was a perfect moment for her and said, "He went down on his one knee while in his boxers, but it was the perfect moment, as we also had our dog there, who just started wagging his tail. It was a celebration with the three of us."

After dating each other for a long time, Prateik and Priya decided to take their relationship to the next level on the day of love, i.e., Valentine's Day. The couple got married in an intimate wedding ceremony held at Prateik's late mother Smita Patil's house in Bandra, Mumbai, on February 14, 2025. Taking to their social media, the newly married couple shared a series of heartwarming pictures, perfectly capturing the warmth, love, and togetherness of the people who gathered to celebrate their bond. In a post captioned "I'll marry you in every lifetime #priyaKAprateik," Prateik and Priya shared their first-ever pictures as a married couple.



Natasa Stankovic

Trolled For Dancing At College Fest; Social Media Defends Actress

Actor-model Natasa Stankovic, who made headlines following her divorce from ace cricketer Hardik Pandya, is back in the limelight after a video of her dancing at a college fest went viral on social media. The video has invited widespread trolling for Natasa Stankovic, with many dropping derogatory remarks against her. Meanwhile, a section of social media was seen urging people not to target her.

The video shows Natasa dancing in a black-and-white outfit at Pillai University's college fest. As the video went viral, people started trolling Natasa. One said, "After divorcing Hardik, she became so unemployed that she had to dance at colleges just to live." Another shared, "Lol, she already grabbed 70% of Hardik's hard-earned assets." A third user commented, saying, "Breakup nahi, full downgrade arc."

People defend Natasa

While trolls tried to bully Natasa, many came out in support of her. One wrote, "It's called living the way you like. Also, it's better than staying in a toxic relationship. No job is big or small. Stop shaming someone just because they are not as successful as their husband or boyfriend. Same goes for girls." Another user shared, "So what? She is trying to earn a living, and people have a problem with that as well now?" A third user commented, "She is living happily and not seeking media attention. That is important. She is not playing the victim card." One user, while defending Natasa,

shared, "Show some respect, man. The girl isn't always wrong. Stop blaming her every time." Another wrote, "After the divorce, instead of sitting at home or playing the victim card, Natasa Stankovic chose to work with dignity. Dancing at colleges, events, anywhere she's respected, that's called self-respect and independence, not unemployment."



About Natasa and Hardik

Natasa Stankovic married Hardik Pandya in May 2020 and welcomed their son, Agastya, in the same year. The pair renewed their vows in 2023 but later the same year decided to part ways. Even after parting ways, Natasa and Hardik have continued to maintain a dignified relationship focused on co-parenting Agastya. While they no longer share a home or marriage, sources indicate that both remain united in ensuring stability and happiness for their young son.

Sweet Potatoes

More than superfood!

X-man: Apocalypse star Olivia Munn recently revealed on social media the secret behind the radical change in her appearance. She said having one roasted Japanese potato (sweet potato) everyday is the reason behind her youthful skin."

Originally grown in the Americas, sweet potato is known to have been domesticated more than 8000 years ago.

Sweet potatoes, because of their fibre dense composition have widely been used throughout the Indian subcontinent as a fasting food that satiates hunger for long periods.

Precisely this is the reason why dieticians recommend it in the weight loss diet.

According to celebrity nutritionist Sandhya Gugnani, "Sweet potatoes are nutrition dense food. If you think because of its sweet taste, it should be shunned by people who avoid sugar; one must know that they actually help in lowering blood sugar because of their low glycemic index. It is helpful in controlling blood pressure and prevents constipation because of the high fiber content."

Power packed super food

Good for the eyes: If you believe in the term 'superfood', sweet potatoes fit the bill perfectly. According to a recent research on African kids, it was found that sweet potatoes meet from 35% to 90% requirement of Vitamin A.

Anti-ageing and anti-cancer: Carotenoids present in sweet potatoes are said to have important anti-oxidant and anti-cancer properties. When passing through digestive tract, this fibrous tuber absorbs dangerous free radicals and heavy metals that might cause cancer.

Studies at Harvard University have proved that there is a reduction of more than 30 percent chance of having lung cancer in people eating foods rich in



beta carotene.

Prevent stress; control blood pressure, heart-healthy:

Rich in Vitamin B6, they have been proved to reduce the risk of cardiovascular ailments. They are rich in magnesium which is necessary for healthy artery, blood, bone, heart, muscle, and nerve function.

Potassium found in sweet potatoes helps in regulating heartbeat and nerve signals and also in relaxing muscle contractions, reducing swelling, and protecting and controlling the function of kidneys.

Energy rich: As the sugar found in sweet potatoes is slowly released in the blood stream, they are often recommended in diet of athletes and players and those who

• Originally grown in the Americas, sweet potato is known to have been domesticated more than 8000 years ago.

• Sweet potatoes, because of their fibre dense composition have widely been used throughout the Indian subcontinent as a fasting food that satiates hunger for long periods.

suffer from low blood pressure.

Healthiest cooking method

It is important to 'cook' sweet potatoes before consuming them for better absorption of nutrition.

Boiling: It is a recommended method as consuming boiled and mashed sweet potatoes helps in better assimilation of beta-carotene (vitamin A). In boiled form they have a lower glycemic index and hence is helpful in slow release of sugar in body.

Stir frying: Frying it



composition.

When one must avoid it While diabetics and weight watchers can have it in measured quantities, individuals with already existing and untreated kidney or gallbladder problems should eat it only after consulting the physician.

Sweet Potato Biscuits

Ingredients

Sweet Potatoes - 1 cup, cooked and mashed, Buttermilk - 1/4 cup, Maida (Plain Flour) - 1 1/2 cups, Light Brown Sugar - 3 tsp, Baking Powder - 1 1/2 tsp, Baking Soda - 1/4 tsp, Butter - 1/4 cup, unsalted Salt - 3/4 tsp

Method

- Combine the maida, brown sugar, baking powder, baking soda and salt. Whisk well.
- Add the butter and mix until the mixture is crumbly.
- Whisk the mashed sweet potatoes and buttermilk in another bowl.
- Add this to the flour mixture and mix well until the dough is sticky.
- Sprinkle some flour on a flat surface and knead the dough 4

- to 5 times.
- Roll it out to 1/2 to 3/4 inch thickness and cut the dough into 2 inch rounds.
- Place them on a baking tray lined with parchment paper.
- Place the tray into a preheated oven at 225C/450F and bake for 10 to 12 minutes or until lightly browned. Remove and cool.
- Store it in airtight container and serve as needed.

5 Healthy lunch box recipes for kids

Try out from our list of quick and healthy breakfast/tiffin box options that are quick to make and easy to carry.

Egg Salad Sandwich

A healthy and delicious breakfast dish for kids and adults alike. These sandwiches are simple and easy to make too.

Ingredients

Bread Slices - 4, Eggs - 2, hard-boiled, finely chopped, Mayonnaise (or Butter) - 4 tsp, Red Chilli Flakes - 1/2 tsp, Salt as per taste, Pepper Powder as per taste, Ghee as required

Optional

Tomato - 1, sliced
Spring Onions - 1/4 cup, finely chopped
Red Onion - 1, sliced
Lettuce Leaves - few, chopped

Method

Mix the eggs, mayonnaise, red chilli flakes, salt and pepper powder in a bowl.
Spread this on 2 bread slices.
Top up with the tomato, spring onions, red onion and lettuce leaves.
Cover with the remaining slices.
Heat a tawa over low flame.
Place the sandwiches and apply little ghee around the edges.
Cook for 30 seconds on each side and remove.
Serve with french fries.
Chicken Noodle Stir-Fry
A simple and delicious meal, this easy to make stir-fry with chicken, noodles and vegetables is ideal for lunch or dinner.

Ingredients

Chicken Fillets - 200 gms, finely sliced, fat trimmed, Plain Noodles - 200 gms, Oil - 1 1/2 tsp Onion - 1, small, finely sliced, Garlic - 1 clove, finely sliced, Ginger - 1 cm piece, grated, Sweet Chilli Sauce - 2 tblsp (recipe here), Fish Sauce - 3 tsp, Coriander Leaves - 1/4 cup, chopped, Green Peas - 2 to 3 tblsp, shelled, boiled

Optional

Spring Onions - 2, chopped, Button Mushrooms - 1, chopped, Carrots - 2 tblsp, chopped, Capsicum - 2 tblsp, chopped, Red Chilli Flakes - 1/2 tsp, Peanuts - 3 tsp, crushed, Lettuce - few, shredded

Method

- Cook the noodles as per packet instructions (or in a pan of slightly salted water for 4 to 5 minutes).
- Stir once and drain well.
- Keep aside.
- Heat oil in a pan ove medium flame.
- Saute the onions for a minute or until soft.
- Add the ginger, garlic and cook for 20 seconds.
- Add the chicken and cook for 5 minutes or until cooked.

- Add the peas, carrots, spring onions, mushrooms, capsicum, red chilli flakes, lettuce, chilli sauce, fish sauce, noodles and stir well.
- Stir-fry for 2 to 3 minutes.
- Add the coriander leaves and peanuts. Stir again.
- Serve warm.

Egg Noodles

Ingredients

Plain Noodles - 1 packet, boiled as per packet instructions, Eggs - 4, Cabbage - 1 cup, finely chopped, Carrot - 1/2 cup, grated, Beans - 1/2 cup, finely chopped, Onions - 1 cup, finely sliced, Green Chillies - 2, sliced lengthwise, Black Pepper Powder - 1/2 tsp, Ajinomoto - as required, Ginger Garlic Paste - 1 tsp, Coriander Leaves - handful, chopped, Salt as per taste, Oil - 2 tsp

Method

- Heat oil in a pan over medium flame.
- Add the ginger garlic paste and fry for 20 to 30 seconds.
- Saute the onions, beans and green chillies for a minute or two.
- Add the cabbage, salt, pepper powder and ajinomoto.
- Stir-fry for a minute.

- Add the boiled noodles and break the eggs into the pan.
- Mix well and cook for 2 minutes.
- Garnish with coriander leaves.
- Serve hot.

Veg Paneer Roll

This easy to make and delicious Veg Paneer Roll makes for a perfect lunch, evening snack or a light dinner. Made with grated paneer and vegetables cooked in spices and then wrapped in a chapati (or a tortilla), they are a popular street food item these days.

Ingredients

Chapati (or Tortilla) - 3 to 4, Paneer - 3 tblsp, grated, Carrot - 2 tblsp, finely chopped or sliced, Capsicum - 1, small, chopped, Cucumber - 2 tblsp, chopped (optional), Onion - 1, small, chopped, Green Chilli - 1, small, finely chopped, Ginger Garlic Paste - 1 tsp, Tomato - 1, small, finely chopped, Red Chilli Powder - 1/2 tsp, Garam Masala Powder - 1/2 tsp, Cumin Seeds - 1/4 tsp, Saunf - a pinch Curry Powder - 1/4 tsp, Coriander Leaves - handful, chopped, Salt as per taste, Oil - 2 tsp

Method

- Heat oil in a pan over medium flame.
- Fry the saunf and cumin seeds for 30 seconds.
- Add the onions and green chillies.
- Saute for a minute or until onions turn light golden.
- Add the ginger garlic paste and stir well for 30 to 40 seconds.
- Add the capsicums, carrots and saute for another minute.
- Add the tomatoes and cook for one more minute.
- Add red chilli powder, curry powder and salt.
- Stir well.
- Add the grated paneer, cucumber and garam masala

- powder.
- Cook for a minute or two on low-medium flame.
- Garnish with coriander leaves and switch off the flame.
- Heat a tawa over medium flame.
- Warm the chapati (or tortillas).
- Add some of the paneer vegetable mixture.
- Roll the chapati tightly.
- Serve at once.

Spinach Cheese Pizza

A simple and delicious pizza that can be served for lunch or dinner.

Ingredients

Pizza Base - 1 (available readymade or use this pizza dough recipe), Onion - 1, big, finely chopped, Spinach - 1/2 bunch (or 1 small bunch), cleaned, washed, chopped, Parsley - 1/2 cup, finely chopped + extra to garnish, Cheddar Cheese - 1/4 cup, grated, Red Chilli Flakes - as per taste + extra to garnish, Cumin Seeds - 1 tsp, Olive Oil - 3 tsp, Pepper Powder as per taste, Salt - a small pinch (optional), Tomato Sauce or Pizza Sauce to spread

Optional Ingredients

Tomatoes - 1/2 cup, chopped (or use sun-dried tomatoes), Mushrooms - 1/4 cup, chopped

Method

- Heat oil in a nonstick pan over medium flame.
- Saute the onions until golden.
- Add the spinach and cook for 3 to 4 minutes or until all moisture has evaporated and the leaves are wilted.
- Remove and transfer to a bowl.
- Add parsley and mix well.
- Sprinkle pepper powder, cumin seeds, salt and red chilli flakes
- Add 2 to 3 tsp of the tomato sauce on the pizza base and spread evenly.
- Place 2 to 3 tblsp of the spinach mixture and spread well.

Try this lip-smacking mango chutney

With the advent of summers, the king of fruits has also made its appearance in the markets. And with so many pretty green mangoes, you can really afford to go creative. Try this simple and easy to make recipe of mango chutney that will give a fillip to your reputation as a super chef.

Ingredients

Raw mangoes - one kilo
Sugar - two kilo
Cinnamon powder
Quarter teaspoon

Method

- Grate the mangoes and put the grated mango pulp and sugar in a thick bottom pan.
- Cook the mixture on low flame till all the water evaporates and the mixture leaves the sides of the pan.
- Switch off the gas and add cinnamon powder to the chutney and let it cool.



- Later, fill the chutney in a glass jar and preserve it on a shelf. It will last longer if you refrigerate it.

