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**PUBLISHED FROM**  
Delhi, Haryana, Uttar  
Pradesh, Punjab,  
Chandigarh, Himachal  
and Jammu

# The Sikh Times

## National Daily

**VISIT:**  
[www.thesikhtimes.in](http://www.thesikhtimes.in)  
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Vol. 17 No. 272

RNI NO. DELENG/2008/25465

New Delhi, Sunday, 15 February 2026

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9654077232

12 pages ₹ 3

# Government Allegedly Strangling Punjabi (Gurmukhi) Newspapers Outside Punjab

## Deep Anger Among the Sikh Community

Special story  
Gurcharan Singh Babbar

A serious concern is rising across the country regarding the systematic neglect and economic strangulation of Punjabi (Gurmukhi) language newspapers published outside Punjab. These newspapers, which serve as the cultural and linguistic lifeline of millions of Sikhs and Punjabi-speaking citizens across India, are reportedly being

denied government advertisements and institutional support. For decades, Punjabi (Gurmukhi) newspapers published from Delhi NCR and other parts of India have played a historic role in strengthening national unity, promoting constitutional values, and highlighting government policies among the Sikh and Punjabi-speaking population. Despite their long-standing contribution, many such newspapers are now facing severe financial hardship due to the non-release of government advertisements. Punjabi is

not merely a language — it is the sacred script of the Sikh Gurus. Gurmukhi carries the spiritual heritage of Sri Guru Granth Sahib Ji and represents the identity, faith, and history of the Sikh community. Any attempt to economically weaken Punjabi Gurmukhi publications outside Punjab is being viewed by many as an attack on linguistic diversity and minority representation.

Across the country, Sikh organizations and intellectual circles are expressing deep anguish.

They believe that ignoring Punjabi newspapers outside Punjab amounts to isolating a large section of patriotic citizens who have contributed immensely to India's growth, security, and prosperity. It is important to remember that India's Constitution guarantees equality, linguistic freedom, and protection of minority languages. Punjabi language newspapers outside Punjab deserve fair and equal treatment, transparency in advertisement policy, and non-discriminatory governance. The Sikh community is watching the

situation closely.

There is growing concern that continued neglect may widen the sense of alienation among Punjabi-speaking citizens living outside their home state. This is not merely a matter of advertisements — it is a matter of dignity, constitutional rights, and respect for linguistic identity. The concerned authorities are urged to take immediate corrective steps, ensure fairness, and protect the rich legacy of Punjabi (Gurmukhi) journalism across India.

## Akhilesh Yadav brands Yogi Adityanath as communal, uncivilised CM

Responding to Yogi Adityanath's remarks that Uttar Pradesh had lost its identity before 2017 and regained it under the BJP, Yadav said the current dispensation was attempting to deflect attention from governance failures.

Kanpur. (Agency)  
Samajwadi Party (SP) chief Akhilesh Yadav on Friday launched a sharp attack on Uttar Pradesh Chief Minister Yogi Adityanath over his recent criticism of the pre-2017 state government, calling him "the most communal, undemocratic and uncivilised Chief Minister" and a "fake yogi".

Responding to Yogi Adityanath's remarks that Uttar Pradesh had lost its identity before 2017 and regained it under the BJP, Yadav said the current dispensation was attempting to deflect attention from governance failures.

"It has been said about the Samajwadi Party that they go to the graves of mafias and read their fate, and they have made such statements. This should not be a communal, undemocratic, and uncivilised government, which is to be seen in Uttar Pradesh today," he said.

"The day the truth is shown, their game will be over," he said, asserting that key investments and infrastructure projects in the state were initiated during the SP



regime. Listing projects undertaken during his tenure, Yadav cited power plants, including supercritical units, metro rail projects in cities such as Lucknow and Kanpur, improvements to Green Park Stadium, Dial 100 emergency response services, ambulance expansion and financial allocations to medical colleges.

He also credited the SP government's electronics manufacturing policy for attracting mobile companies to Noida and investments such as those linked to Samsung and Shiv Nadar.

Turning to recent incidents in Kanpur, Yadav alleged that law-and-order failures

were tarnishing the city's image. Referring to reports of custodial deaths, police action and a case in which a mother and daughter allegedly died after a vehicle overturned amid fear of bulldozer action.

He said the BJP "should not turn Kanpur into 'Badnampur'." He also mentioned the alleged flight of a "Noida mafia" figure and said Kanpur's name was being dragged into controversies.

On his recent social media post comparing "bulldozers" with "BrahMos," Yadav said the government had relied on fear as a political tool.

"They kept scaring people with bulldozers; now it seems BrahMos is being invoked to scare Delhi," he remarked, suggesting the political climate had become excessively confrontational.

Yadav also accused the BJP government of distorting history and disrespecting religious traditions. Referring to Rajmata Ahilyabai Holkar's role in preserving Kashi's heritage, he alleged that facts around a reported idol-breaking incident were being "hidden behind claims of AI".

## 'Yudh Nashean Virudh' exposes Congress links as Kalanaur man caught consuming drugs: Harpal Singh Cheema

The Sikh Times

CHANDIGARH, 14th

February: Punjab Finance

Minister Harpal Singh

Cheema on Saturday said that

the Punjab Government's

'Yudh Nashean Virudh' cam-

paign has achieved another

major breakthrough, as

Gurkirat Singh, a resident of

Kalanaur in Gurdaspur dis-

trict, was allegedly caught

consuming drugs inside a cre-

mation ground. He said that

the accused has direct links

with the Congress party and

photographs of the arrested

individual with several senior

Congress leaders have also

surfaced. In a video message,

Minister Harpal Singh

Cheema said, "Punjab knows

very well that when the state

was ruled by the Akali Dal-

BJP or the Congress party,

Punjab was flooded with

drugs. Today, many such peo-

ple are continuously being

arrested who have direct or

indirect links with Congress,

Akali Dal and BJP. These par-

ties, which ruined Punjab, are now rattled and crying foul." Highlighting the resolve of the present dispensation,

ment is ensuring treatment and helping them recover." He further said, "The people of Punjab are giving overwhelm-

ing support to this war, and today it has become a mass movement in Punjab. Lakhs of people are connected with the Punjab Government and the Aam Aadmi Party because the Bhagwant Mann government is fully committed to completely eliminating drugs from Punjab."



Harpal Singh Cheema stated, "The continuous war being waged by Chief Minister Bhagwant Singh Mann's government against drugs is yielding strong results. Drug smugglers are either fleeing Punjab or ending up inside jails. Whoever is caught consuming drugs, the govern-

ment is ensuring treatment and helping them recover." He further said, "The people of Punjab are giving overwhelm-

## Congress sweeps Telangana urban local body polls; BRS loses ground

Hyderabad. (Agency)

The results of elections to the urban local bodies across the state have underlined the Congress's return as the principal force in urban Telangana, with the ruling party recording a performance comparable to the then TRS (now BRS) sweep a decade ago.

Overall, the results marked a decisive urban consolidation by the Congress, a holding operation for the BRS amid erosion of its base, and incremental BJP gains that also exposed the saffron party's organisational limitations at the grassroots.

Winning a clear majority of urban local bodies, the Congress established dominance across much of the state, particularly in the southern districts. Of the 116 municipalities and seven corporations, the ruling Congress secured absolute majorities in over 90 municipalities and four corporations, along with a strong vote share of over 45% across most urban bodies. Party leaders said the outcome reflected public approval of the government led by Chief Minister A Revanth Reddy. Senior leaders, including ministers, MPs, MLAs and the TPCC leadership, are now focusing on consolidating numbers to secure mayoral and chairperson posts, especially in hung bodies.

The Congress surge was most pronounced in South Telangana, covering Mahabubnagar, Rangareddy, Nalgonda and parts of Medak. In North Telangana, however, the picture was more mixed, with the BRS and the BJP retaining or improving their presence in several pockets.

**BRS single largest party in a dozen municipalities**

For the BRS, the results were just enough to preserve a measure of political respectability after a difficult phase. The party lost control of nearly 90% of the urban bodies it had dominated for the past ten years, but emerged as the single largest party in around 10-12 municipalities, where it still has prospects of securing chairperson posts. In the seven corporations, the BRS was pushed largely to third place, with the BJP overtaking it in several divisions, especially in the north.

## Delhi CM Gupta inaugurates 51 new Ayushman Arogya Mandir; 370 total in capital now

New Delhi. (Agency)

Chief Minister Rekha Gupta on Friday inaugurated 51 new Ayushman Arogya Mandirs from Fatehpur Beri village in South Delhi. With these centres now operational, the total number of Ayushman Arogya Mandirs in the capital has risen to 370—a milestone achieved in just eight months. "The Delhi government's priority is to ensure that every citizen has access to timely, affordable and easily available healthcare," the Chief Minister said. She also launched development projects worth ₹322 crore in the Chhatrapur Assembly constituency.

The Chief Minister inspected an Ayushman centre and reviewed the healthcare services being provided, ensuring that diagnostic tests, medicines and treatment facilities were functioning smoothly and that citizens were receiving timely care.

She said the establishment of Ayushman Arogya Mandirs has significantly transformed the healthcare system, offering not only curative but also preventive and promotive services. "Ayushman Arogya Mandirs are not merely treatment centres; they are hubs of prevention, awareness and trust. Setting up 370 centres within a year reflects our



commitment," the Chief Minister said. The government aims to establish over 1,100 such centres in the near future. Each facility offers around 80 types of free diagnostic

tests, essential medicines, advanced diagnostics, cancer screening, immunisation, maternal and child healthcare, elderly care, screening for non-communicable diseases.

**AAP targets govt over mohalla clinic rebranding**

The Aam Aadmi Party on Friday accused the Delhi government of rebranding mohalla clinics and dispensaries as Ayushman Arogya Mandirs to claim credit for 370 facilities. AAP leader Saurabh Bhargava said most centres operate in existing facilities with the same staff.

## Rahul Gandhi's combative style stole the show in Parliament. What next?

**In the first half of the Parliament Budget session, Rahul Gandhi appeared politically energised and intent on sustaining pressure on the Modi government, especially over national security. Will he be able to keep the momentum? What are his plans for the second half of the session?**

New Delhi. (Agency)

During the first leg of the Budget session, Congress MP Rahul Gandhi emerged as the central figure in Parliament. He dominated proceedings — firing salvos, refusing to yield, holding one line of attack for nearly 50 minutes, countering interruptions, and sustaining a pointed critique of Prime Minister Narendra Modi from beginning to end.

Buoyed by his aggressive stance and ability to get under the government's skin, Congress MPs appeared energised. They rallied behind their leader, faced suspension, staged dharnas, raised slogans and reached out to Opposition colleagues with visible camaraderie — hoping to act as a force multiplier for the party leadership.



As one senior Congress leader remarked, "If Rahul Gandhi continues this form outside Parliament, the Congress party is sorted — but unfortunately that hasn't happened in the past. Let's see what happens this time."

**CHAMPIONING THE 'ANNADATA'**

Rahul Gandhi set the tone for the upcoming political battle by meeting with a group of farmers on Friday. Many attendees were office-bearers of the party's Kisan wing, yet the optics were unmistakable — positioning Gandhi as pro-farmer and critical of the Indo-US deal.

However, for optics to translate into electoral support, the Congress must move beyond symbolism and energise grassroots workers to actively mobilise. The Leader of the Opposition has linked the Indo-US agreement to what he describes as Prime Minister Modi "buckling under pressure" from Donald Trump. Gandhi also suggested that suspended Congress MPs include images of Gautam Adani alongside Donald Trump and Narendra Modi on protest banners displayed at Makar Dwar.



News box

Domestic staffer mowed down by dumper on Dwarka eway service road

**Gurgaon.(Agency)**  
A 35-year-old domestic staffer returning home on a bicycle from Joyville Society in Sector 102 was run over by a speeding dumper truck on the Dwarka e-way service road near Dhanwapur village.The woman Jhulan Kumari lived in a rented accommodation with her family in Lakshman Vihar Phase 2. The accident occurred around 5.30pm on Thursday.A police team from Rajendra Park police station reached the spot and found the truck parked on the service road. Police said the woman's body was under the truck, while her bicycle was stuck under a rear wheel. Eyewitnesses said the driver tried to flee after the accident but they caught him and handed him over to the police. The woman's body was sent to the hospital, where doctors declared her dead. The body was later shifted to a mortuary for autopsy. The body was later handed over to the family. Kumari's husband filed a complaint against the driver. He said, "When my wife was returning from work, a truck bearing the number HR63D9400 came from behind at high speed and crushed my wife in front of Puri Diplomatic Greens Society."An officer said the driver, Alishan, a resident of Punhana, Nuh, has been arrested. He added that the truck was being driven recklessly. A case was registered under sections 281 (rash driving) and 106 (death by negligence) of BNS.

Vigil tightened as Haryana boards to start from Feb 25

**Gurgaon.(Agency)**  
With Class 10 and 12 examinations of the Haryana Board of School Education set to begin on Feb 25, the education department has announced strict monitoring measures and warned of disciplinary action against teachers who fail to report for assigned duties. Officials said the measures follow instances last year when around 22 teachers were absent during board examinations despite repeated notices. District education offices have been directed to expedite disciplinary proceedings against those ignoring official instructions to ensure adherence to the protocols. Officials said surveillance at examination centres across the district will be strengthened through flying squads and regular inspections. The administration stressed that staff attendance is mandatory, as teachers play a critical role in maintaining discipline, preventing unfair practices and ensuring the smooth conduct of exams. However, the stricter stance also triggered concerns among teachers, many of whom raised issues, including low honorarium and delays in payment for examination duties. Some educators expressed anxiety over the heightened scrutiny during malpractice inquiries in previous years.Despite these concerns, district education officer Indu Bokan said the department's priority is to ensure fair, transparent and well-organised examinations. She said instructions had been communicated in advance and that non-compliance would invite departmental action.Teachers on exam duty are responsible for supervising examination halls, verifying students' identities, distributing question papers and answer sheets, monitoring conduct during tests, and ensuring the secure submission of answer sheets. Officials said these duties are critical to maintaining the integrity of the board examinations, which involve thousands of students across the district.

Noida to put up boards, map dog feeding spots



**Noida.(Agency)**  
Noida Authority will begin installing boards marking dog-feeding points across the city to streamline the feeding of stray dogs and reduce conflicts in residential and commercial areas. The Rs 1.2-crore project, implemented by the public health department, will cover multiple locations in Phase-1 sectors. Officials said the work is scheduled to be completed within six months.A senior official said this is the second tender issued under the project. A similar tender of Rs 1.3 crore had been issued earlier, and both cover the entire city. "With this round, the remaining sectors will be brought under the plan," the official said.Supreme Court, in an order dated Aug 22, 2025, had directed local civic bodies to create dedicated feeding zones for community dogs. The court observed that unregulated feeding often led to inconvenience and untoward incidents. It clarified that feeding must take place only at designated locations.In Sept 2025, the Authority had announced plans to develop around 1,200 designated feeding points at an estimated cost of Rs 2.5 crore. The then general manager (public health), SP Singh, had said a city-wide survey would be conducted to identify suitable sites in consultation with apartment owners' associations and residents' welfare associations, particularly in areas with high stray dog density. He had said, "For now, the focus is on identifying safe, permanent locations where dogs can be fed without creating nuisance or safety risks. This will help regulate their movement, reduce group gatherings in colonies, and improve overall cleanliness." The city is home to around 30,000 stray dogs and has four new small veterinary hospitals and a big one in Sector 94, which has been operational for over 30 years. Last year, TOI had reported a series of incidents involving RWAs and dog feeders.

One LED light glitches at wedding venue, electrician shot dead in Gurgaon

**Gurgaon.(Agency)**  
One among many LED lights malfunctioned, angering a groom and his associates so much that one of them shot dead 23-year-old Barkat, the electrician responsible for arrangements at the wedding venue in Pataudi, on Thursday night.Police said the groom, Amandeep, had a heated argument with Barkat when he noticed the lighting imperfection. As the row escalated quickly, Amandeep took out a gun and fired at Barkat but missed, according to the FIR. An alarmed Barkat began running, along with his co-workers, but another bullet — purportedly fired by an aide of Amandeep — hit Barkat from behind.Harsh (21), who is accused of firing the fatal shot, was taken into custody by police. Harsh claimed during questioning that he had "accidentally fired" a bullet from his uncle's licensed weapon, which was kept on a table. Father to three children, Barkat was a Mathura resident who would visit

Gurgaon twice a year during the wedding season. Police said they received information about the firing at Ransika village late Thursday night, and a team from Pataudi police station reached the spot. Bloodstains were found at the scene, and the crime team was called to collect evidence.A case was registered under sections 103(1) (murder), 351(3) (criminal intimidation), 3(5) (act done by multiple persons) of BNS and under sections of the Arms Act. The FIR names Amandeep and an associate Sahil as accused, but not Harsh, the one arrested. It was filed following a complaint by Hashim Khan, Barkat's wife's uncle. According to the FIR, Barkat went to install lights at the event along with Mustafa and Yusuf. The tent arrangement for the ceremony was managed by a local operator, who assigned the lighting work to them. The complaint alleged that the LED light malfunctioned at 9.27 pm, triggering an

argument. Amandeep, Sahil — a resident of Basai village — and another unidentified associate allegedly used



and assaulted the three electricians before leaving the venue. According to the complaint, the three then returned shortly after with a weapon. Amandeep, the complaint says, fired at Barkat with an intent to kill him. As the electricians attempted to flee the tent

area, another shot was fired, hitting Barkat in the waist. He collapsed at the spot. Barkat was taken to a private hospital, where doctors declared him dead on arrival. His body was shifted to the mortuary for autopsy and later handed over to the family. "Harsh told investigators that his uncle handed him his licensed weapon while getting photographed on the stage during the ceremony. He said he placed the weapon on the table. While picking it up, he claimed to have mistakenly pulled the trigger. The investigation is on," a police officer said.Barkat's brother-in-law Arshad told TOI that the family is in shock. "Barkat got married in 2019 and had three kids. Every year, he used to come to Gurgaon during the wedding season. He already lost his parents. The family is ruined," Arshad said. "We want justice for Barkat. There can be an electrical glitch anytime, anywhere, but they killed him mercilessly without thinking of his family," his cousin Tahir said.

5 years of jail for Haryana govt officer caught taking bribe on last day of service

**Gurgaon.(Agency)**  
A city court convicted a retired Haryana govt officer in a bribery case and sentenced him to five years rigorous imprisonment. Dalbir Singh, senior manager at Haryana State Industrial and Infrastructure Development Corporation (HSIIDC), was caught accepting a bribe of Rs 10,000 on the last day of his service to clear a contracto's pending payment file in 2021.Additional sessions judge Puneet Sehgal, while convicting Singh under Prevention of Corruption Act, said bribery by public servants corrodes governance and erodes civic trust. "Culpability is not mitigated simply because the accused was at the end of service tenure," the court said. Public prosecutor Sumit Saini told the court that complainant Ajit Kumar had executed contractual work for HSIIDC and was owed about Rs 4.25 lakh. The prosecution said Bhatti demanded Rs 10,000 to send the file for clearance on Sept 29, 2021, the day he retired.After a written complaint, the vigilance wing organised a trap, deployed a shadow witness, conducted pre-trap proceedings, noted serial numbers of the currency notes, and apprehended Bhatti immediately after he received the money.The court said the recovery was documented through seizure memos and supported by consistent testimonies of the complainant and the trap team.The case was registered on Sept 30, 2021, under Section 7 of Prevention of Corruption Act.The court also noted that Bhatti did not lead any defence evidence to rebut the prosecution case. He denied the allegations but offered no credible explanation for the incriminating circumstances. The judge held that mere denial could not displace a case supported by an unbroken chain of evidence, including proof of demand and acceptance, which are essential ingredients of the offence.The prosecution argued that demanding a bribe on the verge of retirement showed deliberate misuse of official position and that the trap proceedings were conducted in accordance with law.

Suspect held in e-SIM ring in Gurgaon linked to ‘largest digital arrest

**Gurgaon.(Agency)**  
An e-SIM racket linked to a cyber fraud syndicate in Cambodia has been busted with the arrest of a key accused in West Bengal last week.Police arrested Rajat Kumar (28) — a BCom graduate from Bengaluru — on Feb 8. A resident of Hasimara's Railway Colony in West Bengal's Alipurduar district, Rajat was brought to Gurgaon on transit remand, taken into three-day police custody and later sent to judicial custody on Feb 12. So far, eight accused have been arrested in the case from Rajasthan, Uttar Pradesh, Haryana and West Bengal.Police said efforts are on to identify the Cambodia-based handlers and trace the "largest interstate and international network behind the digital arrest scam". Police said Rajat was active in the racket for the past eight to nine months. He told investigators that he was looking for a job when he came across a work-from-home advertisement that led him into the cyber fraud network. Officers described him as "technologically proficient and well-versed in handling mobile systems and app-based platforms". "The accused said that he so far received a total of 19,050 USDT (USDT is a unit of cryptocurrency)

from e-SIM and app enrolment, which he converted to rupees through the EQUITAS app and transferred to his bank account. Then he spent this money on travelling, eating and drinking in Jaipur, Goa and other places." ACP Priyanshu Dewan said.The cyber crime team recovered 87 SIM cards, 42 mobile phones and one laptop from his possession. The e-SIM racket was busted months after a case was registered on Oct 28, 2025 at Cyber Crime West police station in Gurgaon. A 75-year-old retired resident of Palam Vihar was kept under "digital arrest" for nearly a day and cheated of over Rs 17 lakh after a caller posing as an officer of the National Investigation Agency (NIA) threatened him with a fake money-laundering case and demanded Rs 70 lakh. The victim stated that he received a WhatsApp video call from a man who introduced himself as an NIA officer. The caller claimed that Rs 70 lakh was credited to his bank account as commission from illegal activities and warned him of immediate arrest. The elderly man was intimidated, kept under continuous online monitoring for a day and coerced into transferring Rs 17.8 lakh. The probe into the bank trail and SIM

credentials first took investigators to Barmer in Rajasthan in search of the SIM card used in the fraud, then to Siliguri and to Alipurduar in West Bengal, where Rajat was apprehended."The investigation revealed that the Jio SIM used in the fraud was first sold for Rs 650 by two accused, Shafikul alias Safik, who then sent it via speed post to Rajat for Rs 1,100. Rajat converted such SIM cards into e-SIMs using Apple devices and shared the QR codes with handlers in Cambodia through Telegram, earning 22 USDT per e-SIM. He is suspected to have converted and supplied around 2,100 e-SIMs, earning 19,050 USDT," the ACP said.Police said he was simultaneously involved in enrolling fake loan applications on the Apple App Store and Google Play Store. He received Rs 3,000 per app enrolment and installed and supplied details of 40 to 50 fictitious loan apps to the Cambodia-based handlers. Examination of the 42 mobile phones seized from him showed that almost each device contained evidence of fake loan app development. The apps, for which licences were purchased online, were later used to dupe victims and were earlier active on app stores.

Owner steps away for shopping, parked car rolls into open drain in Noida

**Noida.(Agency)**  
A parked car rolled into an open roadside drain near Basai village in Sector 70 late on Thursday night, triggering concerns over civic safety in the area. No one was inside the vehicle at the time, preventing casualties.According to police, the car's owner had parked it at the spot and stepped away briefly to purchase some items at the nearby market. While he was gone, the car suddenly rolled forward and fell into the uncovered drain.Locals alerted the police, and a team from Phase 3 reached the spot. Cops, with the help of locals, managed to

pull the vehicle out of the drain. While the vehicle sustained damage, no people were injured.The incident once again highlighted the issue of open drains across the city and the risk they pose. Residents questioned the functioning of the Noida Authority, alleging negligence in covering roadside drains despite complaints. Such uncovered drains pose a constant threat to pedestrians and motorists, especially at night when visibility is low, residents said, raising demands for immediate action to cover the drains and implement safety measures to prevent

similar incidents in the future. Police said no formal complaint has been filed in the matter so far.Last month, a 27-year-old software engineer drowned after his SUV fell through a damaged boundary wall and plunged into a flooded pit that had been dug-up for a commercial project in Sector 150.Yuvraj Mehta had been on his way home around midnight when the accident happened as he negotiated a sharp turn. Fog made visibility low, and the lack of lights in the area or reflective boards at the construction site meant he could not spot the danger ahead.

Craters, sewage choke Narsingpur stretch of NH8 in Gurgaon as revamp crawls

**Noida.(Agency)**  
One of the worst-affected stretches along Delhi-Gurgaon Expressway — Narsingpur — has failed to draw the attention of National Highways Authority of India (NHAI) even as the work on upgrading the 28-km corridor moves at a snail's pace.In Aug last year, NHAI awarded the upgradation of the highway stretch from Rao Tula Ram Marg in Delhi to Kherki Daula in Gurgaon. While some portions on the Delhi side saw recarpeting, progress on the Gurgaon section is still sluggish and Narsingpur's wait for the resurfacing is getting longer. The service lanes are dotted with huge craters, broken edges and uneven patches. With the monsoon just a few months away, commuters say the damage will only worsen if repairs are not carried out as a priority.Ravi Shukla, a resident of Sector 69 who uses this stretch daily, said, "As the service lane is badly damaged, a

large volume of local traffic spills onto the main carriageway, adding to congestion and increasing the risk of accidents. The service road itself carries traffic in both directions and is heavily burdened due to constant movement of vehicles, especially with factories operating in the area. With just a few months left before the rains, authorities must resurface the stretch and resolve the sewer overflow issue as a priority."The service road was in a deplorable condition for the past many years and "no proper repairs were carried out" despite repeated complaints, Gopal Yadav, a resident of Narsingpur, said.Yadav added, "During the monsoon, the stretch becomes virtually unusable due to waterlogging. The drain along the highway is clogged with rubbish, preventing the flow of water. If authorities do not take up proper resurfacing and drainage correction before the

monsoon, the situation will only deteriorate further."Under NHAI's upgradation plan, parts of the service road near Narsingpur are proposed to be rebuilt using ready-mix concrete to reduce recurring damage and maintenance. On the ground, however, no progress is visible.An NHAI official acknowledged that the condition of the Narsingpur service road deteriorated and said the stretch is part of the ongoing upgradation plan. "We are planning to rebuild portions of the service road using cement concrete to ensure it lasts long. The work is expected to begin in March so that major repairs can be completed before the monsoon season," the official said.The stretch is prone to waterlogging due to inadequate drainage. The problem is further compounded by sewage overflow from adjoining villages. Wastewater frequently spills onto the service road and seeps into the surface, weakening the base

layer and accelerating deterioration. In Nov 2024, MCG officials were asked to ensure sewer lines between Narsingpur village and the service road were cleared to prevent wastewater from entering the expressway's surface drains. However, the problem still persists on the ground. Last year, ahead of the monsoon, a portion of the service road along the Jaipur-Delhi carriageway was dug up to allow water to drain out. Months later, the damaged stretch was not fully restored, forcing commuters to navigate uneven and dug-up patches.Responding to the persistent sewer overflow issue, the NHAI official said the damage is recurring because wastewater from nearby areas flows into the surface drains.An MCG official said, "We have completed the survey of the area and have already prepared the action plan to fix sewerage in the area. We are aiming to fix

the problem before the monsoon arrives."

THE SIKH TIMES

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

Printed at Qaumi Patrika Printing  
Press, A-4/A-144, Tronica City  
(Loni), Ghaziabad (Uttar Pradesh)

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

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RNI No. DELENG/2008/25465



# Eyes watching you: How Delhi cops rely on cameras to fine violators, curb crime

## The Sikh Times

New Delhi: Delhi's streets are no longer watched only by traffic constables at crossings. Increasingly, it is intelligent cameras and Artificial Intelligence (AI) that keep an unblinking eye on the city's roads, tracking vehicles, catching violators and helping the police respond faster to crime. At the heart of this technology-driven shift is the large-scale deployment of Automatic Number Plate Recognition (ANPR) systems. According to latest information, the Delhi Police have implemented around 535 ANPR software-enabled projects, marking one of the most extensive uses of AI-powered vehicle surveillance. The move reflects a growing reliance on data, automation and real-time analytics to manage traffic and strengthen law and order in a city of nearly 2.5 crore people. The ANPR is a computer-vision-based technology that identifies vehicles by reading their licence plates from images or video feeds. Cameras installed at traffic junctions, highways, entry and exit points and sensitive locations continuously capture live video streams. These feeds are processed by AI-powered ANPR software that detects the vehicle, isolates the number plate, and converts the characters into digital data, said Anoop G Prabhu, co-founder and CTO of Vehant technologies.

Advanced image-processing algorithms enable the system to function accurately even in challenging conditions such as poor lighting, high speeds, or partially obscured plates. Once the number plate



is read, the data is processed in real time and matched with government and law-enforcement databases. This allows authorities to automatically detect traffic violations, identify stolen or blacklisted vehicles, and monitor suspicious movements across the city, he added. AI is

playing a crucial role in integrating surveillance and vehicle tracking into Delhi Police's daily operations. AI-powered ANPR systems developed by Vehant Technologies analyse massive volumes of

across multiple locations, correlate them with incidents, and take preventive or immediate action. Instead of reacting after a crime occurs, police can now anticipate risks and intervene early, Prabhu said. Moreover, vehicles linked to criminal activity can be traced across different parts of the city, helping investigators reconstruct routes, identify escape paths and link suspects to specific incidents. Over time, the accumulated data allows the authorities to identify recurring patterns, hotspots and trends related to vehicle-based crimes. This intelligence-driven approach makes policing more proactive. Instead of relying solely on checkpoints or tip-offs, the police can use data-backed insights to conduct targeted operations and deploy resources more effectively. The ANPR deployment in Delhi is also guided by crime mapping — the analysis of historical crime data to identify high-risk and sensitive zones. Cameras are strategically placed in areas with higher crime rates, frequent traffic violations or security concerns. This targeted surveillance ensures better monitoring of vehicle activity where strict vigilance is required. By focusing on high-risk corridors and entry points, the police can track suspicious vehicles more efficiently and respond faster to emerging threats.

## Boy, mother die as scooter rams into truck in Narela

New Delhi: A 16-year-old boy and his mother were killed in a road accident involving a scooter and a truck in Outer North Delhi's Narela on Friday afternoon, the police said. The accident took place around 3 pm on the Old Narela-Bawana Road, close to the Rajeev Awasth Yojana complex, they said. After getting information about the mishap, the police rushed to the Delhi Police station 31 kg of Alprazolam tablets; busts multi-state racket with arrest of 3 Preliminary inquiry revealed that the boy and his mother, aged around 40, residents of Dariyapur Kalan village, were travelling on a scooter from Narela towards Bawana when their two-wheeler rammmed into a truck, a senior police officer said. The police took them to hospitals. The boy was declared dead on arrival at Babu Jagjivan Ram Memorial (BJRM) Hospital, while the woman succumbed to her injuries at Valsmiki Hospital, the police said. The truck driver was apprehended on the spot, officials said, adding that further legal action is being taken in the matter.

## Traffic cop dragged on car bonnet in Greater Noida; driver booked

Noida: In a dramatic escape attempt captured on camera, a traffic policeman in Greater Noida was dragged for nearly 500 metres on the bonnet of a car after its driver allegedly rammmed into him to evade a vehicle check, officials said on Thursday. According to the officials, the incident occurred around 2.30 pm Wednesday at the P3 roundabout. Traffic constable Gurmeet Chaudhary was managing traffic when he signalled a red car to stop. Instead of halting, the driver allegedly hit the policeman and continued driving, forcing Chaudhary to cling to the bonnet for about half a kilometre before the driver abandoned the vehicle and fled, the officials said. A video of the incident, recorded by a bystander, later surfaced on social media. The footage shows the car speeding away with the traffic policeman clinging to the bonnet.

## Biker died of suffocation, reveals autopsy report

New Delhi: Kamal Dhyani (25), who died after his bike fell into a pit dug by the Delhi Jal Board (DJB) in West Delhi's

report states that Kamal died due to suffocation after his mouth and nose were clogged with mud. Doctors also noted that



Janakpuri area last week, succumbed to traumatic asphyxia after his mouth and nose were clogged with mud, while his chest likely came under pressure from a heavy object, according to the post-mortem report. The

his chest likely came under pressure from a heavy object believed to be his motorcycle, which may have fallen on him inside the pit, significantly restricting his ability to breathe. Postmortem findings further recorded

burn marks on his body, particularly on his right thigh, which the doctor opined that these injuries were likely caused after death, possibly due to prolonged contact with the vehicle's silencer. Kamal, a resident of Kailashpuri, left his office in Rohini on Wednesday night, but did not reach home. His body was later recovered from a 15-foot-deep pit allegedly dug by the DJB in Janakpuri. His motorcycle was found toppled near the pit. Earlier, the police registered an FIR for culpable homicide at the Janakpuri police station against the contractor and Delhi Jal Board officials concerned in connection with the incident. The police remand of accused Rajesh Kumar Prajapati was extended by one day, while another accused, Yogesh, was sent to judicial custody. Non-bailable warrants have also been issued against alleged contractors - Himanshu Gupta and Kavish Gupta.

## 3 sharpshooters of Hasmat gang arrested after shootout

New Delhi: The Delhi Police nabbed three sharpshooters of the Wasim Hasmat gang for killing a rival member linked with Lawrence Bishnoi-Hashim Baba gang, officials said on Wednesday. The accused have been identified as Rehman (23) Adil (23) and Mohammad Ayan (19). According to the police, the trio shot dead Sameer, alias Kammu Pehalwan, associated with Lawrence Bishnoi-Hashim Baba gang in Shastri Park, northeast Delhi on January 24. The case stemmed from a gang rivalry. On New Year, a person named Wasim was stabbed to death and Lawrence Bishnoi had claimed the responsibility for the killing, alleging he was killed for raising voice against his fellow gangster Hashim Baba, an official said. Wasim was a known criminal figure previously involved in gang disputes and had survived multiple murder attempts. In year 2024, a shootout at GTB Hospital occurred where Hashim Baba gang members attempted to kill him, but accidentally shot another patient, namely Riyazuddin, the cop added. Wasim's murder raged his gang members who, on January 24, killed Sameer, alias Kammu Pehalwan, who is associated with Hasim Baba gang, on suspicion of planning and executing his killing, the officer mentioned. Acting on a tip-off about the presence of the shooters in the Pehalwan's murder case, a trap was laid near Ajmal Khan Park, Sector 28, Rohini. The suspects were seen riding a scooter about 11:40 pm. On being signalled to stop, they opened fire at the police team. The police also fired in self-defence. Two of accused sustained injuries on their legs and were overpowered, the officer added. They were taken for first aid and later arrested.

## Man fined Rs 1.88 lakh, awarded 6-month jail in power theft case

New Delhi: In a landmark ruling aimed at curbing electricity theft, a Delhi court has sentenced a man to six months of rigorous imprisonment and imposed a fine of Rs 1.88 lakh in a power theft case detected by Tata Power Delhi Distribution Limited (Tata Power-DDL). An inspection was conducted on June 3, 2019, on the premises of Kanwar Lal in Sultanpuri's JJ Colony in North Delhi, following a complaint of electricity theft. During the inspection, he was found illegally drawing power directly from a Tata Power-DDL pole through unauthorised wires for domestic use, without an electricity meter. The connected load at the premises was assessed at 9.1 kW, and a theft bill of Rs 1,88,772 was raised. The Special Electricity Court of Additional Sessions Judge Prashant Kumar at Rohini courts convicted the accused under Section 135 of the Electricity Act-2003, after examining documentary and other evidence on record. The sentence was pronounced on January 16, 2026. Reacting to the verdict, Tata Power-DDL's Chief Commercial Officer said the judgment sends a strong message on disciplined electricity usage and urged consumers to avoid illegal practices. Tata Power-DDL said such actions are part of its efforts to ensure reliable, affordable and sustainable power supply while strengthening consumer awareness and compliance.

# Occultist under police radar after 3 persons found dead in parked car

New Delhi: The police believe that an occultist is the prime accused behind the death of three persons whose bodies were found in a parked car on the Peeragarhi flyover in outer Delhi, with police sources pointing to his past involvement in similar cases. As per the sources, the 'tantric' has been linked to similar cases in the past, but was acquitted due to lack of evidence. "The police have traced one such case and are trying to gather evidence from it to prove the point," the sources added. The sources further mentioned that the 'tantric' was known for luring people with promises of doubling their wealth through occult practices. He used to lure people with the promise of financial gains, claiming their wealth would be doubled within a short

span of time. However, later his clients have either died under suspi-

area around 10.30 am on Sunday. After the meeting, they left for northeast



cious circumstances or gone missing. Investigators said the victims - Randhir (76), Naresh Singh (47) and Laxmi Devi (40) - met the 'tantric' in the Peeragarhi

Delhi via Ring Road and returned to the same area around 3 pm. Family members of Naresh and Randhir did not know about their affiliation with

the occultist. However, Laxmi's family knew about her affiliation and it is suspected that she introduced the duo to the tantric. As per preliminary investigation, the exact cause of their death is suspected due to poison. The sources mentioned that the poison might have been given to them in alcohol or any other drink as the police found the traces of intoxicating material in the car. The police are examining the case from both murder as well as suicide angles. Based on the investigation so far, sources said the tantric's

past history has emerged as a crucial link, and he remains on the police radar as the probe continues. According to the police, the car had been parked at the spot for some time. When passersby checked inside, they found all three occupants lying unconscious. After receiving no response despite knocking on the windows, they alerted the police. After getting information, the police reached the spot and forcibly opened the locked vehicle and recovered the bodies.

## NAME CHANGE

I, S VANITHA W/o No. 14838283N Rank-HAV/MT Name-RAMESH P R/o VILL-SEDRAMPUTTU, PO-SEDRAMPUTTU, TEH-POLUR, DIST-THIRUVANNAMALAI, TAMIL NADU-632315, have changed my name from S VANITHA to VANITHA R for all future purposes vide Affidavit dated 15/07/2025 before Notary Public, Kupwara.

## NAME CHANGE

I, hitherto known as ASHISH KUMAR RATHOR S/O PURAN LAL R/O Q-48, RAJEEV NAGAR BEGUM PUR, NORTH WEST DELHI, DELHI-110086, have changed my name and shall hereafter be known as RAZA-AHMED.

## PUBLIC NOTICE

It is for general information that I, NIDHI AGGARWAL YADAV D/o VIRENDER KUMAR AGGARWAL, and Ex. wife of AMIT YADAV, R/O H.No.E-12, Hauz Khas, South West Delhi-110016, declare that I got divorce from my Ex. Husband AMIT YADAV vide Court Decree HMA No. 603/2019 dated 30 - 04-2019, further I have changed my name and shall hereafter be known as NIDHI AGGARWAL. I also have changed the name of my minor Son namely AAYAN YADAV, aged 16 years and my minor daughter namely ARSHIYA YADAV, aged 13 years and they shall hereafter be known as AAYAN AGGARWAL and ARSHIYA AGGARWAL respectively, which may be amended accordingly.

## NAME CHANGE

I, VINOD KUMAR S/O UDAY SINGH residing at FLAT NO-G-3/8, NEAR DDA WATER TANK, SECTOR-4, ROHINI, DELHI-110085 have changed my name to VINOD KUMAR KUSHWAHA for all future purpose.

## NAME CHANGE

I, SANTOSH KUMAR S/O VISHVA NATH PRASAD residing at PLOT NO-38859, FLAT NO-2, STREET NO-5, HAVENS GARDEN MATIALA, DELHI-110059 have changed my name to SANTOSH KUMAR GUPTA for all future purposes

## NAME CHANGE

I, Anil Balakrishna Panicker s/o Angakattil Narayan Balakrishna Panicker R/o A-6/334-A, Janta Flats, Paschim Vihar, Delhi-110063, have changed my name to Anil Bala Panicker permanently.

## NAME CHANGE

I, SH AUTAR SINGH Father of JC-413677X Rank-SUB MAJ Name-BHAGAT SINGH presently residing at VILL-BILTIYA, SIKOLI TALLI, PO-DHAUNTIAL, DIST-PAURI GARHWAL, UTTARAKHAND-246155 have changed my name from SH AUTAR SINGH to AVTAR SINGH for all future purposes vide affidavit dated 05/09/2023 before Notary Public, Delhi.

## NAME CHANGE

I, NO-17007475L Rank-NK Name-JITENDRA GANGWAR S/O LATE NIRANJAN LAL GANGWAR R/O WARD NO-11, MOHALLA GYASPUR, NEAR BANGALI BABA MANDIR, BILASPUR, PILIBHIT, UTTAR PRADESH-262201 have changed my minor son's name from DAKSH GANGWAR to YASH GANGWAR for all future purposes vide Affidavit Dated 05/09/2023 before Notary Public, Delhi.

## PUBLIC NOTICE

It is for general information that I, BALJEET SINGH S/O GURCHARAN SINGH R/o 12/32, Geeta Colony, East Delhi-110031 declare that name of mine, my wife and my minor daughter has been wrongly written as BALJEET SINGH CHUGH, GURPREET KAUR CHUGH, JASLEEN KAUR CHUGH in my minor daughter JASLEEN KAUR aged 16 years in her 10th class Educational Documents. The actual name of mine, my wife and my minor daughter are BALJEET SINGH, GURPREET KAUR and JASLEEN KAUR respectively, which may be amended accordingly.

## NAME CHANGE

I Swaran Kaur Sawhney W/o Prith Pal Singh R/o 10C/80 SFS Flats Green View Apartment Mayapuri Road Hari Nagar West Delhi-110064 Have Changed My Name to Swaran Kaur for all purpose.

## PUBLIC NOTICE

### Notice of Organisational Election and Appointment of Office Bearers

This is to inform the general public, party members, supporters, statutory authorities, and all concerned stakeholders that the **Organisational Election of Parivartan Rajniti Party**, a registered political party, was duly conducted in accordance with the party constitution, rules, and applicable provisions of law. Pursuant to the said organisational election, the following office bearers have been elected/appointed for the term 2026-2029 and they have assumed charge with effect from **14th February, 2026**.

1. **President** – ANITHA YANNAM  
2. **General Secretary** – VIJAY PRATAP REDDY TAMMA  
3. **Treasurer** – SUDHAKARA REDDY YANNAM  
The election process was carried out in a free, fair, and transparent manner, and the results were duly approved and ratified by the competent authority of the party.

This public notice is issued for the purpose of **general information, official record**, and to notify all government departments, election authorities, banks, institutions, media houses, and other concerned entities that the above-mentioned individuals are the **authorized representatives and office bearers** of the party. Any communication, correspondence, or transaction undertaken by the above office bearers shall be considered **valid and binding** on behalf of the party. Issued on this **15th February, 2026**.

By Order of the Party  
For Parivartan Rajniti Party

## NAME CHANGE

I, ABDUL TAWWAB S/O Shri Abdul Rehman Resident of House No. C-16, Abhimanyu Gali, Near Babu Ram Chowk, Arjun Mohalla, Moujpur, Delhi-110053 have changed my name ABDUL TAWWAB to ABDUL TAWWAB for all future purposes.

## NAME CHANGE

I, SIDDHARTH RANA S/O BHAGWAN RANA residing at H NO-1074, SIRASPUR, DELHI-110042 have changed my name to SIDDHARTH RANA for all future purpose.

## NAME CHANGE

I Kapil Kumar Yadav S/o Dinesh Yadav R/o House No-523 P, Sector-14, Gurgaon, Haryana-122001, Have Changed My Name To Kapil Yadav For All Purpose

## NAME CHANGE

I, Pradeep Kumar S/o Prem Chand R/o D-754/A, Gali No.1, Ashok Nagar, Shahdara, Delhi-110093 have changed the name of my minor son from Arjun to Arjun Vaidwan.

## NAME CHANGE

I, Anupama D/o Pradeep Kumar R/o D-754/A, Gali No.1, Ashok Nagar, Shahdara, Delhi-110093 have changed my name to Anupama Chaudhary.

## NAME CHANGE

I, VINOD KUMAR S/O UDAY SINGH residing at FLAT NO-G-3/8, NEAR DDA WATER TANK, SECTOR-4, ROHINI, DELHI-110085 have changed my name to VINOD KUMAR KUSHWAHA for all future purpose.

## NAME CHANGE

I Manoj Ram S/o Ram Bilash Ram R/o Flat No-6, Tower-8, Harmelia Street, IRIS, Vastika City, Sector-49, Gurgaon, Haryana-122018, Have Changed My Name To Manoj Kumar For All Purpose

## NAME CHANGE

I Taran Preet Singh Kochhar S/o Manpreet Singh Kochhar R/o 10C/80 SFS Flats Green View Apartment Mayapuri Road Hari Nagar West Delhi-110064 Have Change My Given Name Taranpreet Singh and Surname Kochhar for all purpose.

## NAME CHANGE

I, DEEPAK KUMAR VERMA S/O PARTAP SINGH resident of H.No.16, Tara Nagar Main Kakrola Road, Kakrola, South West Delhi, Delhi-110078 have changed the name of my minor daughter SHREYA ALIAS SHREYA VERMA aged 13 years, and she shall hereafter be known as SHREYA VERMA.

## NAME CHANGE

I, hitherto known as SAMEERA SINGH D/O SUDHIR KUMAR SINGH residing at Flat No.E-1058, River Heights, Raj Nagar, Extension, Tower-15, Ghaziabad, U.P.-201001, have changed my name and shall hereafter be known as SAMEERA SINGH AMETHIA.

## NAME CHANGE

I, Sushma D/O Shambu Prasad Charamana W/O Vinod Kumar R/O B-6 Police Colony Mandir Marg New Delhi 110001 Have changed my name to Sushma Badola for all future purposes.

## NAME CHANGE

I Swaran Kaur Sawhney W/o Prith Pal Singh R/o 10C/80 SFS Flats Green View Apartment Mayapuri Road Hari Nagar West Delhi-110064 Have Changed My Name to Swaran Kaur for all purpose.

## PUBLIC NOTICE

It is for general information that I, Rahul Vishwakarma R/o J-4, Ground Floor Gandhinagar, Mir Dard Road, Minato Road, Indraprastha, Central Delhi, Delhi-110002 declare that name of mine has been wrongly written as Rahul Kumar Vishwakarma in my minor daughter namely Anika Vishwakarma aged 5 years in his School Records. The actual name of mine is Rahul Vishwakarma.

## PUBLIC NOTICE

It is for general information that I, INDU CHAUHAN W/O NARENDER SINGH CHAUHAN R/O N-129/1, T-HUTS, KHILONA BAGH DIST NORTH WEST DELHI-110009 declare that name of mine has been wrongly written as INDU KANWAR in my minor son namely HARSH VARDHAN SINGH CHAUHAN aged 13 years in his school record and birth certificate No. MCDOLIR-2211-005020356. The actual name of mine is INDU CHAUHAN which may be amended accordingly

## PUBLIC NOTICE

It is for general information that CHANDER VEER S/O RAMJI LAL R/O Q-157 Vikas Vihar Uttam Nagar West Delhi-110059 declare that name of mine has been wrongly written as CHANDER PAL in my minor daughter namely KIRTI aged 15 years in her birth certificate No.MCDOLIR-0110-004425168. The actual name of mine is CHANDER VEER which may be amended accordingly

## PUBLIC NOTICE

It is for general information that I, BALJEET SINGH S/O GURCHARAN SINGH R/o 12/32, Geeta Colony, East Delhi-110031 declare that name of mine, my wife and my minor daughter has been wrongly written as BALJEET SINGH CHUGH, GURPREET KAUR CHUGH, JASLEEN KAUR CHUGH in my minor daughter JASLEEN KAUR aged 16 years in her 10th class Educational Documents. The actual name of mine, my wife and my minor daughter are BALJEET SINGH, GURPREET KAUR and JASLEEN KAUR respectively, which may be amended accordingly.

## NAME CHANGE

I, MOGHAL FATHIMA BAIG Wife of JC-335017L Rank-NB/SUB Name-MOGHAL MOHAMMAD BAIG Presently residing at 9-5-5, ANDHRA RATNA NAGAR, PIER-2, ALA HIGH SCHOOL, PEERALA, CHIRALA PRAKASAM DISTRICT, ANDHRA PRADESH-523157, have changed my name from MOGHAL FATHIMA BAIG to FATHIMA SHAIK for all future purposes vide Affidavit dated 16/07/2025 before First Class Magistrate, Shillong, Meghalaya.

## NAME CHANGE

I, Jugal Kishor S/O Lita Dhar R/o H.No-196 S/F, Kh.No-619/21, Chatter Pur, South Delhi, Delhi-110074 have changed the name of my minor daughter namely Krishna Devi aged 16 years and she shall hereafter be known as Priya.

## NAME CHANGE

I, hitherto known as Farman S/O Akeel Ahmed R/o B 272/27, Gali No 4, Subhash Mohalla North Ghonda, Garhi Mendu, Bhajan Pura, North East, Delhi-110053 have changed my name and shall hereafter be known as Farman Ahmed.

## NAME CHANGE

I, hitherto known as Laxman Yadav alias Bhavikshan Yadav S/O Beshan Yadav R/O Gram Debra, Post Bela, Thana Babubarhi, Ward No-02, Bela, PO Bela, Dist Madhubani, Bihar-847224 have changed my name and shall hereafter be known as Bhavikshan Yadav.

## COMPREHENSIVE ANNUAL MAINTENANCE CONTRACT

E-tender Notice No. S&T/APDJ/58 Dated: 12-02-2026. E-Tenders are invited by the undersigned for the following works: **Tender No. AP-ST-58-2025-26. Name of work:** Comprehensive Annual Maintenance Contract of Data loggers of Alipurduar Division for a period of 03 (three) years, i.e. 36 months. **Tender Value:** ₹2,02,32,287.64/- **Earnest Money:** ₹2,51,200/- **E-tender will be closed at 15:00 hrs. on 12-03-2026 & opening at 12-03-2026** after closing of E-Tender. The complete information with the tender document of above e-tender will be available upto in the website **www.ireps.gov.in** **DRM (S&T), Alipurduar Division** **NORTHEAST FRONTIER RAILWAY** *Serving Customers With A Smile*



NEWS BOX

22-year-old Indian student goes missing in US

**NEW YORK. (Agency)**  
A 22-year-old Indian postgraduate student has gone missing in the US state of California, prompting efforts by authorities to locate him.Saketh Sreenivasaiah, a UC Berkeley student hailing from Karnataka, disappeared on Tuesday, local media reported, quoting the police.His backpack, with his passport and laptop, was found on a doorstep in the Park Hills neighbourhood, The Berkeley Scanner news portal reported.The Indian consulate in San Francisco expressed deep concern about his disappearance.”...deeply concerned about the disappearance of Saketh Sreenivasaiah, an Indian postgraduate student of UC Berkeley, hailing from the State of Karnataka,” it said in an X post.The Consulate is in touch with the family and also is in contact with the concerned local authorities to locate the student," it added.  
Sreenivasaiah was last seen in the 1700 block of Dwight Way, the report quoted police as saying.  
He is described as approximately 6 feet 1 inch tall, weighing around 73 kilograms, with short black hair and brown eyes.Police urged anyone with information about Sreenivasaiah to notify local law enforcement.

Widespread arrests roil Iran weeks after security forces crushed protests

**CAIRO.(Agency)**  
The Iranian security agents came at 2 am, pulling up in a half-dozen cars outside the home of the Nakhii family. They woke up the sleeping sisters, Nyusha and Mona, and forced them to give the passwords for their phones. Then they took the two away.  
The women were accused of participating in the nationwide protests that shook Iran a week earlier, a friend of the pair told The Associated Press, speaking on condition of anonymity for her security as she described the Jan. 16 arrests.Such arrests have been happening for weeks following the government crackdown last month that crushed the protests calling for the end of the country's theocratic rule.Reports of raids on homes and workplaces have come from major cities and rural towns alike, revealing a dragnet that has touched large swaths of Iranian society. University students, doctors, lawyers, teachers, actors, business owners, athletes and filmmakers have been swept up, as well as reformist figures close to President Masoud Pezeshkian.They are often held incommunicado for days or weeks and prevented from contacting family members or lawyers, according to activists monitoring the arrests. That has left desperate relatives searching for their loved ones.  
The US-based Human Rights Activists News Agency has put the number of arrests at more than 50,000. The AP has been unable to verify the figure. Tracking the detainees has been difficult since Iranian authorities imposed an internet blackout, and reports leak out only with difficulty.Other activist groups outside Iran have also been working to document the sweeps. "Authorities continue to identify people and detain them," said Shiva Nazararahi, an organizer with one of those groups, the Committee for Monitoring the Status of Detained Protesters.So far, the committee has verified the names of more than 2,200 people who were arrested, using direct reports from families and a network of contacts on the ground. The arrestees include 107 university students, 82 children as young as 13, as well as 19 lawyers and 106 doctors.

US Prepares For Potential Weeks-Long Operations Against Iran: Report

**World. (Agency)**  
The US military is preparing for the possibility of sustained, weeks-long operations against Iran if President Donald Trump orders an attack, two US officials told Reuters, in what could become a far more serious conflict than previously seen between the countries.The disclosure by the officials, who spoke on condition of anonymity due to the sensitive nature of the planning, raises the stakes for the diplomacy underway between the United States and Iran.US and Iranian diplomats held talks in Oman last week in an effort to revive diplomacy over Tehran's nuclear programme, after Trump amassed military forces in the region, raising fears of new military action.US officials said on Friday the Pentagon was sending an additional aircraft carrier to the Middle East, adding thousands more troops along with fighter aircraft, guided-missile destroyers and other firepower capable of waging attacks and defending against them.Trump, speaking to US troops on Friday at a base in North Carolina, said it had "been difficult to make a deal" with Iran.  
"Sometimes you have to have fear. That's the only thing that really will get the situation taken care of," Trump said.Asked for comment on the preparations for a potentially sustained US military operation, White House spokesperson Anna Kelly said: "President Trump has all options on the table with regard to Iran."  
"He listens to a variety of perspectives on any given issue, but makes the final decision based on what is best for our country and national security," Kelly said.The Pentagon declined to comment.  
The United States sent two aircraft carriers to the region last year, when it carried out strikes against Iranian nuclear sites.However, June's "Midnight Hammer" operation was essentially a one-off U.S. attack, with stealth bombers flying from the United States to strike Iranian nuclear facilities. Iran staged a very limited retaliatory strike on a U.S. base in Qatar.RISKS INCREASING  
The planning underway this time is more complex, the officials said.In a sustained campaign, the US military could hit Iranian state and security facilities, not just nuclear infrastructure, one of the officials said. The official declined to provide specific detail.

\$100K 'hit job' and up to 40 years in jail: Inside Indian national’s alleged role in Pannun murder plot

Nikhil Gupta pleaded guilty to his role in an alleged murder-for-hire plot targeting Khalistani terrorist Gurpatwant Singh Pannun on US soil. What the court records show.

**CHANDIGARH. (Agency)**  
Indian national Nikhil Gupta will be sentenced on May 29 this year after pleading guilty in a US federal court to his role in an alleged murder-for-hire plot on American soil.The US Attorney’s Office for the Southern District of New York described Gupta, also known as Nick, as an "international narcotics and weapons trafficker", accusing him of involvement in a plot to kill Khalistani separatist and designated terrorist Gurpatwant Singh Pannun.Gupta, 54, pleaded guilty to murder-for-hire, conspiracy to commit

murder-for-hire and conspiracy to commit money laundering, in connection with efforts to kill Pannun in New York. He faces up to 40 years in prison across all three charges and will be sentenced by US District Judge Victor Marrero.  
According to the US Department of Justice (DOJ), Gupta was recruited by Vikash Yadav, who is described in a second superseding indictment and other court documents as an employee of India’s Cabinet Secretariat, which houses the country’s foreign intelligence service, the Research and Analysis Wing (RAW).  
In a detailed statement, the DOJ said that, according to the Second Superseding Indictment and statements made in court, "At Yadav’s direction", Gupta allegedly sought to "hire a hitman to orchestrate the assassination" of Pannun on US soil.  
The individuals Gupta contacted were, however, working with US law enforcement. The plot was ultimately thwarted by the Drug Enforcement Administration (DEA) and the Federal Bureau of Investigation (FBI).The

intended target is a US citizen of Indian origin who is a vocal critic of the Indian government and leads a US-based organisation advocating the secession of Punjab to establish a Sikh sovereign state



called Khalistan. India has banned the "victim" (Pannun) and his separatist organisation, the document reads.  
Gupta, an Indian citizen and resident, described himself as an “international narcotics and weapons trafficker” in electronic communications with Yadav and others, according to court records.\$100,000 for the killing'

According to the DOJ, in or about May 2023, Yadav recruited Gupta to orchestrate the assassination in the United States.  
"At Yadav’s direction", Gupta contacted an individual he believed to be a criminal associate for assistance in hiring a hitman to kill the victim (Pannun) in New York City. The individual was, in fact, a confidential source (CS) working with the DEA. The CS introduced Gupta to a purported hitman, who was actually a DEA undercover officer (UC), it added.  
Authorities say Yadav subsequently agreed, in dealings brokered by Gupta, to pay the UC \$100,000 to murder the victim and arranged a \$15,000 cash in advance on or about June 9, 2023.  
In June 2023, Yadav also provided further personal information about the victim -- including the Victim’s home address in New York City, phone numbers associated with the Victim, and details about the Victim’s day-to-day conduct -- which Gupta forwarded to the UC, along with surveillance photographs, the court records showed.

What to know about the US Homeland Security shutdown starting this weekend

**NEW YORK. (Agency)**  
Another shutdown for parts of the federal government is expected this weekend as lawmakers debate new restrictions on US President Donald Trump's immigration enforcement agenda.Funding for the Department of Homeland Security is set to expire Saturday. Democrats say they won't help approve more funding until new restrictions are placed on federal immigration operations after the fatal shooting of Alex Pretti and Renee Good in Minneapolis last month.The White House has been negotiating with the Democrats, but the two sides failed to reach a deal by the end of the week, guaranteeing that funding for the department will lapse.Unlike the record 43-day shutdown last fall, the closures will be narrowly confined, as only agencies under the DHS umbrella — like Immigration and Customs Enforcement and Customs and Border Protection — will be affected. Still, depending on how long the shutdown lasts, some federal workers could begin to miss paychecks.  
Services like airport screening could also suffer if the



shutdown drags on for weeks. At the Transportation Security Administration, about 95% of employees are deemed essential. They will continue to scan passengers and their bags at the nation's commercial airports.But they will work without pay until the funding lapse is resolved, raising the possibility that workers will be calling out or taking unscheduled leave. Many TSA workers already faced financial stress last year."Some are just now recovering from the financial impact of the 43-day shutdown" said Ha Nguyen McNeill, a senior official performing the duties of TSA administrator. "Many are still reeling from it."  
**Why is a Homeland Security shutdown happening?**  
Essentially, it's because Trump acquiesced to Democrats' request that Homeland Security funding be stripped from a broader spending package to allow more time for negotiation over demands for changes to immigration enforcement, like a code of conduct for federal agents and a requirement that officers show identification. Homeland Security was temporarily funded only through Feb. 13.The rest of the federal government is funded through Sept. 30. That means most federal programs are unaffected by the latest shutdown, including food assistance, and pay for most federal workers and for service members will continue uninterrupted.

'Gifts, soup from Uncle Jeffrey': Epstein ties that ended ex-Obama lawyer Ruemmler’s run at Goldman

**NEW YORK (Agency)**  
Goldman Sachs general counsel Kathy Ruemmler has had a storied legal career. As a federal prosecutor, she helped successfully prosecute Enron executives including Ken Lay and Jeffrey Skilling.She was part of President Barack Obama's administration, working in various roles for much of his two terms in office, including as White House Counsel. She was even briefly considered by President Obama as a candidate for attorney general.  
On Thursday, Ruemmler, 54, announced that she plans to resign from the top legal post at Goldman after a trove of emails and correspondence between her and disgraced financier Jeffrey Epstein showed the two individuals were especially close, years after Epstein's 2008 conviction on sex crimes charges, when he became a registered sex offender.Ruemmler previously downplayed her relationship with Epstein. She called him a "monster" and said she regretted ever knowing him. Ruemmler has repeatedly described their relationship as

professional, citing her job as a private defense attorney before she ever joined Goldman Sachs.

But documents released in recent weeks and reviewed by The Associated Press



depict a deeper relationship than had previously been characterized by Ruemmler and Goldman Sachs. These included intimate email exchanges, social plans and gifts that went beyond formal legal work.Roughly 8,400 documents involved Ruemmler or referenced her. Some correspondence shows that Ruemmler was aware of the extent of the allegations that Epstein had faced involving underage girls in Florida.In some instances, she advised Epstein on how he might go about trying to repair his image and defend

himself publicly against new claims of misconduct.

Well, I adore him'  
The gifts Epstein gave to Ruemmler have been documented in news reports: the spa treatments, the handbags from Hermes, an Apple Watch, a Fendi coat, among many others. But some of the interactions between Epstein and Ruemmler described throughout their correspondence indicates that Epstein and Ruemmler did not simply have a lawyer-client transactional relationship, as Ruemmler previously attested to."It makes him happy to see you happy," Epstein's assistant wrote to Ruemmler in 2016, after Epstein prepaid for a spa treatment for her.In October 2018, Epstein directed one of his assistants to send flowers and chicken soup to Ruemmler because she has "not been feeling well." It would not be the first time that Epstein would send her a small token of appreciation when she was sick. They talked about dating issues, made jokes about both the wealthy and everyday people, and shared laments about their careers and dating lives.

Bangladesh EC publishes gazette of newly elected MPs, clearing path for swearing-in



**DHAKA. (Agency)**  
Bangladesh's Election Commission has published a gazette of newly elected members of Parliament from the 13th general election, paving the way for their swearing-in, media reports said on Saturday.The gazette was published for 297 out of the 300 parliamentary

constituencies late on Friday, state-run BSS news agency reported.The notification was signed by Akhtar Ahmed, secretary of the Election Commission Secretariat.The next step is the swearing-in ceremony, which will officially seat them in Parliament, according to the bdnews24 news portal.

Parliamentary elections were held in Bangladesh on Thursday across 299 of the country's 300 constituencies, while the results from two seats were withheld.The Bangladesh Nationalist Party (BNP) bagged 209 out of 297 seats and is making a return to power after a gap of two decades. The right-wing Jamaat-e-Islami, known to be close to Pakistan, secured 68 seats.  
The Awami League party of deposed prime minister Sheikh Hasina was barred from contesting the elections, which recorded 59.44 per cent voter turnout.The 13th Parliamentary elections assumed significance as they were held after a period of tumultuous political vacuum, instability and fragile security situation, including widespread attacks on minorities after the student-led protests.

Trump says change in power in Iran ‘would be best thing that could happen’

**WASHINGTON. (Agency)**  
US President Donald Trump has said that a change in power in Iran “would be the best thing that could happen” as the US administration weighs whether to take military action against Tehran.  
Trump made the comments shortly after visiting with troops in Ft. Bragg, North Carolina, and after he confirmed earlier in the day that he’s deploying a second aircraft carrier group to the Mideast for potential military action against Iran.“It seems like that would be the best thing that could happen,” Trump said in an exchange with reporters when asked about pressing for the ouster of the Islamic clerical rule in Iran. “For 47 years, they’ve been talking and talking and talking.”Trump said earlier that the USS Gerald R. Ford, the world’s largest aircraft carrier, is being sent from the Caribbean Sea to the Mideast to join other warships and military assets the US has built up in the region.The lanned deployment comes just days after Trump

suggested another round of talks with the Iranians was at hand. Those negotiations didn’t materialise, as one of Tehran’s top security officials visited Oman and Qatar this week and exchanged messages with US intermediaries.  
“In case we don’t make a deal, we’ll need it,” Trump told reporters about the second carrier. He added, “It’ll be leaving very soon.”Already, Gulf Arab nations have warned any attack could spiral into another regional conflict in West Asia, still reeling from the Israel-Hamas war in the Gaza Strip.Meanwhile, Iranians are beginning to hold 40-day mourning ceremonies for the thousands killed in Tehran’s bloody crackdown on nationwide protests last month, adding to the internal pressure faced by the sanctions-battered Islamic Republic.The Ford, whose new deployment was first reported by The New York Times, will join the USS Abraham Lincoln and its accompanying guided-missile destroyers,

which have been in the region for over two weeks. US forces already have shot down an Iranian drone that approached the



Lincoln on the same day last week that Iran tried to stop a US-flagged ship in the Strait of Hormuz.  
It is a quick turnaround for the Ford, which Trump sent from the Mediterranean Sea to the Caribbean last October as the administration built up a huge military

presence in the lead-up to the surprise raid last month that captured then-Venezuelan President Nicolás Maduro.  
It also appears to be at odds with the Trump administration’s national security and defence strategies, which put an emphasis on the Western Hemisphere over other parts of the world.In response to questions about the movement of the Ford, US Southern Command said US forces in Latin America will continue to “counter illicit activities and malign actors in the Western Hemisphere.”  
“While force posture evolves, our operational capability does not,” Col. Emanuel Ortiz, spokesperson for Southern Command, said in a statement.  
US “forces remain fully ready to project power, defend themselves, and protect US interests in the region” The Ford strike group will bring more than 5,000 additional troops to West Asia but few capabilities or weapons that don’t already exist within the Lincoln group.



NEWS BOX

## With GBA polls looming, Bengaluru set for bigger push in state budget

**BENGALURU. (Agency)**

Bengaluru is expected to receive a lion's share in the upcoming state budget to be presented by Chief Minister Siddaramaiah on March 6. While Bengaluru Development Minister and Deputy Chief Minister DK Shivakumar is pushing for higher grants for the city, the chief minister himself is also facing pressure to focus on Bengaluru's development as he heads the Greater Bengaluru Authority (GBA), with GBA polls likely to be held this year.

In the 2025-26 Budget, the chief minister had announced Rs 7,000 crore for infrastructure works (excluding major projects), compared to Rs 3,000 crore earmarked for infrastructure in 2024. This year, allocations are expected to cross Rs 12,000 crore amid growing demands for improved roads, better footpaths and effective garbage management.

"Going by past trends, the party in power in the state tends to retain control of Bengaluru. With issues such as poor roads, broken footpaths and the garbage menace, the government believes it needs better control and higher allocations. The Congress government's move to divide BBMP into five corporations has already drawn criticism and could put the party in an embarrassing position if it loses the polls," sources said. A senior minister, speaking on condition of anonymity, said the chief minister is under pressure to announce additional grants.

## Chennai realtor sells flats built on temple land, buyers cry foul

**CHENNAI. (Agency)**

Over 2,000 homebuyers in Korattur have been left in the lurch after a popular realtor allegedly beguiled them of crores of rupees by selling residential properties, which was developed on a land mired in legal disputes and reportedly belonging to a temple.

A complaint to the Director General of Police (DGP) filed by the Orchid Springss All Owners Association says that the registration department has stopped registration of flats as two survey numbers of land parcels on which the apartment has been built, were classified as temple lands.

It was only during the mid-2025, the association came to know about a dispute regarding the two survey numbers and writ was pending in the Madras High Court. "Some time during early 2018, we were told that registration of houses in Orchid Springss has been stopped by the Registration Department. When enquired, the builder said it was a small issue and has been taken care of. Until mid-January 2026, the registration has been going for new and resales also," the complaint said.

Alleging criminal intent and cheating by the promoter, the buyers raised concern that their investments are at stake as banks have stopped processing loans and some financial institutions value the property at Rs 0. The association sought the intervention of police as the buyers have collectively lost over Rs 2,000 crore (average price of one apartment is Rs 1 crore) and urged the DGP to file cases under various sections of BNS including section 318 (cheating) and section 336 (forgery).

## Telangana HC bench seeks report on baby in trafficking case

**HYDERABAD. (Agency)**

The Telangana High Court has sought a report on the wellbeing of a two-year-old girl removed from her adoptive parents during an investigation into a child trafficking network. A bench of Chief Justice Aparesh Kumar Singh and Justice GM Mohiuddin directed the Women and Child Welfare department to place its assessment before the court.

The bench was hearing a writ appeal by the couple seeking restoration of custody. The matter has been listed for consideration on March 10. The appeal challenges a January 28 order of a single judge who declined to restore custody on the ground that the adoption was not conducted in accordance with statutory procedure. The court recorded



that the child was obtained through a mediator linked to trafficking cases. Dismissing the plea, the single judge said that emotional bonds arising from an unlawful adoption could not legitimise a "backdoor" process. During the appeal hearing, counsel for the couple conceded that the adoption was not routed through recognised legal channels and that payment had been made to an intermediary. Counsel urged the bench to consider custody in the child's best interests.

The appellants relied on a recent ruling of the Supreme Court invoking Article 142 of the Constitution, which empowers the apex court to pass orders to do complete justice. The bench noted that the apex court had clarified that its directions in the cited case were confined to specific facts and were not meant as a precedent.

# Hosakote accident: Underage driving raises many relevant questions

**Early sensitisation, responsible role-modelling, open communication in families needed; Influence of adult behaviour on kids' habits prominent: Experts**

**BENGALURU. (Agency)**

In the wake of the fatal collision near Bengaluru reportedly involving minors, mental health professionals are urging society to shift the conversation toward parenting practices, adolescent development, and the broader social environment that shapes young people's behaviour. Experts say such incidents highlight the need for early sensitisation, responsible role-modelling, and open communication within families rather than reactive blame.

Adolescence is a stage marked by developmental vulnerability, said consultant counselling psychologist Rakhi N Gopan. Young people are more likely to underestimate risks, seek peer approval, and pursue thrill-seeking experiences due to ongoing brain development. While society often questions parental responsibility after such incidents, reducing the issue to blame overlooks biological, psychological, and social factors. Instead, the focus should be on helping parents understand adolescent behaviour and building supportive environments that encourage safer choices.

The influence of adult behaviour on children's habits cannot be overstated, observed counselling psychologist Shayna Sunu. When

adults ignore traffic signals, avoid helmets, or disregard lane discipline, children internalise these practices as normal. Moving beyond rule enforcement, she emphasised the importance of psychoeducation, explaining why safety measures matter. Teaching children that



helmets and seat belts protect lives, not merely prevent fines, can foster a deeper sense of responsibility and long-term behavioural change. Experts add that open, non-judgmental communication at home is another critical preventive factor.

When teenagers feel safe discussing their plans, parents are better positioned to guide them, set boundaries, and ensure safety. Fear-based

control, experts warn, may instead push adolescents to hide risky behaviour, including unauthorised driving. Building trust allows parents to remain informed and involved while still respecting growing independence.

Traffic Expert Prof. MN Sreehari stressed that parents are legally accountable when minors access vehicles and pointed out that with extensive camera surveillance in place, traffic police are responsible for monitoring violations in real time and taking immediate action, and in cases involving underage drivers, the law mandates that parents be held accountable. Stronger value-based education that teaches civic sense, road discipline, and social responsibility from an early age is essential.

"Raising responsible citizens, requires integrating practical life skills and ethical behaviour into both parenting and education systems," he said.

Another expert said that just like firearm licence holders are booked if it is misused by their children or others, as such weapons must be kept in safe custody, parents should also ensure that their vehicle keys are out of reach of children, especially teenagers, as vehicles can be deadly if they are used by minors.

# Apprenticeship to be part of BA, BSc soon, says Karnataka Higher Edu Minister Sudhakar

**Sudhakar shared that the AEDP degree courses launched in the academic year 2024-25 are shaping students to be job-ready professionals**

**BENGALURU. (Agency)**

Minister of Higher Education Dr MC Sudhakar announced that the employment-oriented Apprenticeship Embedded Degree Programme (AEDP) will soon be extended to students studying arts and science too. It is now available only for commerce students.

Inaugurating a one-day workshop at Jnanajyoti Auditorium for commerce students, who have completed two years of study in finance, banking, logistics, e-commerce and retail sectors, he said, "The programme is aligned with industry requirements. Similar employment-oriented curriculum



models will be introduced for BSc, BA students to meet sectoral skill needs," Sudhakar shared

broader adoption. that the AEDP degree courses launched in the academic year 2024-25 are shaping students to be job-ready professionals. He said, "Students will complete their fourth and fifth semester in industry settings, which will strengthen their career prospects."

He stated that after Karnataka implemented AEDP, the University Grants Commission adopted the model for nationwide implementation. He recalled presenting the concept on a national platform, capturing the attention of the UGC leadership and inspired

# Rejects developer's plea, status quo request: Bombay HC clears Kanjurmarg land transfer for Metro 6 depot

**Mumbai. (Agency)**

In significant relief to the Maharashtra government, the Bombay High Court on Friday dismissed a plea filed by a private developer challenging the land transfer at Kanjurmarg to Mumbai Metropolitan Region Development Authority (MMRDA) to construct the Metro 6 depot. The court also refused the developer's request to continue status quo on the land for four to six weeks to enable him to approach the Supreme Court.

The ruling clears a key major legal hurdle for the long delayed Metro Line 6 project, which requires a dedicated depot at Kanjurmarg to stable and maintain trains.

Rejecting the plea, the court observed, "We have also recorded in findings that the plea filed by the petitioner shall not be maintainable and in view thereof, the prayer for maintaining status quo for 4 to 6 weeks is declined."

The petition was filed by Maheshkumar Garodia of the

Garodia Group, who sought to quash the April 17, 2023 order issued by the Mumbai Suburban District Collector transferring salt pan land, including around 15 hectares earmarked for the Metro 6 Swami Samarth Nagar-Jogeshwari-Vikhroli-Kanjurmarg depot. He had also sought directions restraining



authorities from carrying out any development work on the land.

Garodia, represented by senior advocate Aspi Chinoy, had argued that "the State government, without even having any right, title and interest over the subject property, cannot take forcible possession of a private property and dispossess the petitioner". He claimed to be

a lessee of a large tract of land in Kanjur village and contended that the state had passed the impugned order without taking cognisance of a pending civil suit over the land. He had also earlier argued that the land was reserved for low cost housing and that an application had been made by private developer Shapoorji Pallonji to construct affordable homes, and therefore the land could not be transferred for the Metro project. Advocate General Milind Sathe and advocate Saket Mone, appearing for MMRDA, opposed the developer's claims.

A bench of Chief Justice Shree Chandrashekhar and Justice Gautam A Ankhad noted that the Advocate General of Maharashtra had on May 8 last year made a statement that "status quo in respect of subject matter of the petitions shall not be disturbed" till further hearings. In October 2024, the High Court had directed authorities to maintain status quo, which was extended from time to time.

# Redeveloped Connemara market to open by August

**THIRUVANANTHAPURAM. (Agency)**

The redeveloped Palayam Connemara market, one of the bustling commercial landmarks, is slated to be completed by August and will be open for public. The redevelopment project under the Smart City Mission of the centuries-old Palayam Connemara market, after years of delay, is back on track with work progressing at full swing.

The project, which was originally awarded in 2021, had been stalled for nearly three years due to repeated administrative and procedural hurdles. The plan faced a major setback after the earlier contractor, RDS Projects Ltd backed out of the project citing cost escalation and other delays. Subsequently, the Smart City Thiruvananthapuram Ltd (SCTL) rendered the project and the bid for the construction was won by a Hyderabad based contractor at an estimated cost of Rs 71 crore.

An official said that excavation for the two-level basement parking is ongoing. "Around 25 per cent of the work has been completed and the rest of the excavation work is expected to be completed by March end. After that the foundation work will begin and the construction activities are expected to be completed in the next months," said the official. The project which was

## Permits and licences of two cabbies revoked for overcharging American tourist

**Mumbai. (Agency)**

The Sahar police have completed the process of cancelling the taxi permits and driving licences of two drivers accused of overcharging an American tourist Rs 18,000 for a journey of barely 400 metres. The proposal has been forwarded to the Regional Transport Office for further action, an official said on Friday.

Documents seeking cancellation of the taxi permit have been sent to the Tardeo RTO, while those related to the driving licences have been forwarded to the Andheri RTO. Senior Police Inspector Manoj Chalake of Sahar police station said the police would closely monitor the cancellation process. Both accused are presently in judicial custody.

The case gained attention after a social media post by Argentina Ariano went viral nearly 15 days after the incident. She shared her experience on January 26, stating that she had landed in Mumbai and taken a taxi to the Hilton Hotel. According to her post, the driver and another man first took her to an unknown location, charged 200 US dollars, equivalent to Rs 18,000, and later dropped her at the hotel, which was only 400 metres away. She mentioned the taxi number MH 01 BD 5405 and tagged Mumbai Police and traffic authorities with the hashtag #scam.

Police arrested the first accused, Yashraj Yadav alias Pappu, 50, on January 28, and the second accused, Mohammad Taufiq Shaikh, 39, on February 4. Investigations revealed that the vehicle was registered in the name of Sharad Patil of SMS Taxi Cab Pvt Ltd, who informed police that the cab had been assigned to another driver.

Using Open Source Intelligence tools, police traced the vehicle details. Airport staff and drivers identified Yadav after being shown photographs from the viral post. Officials said Mohammad had been named in three similar cases earlier — two at Sahar police station and one at Airport police station — each time with different accomplices. No previous criminal record was found against Yadav.

officially launched on November 5 last year is expected to be completed in nine months. The redeveloped market will have a three floor complex and two additional floors for underground parking. The project envisions a modern, multi-level commercial complex blending traditional trading spaces with contemporary design, improved hygiene standards, and upgraded public amenities.



As part of the project, a hi-tech fish and meat market will be constructed on the ground floor and the traders will be given designated stalls in the market. The first and second floors of the market will be used for commercial purposes.

As many as 450 traders were relocated to facilitate the project which will be executed retaining the heritage value of the market. The SCTL had constructed a temporary rehabilitation block near the market to relocate the traders.

For Haridas Nayak, it isn't celebrity patronage that matters most but the loyalty of regulars. 'The focus is on food, not ambience,' says the 70-year-old owner of Anand Bhavan.

**Vadodara. (Agency)**

"Do you know the head of every house in Donderangady (a small hamlet in Udupi district of Karnataka) is a cook?" asked 70-year-old Haridas Nayak, the second-generation proprietor of Anand Bhavan, a Matunga Udupi eatery known for serving home-style food.

"It is because when Swamiji (the pontiff of the Kashi Math) travels to major temples, the head of the family accompanies him and guides the cooks preparing food for thousands of devotees," he said. "They follow strict discipline like bathing before

entering the kitchen and abstaining from smoking and drinking."

A deeply religious man who wears a red tilak on his forehead, Nayak treats his restaurant with reverence. Anand Bhavan was started by his father, Madhav Nayak, sometime in the 1940s. "He was the sole earning member in a family of 15.

He had studied only till Class 3, but he carried the responsibility of educating and marrying off his siblings," Haridas said. Madhav left Donderangady in 1919 at the age of 12. He first worked in a military kitchen in Pune before moving to Bombay,



where he began at the mori, washing utensils, and slowly worked his way up. "But things weren't working in his favour," Haridas

recalled. "So he visited Nityananda Swamiji in Ganeshpuri, near Vajreshwari (about 80 kms from Mumbai). He was unsettled. Before my father could even speak, the swamiji told him that there was a shop near his house that he would soon get." At the time, the family lived in a 250-sq-ft one-room kitchen where Haridas's mother cooked for 15 people on a kerosene stove. A Gujarati restaurant called Anandi Bhavan operated nearby, serving misal and vada pav. "My father took it over, removed the 'i' to make it Anand Bhavan, and began serving pure South Indian food."



## Another way to protect and attract

Since 1991, when a new generation of economic reforms were initiated, Indian policymakers in successive governments have tried to strike a balance between attracting foreign direct investment (FDI) and protecting domestic businesses, especially small firms in many sectors. Unsurprisingly, this approach has not worked particularly well, though that has not prevented the government from persisting with this approach.

The retail industry is a good sector to understand why this approach typically fails. In the initial reform years, the government worried about what would happen to small neighbourhood retailers, especially grocers, if big-box formats of the kind that were popular in the US, Europe and Southeast Asian countries were to be allowed a free rein in the country.

Therefore, policymakers grudgingly allowed global single-brand retail players to enter the country—calculating that they posed the least threat to small Indian shopkeepers. Big multi-brand players such as Walmart or Carrefour were not allowed to sell directly to customers. Big-box retailers could only come in via the cash-and-carry route, where they sold to smaller shops. The reasoning was that this would be a win-win situation with FDI in retail coming in, while small grocers benefited by buying from the cash-and-carry giants and selling to consumers.

As it turned out, the final outcome has not been quite what the policymakers thought would happen. Domestic companies ushered in big-box retail though the global companies were kept off. Not every homegrown player succeeded. Some expanded quickly but eventually went bust. They were replaced quickly by others. Today, Reliance and the Tata Group are big players in big-box physical retail in several multi-brand formats. Others have also built a significant presence—Radhakishan Damani’s DMart in the groceries space is a good example. There are many others jostling for a slice of the pie. In all of this, the small mom-and-pop grocery stores have not been protected. Indeed, they face their biggest threat at present from the homegrown quick-commerce players who are setting up ‘dark stores’ with fast-moving inventory and offering a service that a small grocery often cannot. Between domestic players like Big Bazaar and quick-commerce players such as Blinkit and Zepto, small Indian grocers are facing exactly the kind of competition that the government thought it would protect them from. Take the case of e-commerce. Here, the government has had multiple policy flipflops. Flipkart, started by domestic entrepreneurs, grew rapidly until capital requirements ensured that the founders sold to Walmart. Meanwhile, US giant Amazon set up and scaled up quickly. This has attracted big Indian groups such as Reliance and Tata to start their own online businesses.

The government has been unable to decide whether players such as Amazon or Flipkart are beneficial to smaller players or are competitors. In a bid to protect small Indian sellers, the government has said that Amazon and Flipkart cannot follow an inventory-led or hybrid model, and should act only as platforms for domestic and other sellers. It also developed the Open Network for Digital Commerce or ONDC, an open platform that is supposed to offer an alternative to Amazon and Flipkart. But so far ONDC has not quite taken off to the extent where it can challenge the big players. Meanwhile, by not allowing Amazon and Flipkart to stock their own inventories and restricting global multi-brand big-box retailers from setting up physical outlets that can sell directly to consumers, the government has essentially throttled FDI in retail. Thus, only a fraction of the potential FDI is trickling in now.

Nor have the small players been protected. It is hard to argue that a Blinkit or a Reliance Smart Bazaar poses less of a threat to small players than an Amazon or a Walmart.

## Trial by fire for Bangladesh

The trouble-torn South Asian nation must put its best foot forward in today’s elections

BANGLADESH goes to the polls today — for the second time in two years. The January 2024 elections were practically a sham presided over by then PM Sheikh Hasina, but there is some hope that things will be different this time. The last year and a half has been quite eventful for this vulnerable nation — the July 2024 uprising, Hasina’s ouster and escape to India, her old rival Khaleda Zia’s demise, the homecoming of the latter’s son Tarique Rahman after a long exile in the UK. The February 12 parliamentary elections have been described as a “historic, decisive and future-defining moment” by Muhammad Yunus, the Nobel laureate who is heading the interim government. After years of disputed polls, shrinking democratic space and deepening polarisation, Bangladeshis are being asked to decide whether their country can undergo a democratic revival and build institutions that serve all citizens, not just those in power. At the same time, voters are weighing in on a referendum proposing significant reforms: term limits for the prime minister, stronger checks on executive authority and constitutional safeguards to prevent the consolidation of power. Taken together, these measures promise to herald Naya Bangladesh, if everything falls into place. The challenge for the interim administration is to ensure free, fair, credible and peaceful polls. The presence of hundreds of international observers and foreign journalists shows that Bangladesh is drawing global attention. Compared to previous elections since 2008 — some of which were boycotted or criticised as deeply flawed — this expanded international scrutiny is intended to reassure voters and investors alike. For more than a decade, Opposition parties and human rights groups accused the Hasina government of manipulating elections, silencing critics and narrowing political space. The Awami League’s absence from the current contest and the death penalty awarded to Hasina in absentia over alleged crimes against humanity have turned the page on a controversial era. But these developments also raise an uncomfortable question: are these elections a genuine break from the politics of exclusion or simply old wine in a new bottle? Encouragingly, election campaigning has seen



safe nation. Islamist forces are also reshaping the political landscape, particularly the Jamaat-e-Islami, which was banned under Hasina but has regained influence. Now part of a broader coalition, Jamaat is keen to expand its role in national politics. For a section of the voters, this phenomenon represents a legitimate expression of political diversity after years of repression. For others — especially women and religious minorities — it is a harbinger of greater anxiety and insecurity. Perhaps the most hopeful sign is the importance of young voters. Nearly 5 million citizens are voting for the first time. Students had spearheaded the uprising that toppled

Hasina’s government. The question now is whether all that youthful energy can evolve into sustained democratic engagement. Public wrath can overthrow autocrats; rebuilding a democratic framework requires patience as well as compromise.

Globally, Bangladesh’s trajectory matters a lot. As one of South Asia’s most populous nations and a key player in regional economics and geopolitics, its stability — or lack of it — affects neighbouring India and beyond. A credible election could enhance Bangladesh’s standing and attract investment at a time when economic revival is urgently needed. Conversely, a contested or exclusionary outcome would risk renewed unrest and diplomatic strain. India remains non-committal on Hasina’s extradition, which is a knotty bilateral issue, but it has reached out to the BNP. External Affairs Minister S Jaishankar attended Khaleda’s funeral in December and handed over PM Narendra Modi’s letter of condolence to Tarique Rahman. Considering that Delhi-Dhaka relations had come under strain during Khaleda’s tenure, India would be keen to make a fresh start if Rahman comes to power. Delhi also has to contend with the machinations of Islamabad, which is going all out to win over Dhaka, notwithstanding the historical baggage of 1971. The US and China are among the other key stakeholders.

According to the US Ambassador to Dhaka, Brent T Christensen, America is concerned about China’s expanding presence in South Asia and is planning to offer defence systems to Bangladesh’s next government as alternatives to Chinese equipment. Moreover, Bangladesh has secured a reduced 19 per cent tariff under a trade agreement with the US. For the moment, Bangladesh must put its best foot forward. If the election mandate spurs transparency, accountability and genuine reform, it could mark the birth of a resilient democracy. However, if things go wrong, it will only deepen the divide and signal the start of another disturbing chapter for the trouble-torn nation.

## Social media rules

The Tribune Editorial: Negotiating tech offensive has its complexities



regarding suppression of free expression. As artificial intelligence makes long and fast strides in digital domination, framing effective regulatory controls poses a

tough task. For the AI industry itself, consistently upholding ethical frameworks as their technologies scale in a highly competitive market is a demanding ask. The resignation of a safety researcher at a leading company, citing his disagreement with the unchecked acceleration of controversial projects, points to the pitfalls of technological advancements. The moral dilemma is stark, and there are no easy answers.

In the US, a landmark trial has begun that is examining the mental health effects of Instagram and YouTube. The world’s largest social media companies have been accused of creating addiction machines. ‘We’re seeing more and more young people who experience not just psychological distress, but physical distress, when their devices are taken away,’ a leading expert remarked. The observation can find resonance across the globe. That’s how challenging the tech offensive is.

## Why Parliament needs quiet conversations

The absence of dialogue between the ruling dispensation and the Opposition is visible in Rahul Gandhi’s reference to Naravane’s work

THE disruption in the Lok Sabha that prevented a discussion on the Budget is over. A new chapter of bitterness, though, has begun, with the Opposition moving a no-confidence motion against Speaker Om Birla. All through this Lok Sabha session, the Opposition has targeted Birla for not giving sufficient time to it in the chamber’s proceedings. Since the beginning of this Budget Session, the Congress has been particularly aggrieved that Leader of the Opposition Rahul Gandhi has not been allowed to speak. Gandhi wanted to focus on excerpts from the book ‘Four Stars of Destiny’ written by a former Army Chief, General Manoj Mukund Naravane. The book is not formally in the public domain. It is yet to be cleared by the Ministry of Defence (MoD). General Naravane has said that it was sent for clearance to the MoD by the publishers. Gandhi has shown a hard copy of the work in Parliament’s premises. Soft copies of the book are circulating on the internet. The Delhi police have lodged an FIR to investigate how the book is available on the internet if it has not been approved for publication. The government has taken the position in the Lok Sabha that Gandhi cannot refer to a book which has not been cleared for publication. This may be technically correct, but the government would be aware that what General Naravane has purportedly written in the book regarding India-China clashes in Eastern Ladakh in 2020 is circulating among the public. This would inevitably lead to many people making up their minds on the issue without having the benefit of the government viewpoint.

With regard to memoirs, a point may be made. Military and civilian officers who have held sensitive and senior positions have to eschew the temptation of treading into the territory of confidential information while penning their memoirs. They also have to be conscious that their interaction with the political leadership, while they were in service, was always based on trust. It is a matter of honour and obligation that this trust between the military

and civilian officers and the political leadership is always maintained while in service or after retirement. The system will be greatly impaired if details of meetings of Cabinet committees or the decision-making processes, especially on matters of national security, are revealed. Even if these officers feel that political leaders erred or that they were let down, they do not have the luxury or liberty to break that trust after their retirement. Senior military and civilian officers have to be conscious of their remit. Thus, civilian officers need to be conscious that decisions given to them have to be interpreted by them within their area of responsibility. And, military officers have to refrain from decisions or advice of the political leadership strictly within the confines of their military responsibilities. They cannot view them from any other perspective. Thus, if a matter is left to their discretion, it is to be interpreted by them narrowly in the context of their military duties and not be extended to the diplomatic and political domains. That is the jurisdiction of other institutions of the state. Military leaders have to assume, in such situations, that the discretion given to them has been only after the political leadership has taken the nation’s interest in the diplomatic and political spheres into account. The recent impasse in the Lok Sabha and the motion against Birla once again highlights the absence of sufficient communication between different elements of the political class. Yes, there is a degree of contact during Parliament’s sessions so that it can function even if only to a minimal extent.



However, the lack of communication on issues is obvious. This is in contrast to what prevailed in the past. Former civil servants can recall that leaders in the government and the Opposition kept in touch with each

some instances, the leaders communicated directly with one another while in other cases, through trusted aides. The bitterness, rancour and invective now witnessed almost daily among the leaders of the ruling dispensation and the Opposition indicates that the tradition of being in communication with one another is either absent or not as much as it should be. This is particularly damaging to national interest because the country is facing grave strategic challenges. The absence of dialogue between the ruling dispensation and the Opposition is visible in Gandhi’s reference to Naravane’s work. Once Gandhi had referred to it, the government could have told him that it could not agree to any discussion based on the work, but that it was willing to brief him on the reasons which have led it to not give clearance to the work. It could have briefed him in confidence about the important incidents in Eastern Ladakh, including those which have been purportedly mentioned in the work. After all, the members of the political class are all committed to the nation’s interest. They all have a sense of what can be disclosed and what has to be kept secret. I recall an incident which occurred in the Standing Committee on External Affairs chaired by former Prime Minister IK Gujral. It illustrated that the political class knows what can be disclosed and what has to be held back. Foreign Secretary K Raghunath was being questioned about India’s assistance to the Northern Alliance. Members were getting impatient with Raghunath’s sparse answers; Gujral stepped in to say that he knew what the MEA was doing and closed the discussion. No member protested.

other on issues of national significance. I remember occasions during my diplomatic career when the government briefed leaders of the Opposition before embarking on a major diplomatic initiative or when the nation faced a sudden crisis.

This was done not because such an outreach would prevent the ebb and flow of politics on the issues on which these briefings were done, but because they gave an understanding to all sections of the political class of the challenges and opportunities relating to these issues. In



## International conference on beam technology begins at Central University in Dharamshala

Dharamshala.(Agency)

Dharamshala, Feb 14 (UNI) A three-day international conference-cum-roundtable discussion on “Applied Research and Innovation in Beam Technology” (ICTRIBT-2026) commenced at the Central University of Himachal Pradesh in Dharamshala.

The conference is being organised by the Department of Physics and Astronomical Sciences at the university’s B.Ed. College Multipurpose Hall. Vice-Chancellor Prof. S.P. Bansal is the chief patron of the event, while Prof. Dinesh Kumar, Vice-Chancellor of Shri Vishwakarma Skill University, Haryana, attended as the chief guest and lauded the department’s visionary initiative.

The conference is patronised by Prof. Archana Sharma, ANRF Prime Minister Professor from the National Institute of Technology, Raipur. The keynote address was delivered by Prof. Ashok Kumar Das, an eminent scientist from the Bhabha Atomic Research Centre, who shared insights on beam technology and translational research.

Around 40 invited speakers and nearly 120 participants from various states, including Tamil Nadu, Gujarat, West Bengal and Maharashtra are attending the conference. The event aims to promote innovation in beam technology, translational research, and academic-industrial collaboration.

Senior university officials, including Registrar Prof. Narendra Sankhyan, Dean Academic Prof. Pradeep Kumar, Dean Student Welfare Prof. Sunil Thakur, and Finance Officer Pratibha Pathania, were also present.

Vice-Chancellor Prof. Bansal congratulated Head of the Department Prof. B.C. Chauhan and his team for successfully organising the international conference, calling it a matter of pride for the university.

## Himachal govt committed to women’s empowerment: Pathania at Youth Theatre festival

Shahpur (Kangra).(Agency)

Kewal Singh Pathania, MLA from Shahpur and Deputy Chief Whip, said that the Himachal Pradesh government has launched various schemes and programmes to promote women’s empowerment, enabling women to work shoulder to shoulder with men.

Addressing the Youth Theatre Festival 2026 as the chief guest under the “Umdte 100 Creore Abhiyan” organised by Jagori Sanstha at Chambai in Rait, he lauded the organisation for its commendable grassroots work and consistent efforts against women’s oppression.

He expressed concern over the declining sense of mutual coordination and brotherhood in villages and called for collective efforts to restore social harmony. Pathania congratulated the organisers and assured them of all possible support.

Jagori coordinator Manisha highlighted that this year’s theme, “From Body to Earth, Our Body, Our Earth,” is being promoted nationwide through song, music, and theatre.

Women from various parts of the Kangra district and students from educational institutions participated in the festival. Cultural performances and an exhibition of handmade products by women’s groups were major attractions. Participants were honoured with certificates. Several officials and prominent citizens were present on the occasion.

## Dr. Manu Sharma becomes Himachal’s first woman retina gold medalist

Dharamshala. (Agency)

Himachal Pradesh celebrates a historic achievement as Dr. Manu Sharma from Gaggal in Kangra district becomes the state’s first woman retina specialist to win a Gold Medal, earning national and international acclaim for her outstanding academic and professional accomplishments. Dr. Sharma secured a Gold Medal after qualifying for the Fellowship of the All India Ophthalmological Society (FAICO) in the subspecialty of Vitreoretinal Surgery. She is currently pursuing her MCh super-specialty degree in Vitreoretinal Surgery from the Postgraduate Institute of Medical Education and Research (PGIMER), Chandigarh. The convocation ceremony, organised by the All India Ophthalmological Society, was held in New Delhi on February 1. Former Chief Justice of India, Justice Dhananjaya Y. Chandrachud, graced the occasion as the chief guest and presented the Gold Medal and Fellowship certificate to Dr. Sharma. Several eminent ophthalmologists from across the country were present at the ceremony, including AIOS Collegium Board Chairman Dr Lalit Verma, President Dr Partha Biswas, and General Secretary Dr Santosh Honavar. Adding to her laurels, Dr Sharma secured first position in the Best Photo Competition at a conference organised by the Asia-Pacific Academy of Ophthalmology in Hong Kong on February 5-6, bringing further international acclaim.

## Over 900 cops deployed, 115 nakas set up across tricity for Valentine’s Day

**Surveillance, patrolling and traffic regulation plans synchronised among districts to ensure coordinated response if required: police**

Chandigarh. (Agency)

With more than 900 police personnel at work and over 115 checkpoints planned across the tricity, police authorities have rolled out an extensive security plan to ensure peaceful Valentine’s Day celebrations. According to the Chandigarh Police, 415 personnel will be deployed, 47 internal nakas and 18 outer checkpoints will be set up across the city, while neighbouring Mohali will see around 200 policemen manning 50 nakas, whereas in Panchkula, nearly 500 personnel have already been stationed at strategic points.

UT Police said special deployment would be made at sensitive and crowded locations, including colleges, universities, schools, markets, parks, malls and the lake area. Five gazetted officers, 21 SHOs/inspectors, 13 police posts in charge and 415 other personnel will be on duty as part of the security grid. Police said 47 internal nakas would be operational between 9 am and 6 pm,



while 18 outer nakas would monitor the movement of suspicious elements. Market patrolling teams will be active from 11 am to 10 pm, while PCR vehicles will continuously patrol around educational institutions. A limited vehicle zone will also be enforced at the turn connecting Sectors 11-12 and 8-9 to regulate traffic and prevent congestion. In addition, police personnel in civil clothes will be deployed

in public parks to keep watch on anti-social activities, and special nakas will be set up to check reckless driving.

Chandigarh Senior Superintendent of Police Kanwardeep Kaur said, “Adequate force has been positioned across key points, and teams have been instructed to remain alert throughout the day. Extensive nakas, patrolling and surveillance arrangements are part of preventive policing to ensure peaceful and safe celebrations for the public.” In Mohali, around 50 check posts will be erected across the city, and nearly 200 policemen will be deployed at these nakas.

Mohali SP Dilpreet Singh said, “The district maintains 24x7 checkpoints, but additional nakas have been set up across the city and adjoining areas, including Zirakpur. All PCR units are on alert, and CCTV cameras across the city are fully functional and being closely monitored.”

## Himachal earns Rs 171.48 crore from 11 toll barriers’ auction in 11 months: RTI

**Department of State Taxes & Excise expresses inability to provide profit earned by the contractors citing ‘third party info’**

Chandigarh.(Agency)

The Himachal Pradesh government has earned Rs 171.48 crore through the auction of 11 state toll barriers located in seven of the 15 revenue districts up to February 10 in the Financial Year (FY) 2025-2026.

The 11 toll barriers are situated in Sirmaur, Solan, Shimla, Baddi-Barotiwala-Nalagarh (BBN), Una, Bilaspur and Nurpur. These state toll barriers charge entry tax to outstation vehicles, including heavy load vehicles with 20 to 250 quintals even bearing Himachal registration number.

The toll barrier at Mehatpur & Gagret in Una district fetched the highest bid of Rs 34.51 crore (Rs 34,51,50,000) and a total of Rs 26.63 had been deposited up to February 10. The Baddi toll barrier received the highest auction bid of

Rs 26.04 crore and a total of Rs 20.83 had been deposited up to February 10.

The Garamaura toll barrier in Bilaspur district fetched the third-highest bid with Rs 24.13 crore and the total fee deposited up to February 10 was at Rs 18.47. The Parwanoo barrier in Solan district was auctioned for Rs 21.13 crore with Rs 16.90 as the total fee deposited up to February 10.

The lowest amount — Rs 23.98 lakh — was received from the Minus toll barrier in Sirmaur district. The total amount deposited up to February 10 was at Rs 19.19 lakh.

The information was procured by Una-based advocate Uttansh

Bains under the Right to Information (RTI) Act, and was provided by the Department of State Taxes and Excise. According



to the RTI reply, “Although total bids amounting to Rs 173.89 crore were received, contractors have deposited Rs 171.48 crore of the bid amount so far. The pending amount of Rs 2.40 is expected to

be received by March 15.”

Meanwhile, the state’s tax department expressed its inability to provide information regarding the earnings made by the contractors who secured the bids, citing “third-party information”. In one such reply, the office of the Deputy Commissioner (Excise) Vinod Dogra, BBN-Baddi, said, “In this context, it is intimated that the information pertains to a third party. They were asked to disclose the information under Section 11 of the Right to Information (RTI) Act, 2005, but the third party denied disclosure.

Therefore, the information cannot be provided.”

## Doctor ‘set on fire’ in Hisar university room: HHRC summons SIT officer as mother seeks answers

**The SIT officer in charge has been asked to appear before the Haryana Human Rights Commission on April 6, with the original investigation record, relevant documents, and material evidence.**

Chandigarh. (Agency)

The Haryana Human Rights Commission (HHRC) has taken a firm stand on allegations that a young doctor was set on fire in a university room in Hisar in April last year, making it clear that “no compromise with the due process of justice will be tolerated”. The case relates to the death of Dr Bhavna Yadav, a 25-year-old doctor from Rajasthan, who died after sustaining severe burn injuries in Hisar. The incident occurred on April 24, 2025, at the Chaudhary Charan Singh Haryana Agricultural University (HAU) in Hisar. Dr Bhavna was found with severe burn injuries and was taken to Soni Hospital in Hisar by Udesb Yadav, a university employee. She was later moved to a hospital in Jaipur, where she succumbed to her injuries.

The doctor’s mother, Gayatri Devi, alleged that her daughter was stabbed and then set on fire, citing injuries inconsistent with an accident, such as wounds to the abdomen, and missing personal belongings like her laptop and phone. The police subsequently arrested Udesb on May 1, 2025.

The HHRC has now directed the officer in charge of the Special Investigation Team (SIT) to appear in person with the complete original investigation

record, including all documents and material evidence. The direction was issued during proceedings held at the Commission’s Camp Court at the New PWD Rest House in Gurgaon on February 2, the written order of which was released officially on Saturday. According to Devi’s complaint submitted to the HHRC, she received information on April 24, 2025, that Udesb had set her daughter on fire in his university room. In this regard, a First Information Report was registered. However, the complainant alleged that the police, in connivance with the accused, released him later. She further alleged that no effective action has been taken so far, and sought justice from the Commission and demanded a fair and impartial investigation.

Taking serious note of the matter, HHRC member Deep Bhatia had earlier requisitioned a fresh status report. In compliance with his earlier directions, the case was transferred to the State Crime Branch, Bhondsi, Gurgaon. During the course of investigation, the concerned parties were interrogated on December 12, 2025. On December 29, 2025, the case file was presented before the State Police Complaint Authority, Panchkula, and the spot of occurrence was inspected on January 1, 2026.

## J&K Police, BSF recover heroin worth crores suspected to be drone dropped along IB

Jammu.(Agency)

Jammu and Kashmir Police, along with the Border Security Force (BSF), have recovered heroin worth crores in a joint operation. The narcotics are suspected to have been drone-dropped along the International Border in the Ranbir Singh Pura sector of Jammu.

The official spokesman said that, in a significant achievement on the anti-drug trafficking front, Jammu Police and the BSF made a major breakthrough by recovering a large quantity of narcotics (suspected to have been dropped by a drone) worth Rs 40 crore in the RS Pura sector of District Jammu, near the International Border. Acting promptly on inputs from the BSF regarding suspicious drone activity near the International Border, a cordon and search operation was launched jointly by Jammu Police and the BSF during the intervening night of February 13-14 at Nai Basti Karotana, Baspur area of the R S Pura sector, near the International Border, he said. He added that during the search at first light, two yellow-

colored packets of narcotics were recovered from a wheat field at Nai Basti Karotana. The area is near the International Border, and the substance is suspected to have been dropped by a drone from Pakistan into Indian territory.

Each packet appeared to contain a heroin like substance. A recovery memo has also been prepared in the presence of a magistrate; the recovered packets contain appropriately 6.582-kg heroin like substance worth Rs 40 Crores in the international market.

A case under relevant sections was registered, and an investigation was taken up by SHO Police Station R S Pura, Inspector Ravi Singh Parihar, assisted by Incharge BPP Baspura, SI Ranbir Singh, under the supervision of SP Headquarters Jammu

Further investigation is underway to trace the exact source and destination of the recovered contraband, he said.

Police are thoroughly examining both the backward and forward linkages in the case and more breakthroughs are expected, said the spokesman.

## ‘Himachal earns Rs 171.48 crore from 11 toll barriers’ auction in FY 2025-26’

**Information was procured by an Una-based advocate under the RTI Act, was provided by the tax department**

Shimla. (Agency)

The Himachal Pradesh government has earned Rs 171.48 crore through the auction of 11 state toll barriers located in seven of the 15 revenue districts up to February 10 in the Financial Year (FY) 2025-2026.

The 11 toll barriers are situated in Sirmaur, Solan, Shimla, Baddi-Barotiwala-Nalagarh (BBN), Una, Bilaspur and Nurpur. These state toll barriers charge entry tax to outstation vehicles, including heavy load vehicles with 20 to 250 quintals even bearing Himachal registration number.

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The information was procured by Una-based advocate Uttansh Bains under the Right to Information (RTI) Act, and was provided by the Department of State Taxes and Excise. According to the RTI reply, “Although total bids amounting to Rs 173.89 crore were received, contractors have deposited Rs 171.48 crore of the bid amount so far. The pending amount of Rs 2.40 is expected to be received by March 15.”Meanwhile, the state’s tax department expressed its inability



to provide information regarding the earnings made by the contractors who secured the bids, citing “third-party information”. In one such reply, the office of

the Deputy Commissioner (Excise) Vinod Dogra, BBN-Baddi, said, “In this context, it is intimated that the information pertains to a third party. They were asked to disclose the information under Section 11 of the Right to Information (RTI) Act, 2005, but the third party denied disclosure. Therefore, the information cannot be provided.”

RTI applicant Uttansh Bains said, “The Department of State Taxes and Excise declined to provide information on how much the contractors earned through these 11 toll barriers, citing third-party information. Some of these toll barriers are situated on National Highways where the National Highways Authority of India (NHAI) also collects toll. One such state-governed toll is the Parwanoo barrier, where vehicles from other states have to deposit entry tax.”



# Show that PM CARES: Congress books PM's flight ticket from Assam to Manipur

**Congress leader Pawan Khera has urged Prime Minister Narendra Modi to visit violence-hit Manipur during his North-East trip, highlighting the ongoing unrest since 2023.**

**New Delhi.(Agency)**

A sharp political barb from the Congress has brought Manipur back into national focus, with party leader Pawan Khera urging Prime Minister Narendra Modi to visit the violence-hit state during his trip to the North-East. In a post on X, Khera wrapped his appeal in sarcasm, saying that while “poll-bound states are always your top priority”, Manipur “should not be abandoned”. He added, “The state has been burning since 2023, and it is burning again.”

The remarks came as the Prime Minister is in Assam to inaugurate and flag off development projects worth over Rs 5,450 crore.

Khera pointed to the proximity of the two states, writing, “You are

**Guwahati - Imphal**

Sat, 14 Feb 2026 • Non stop • 1h 0m duration

PNR	Y9L9VT	AIR INDIA EXPRESS	IX-1037
Guwahati	GAU 15:55 hrs	1h 0m	16:55 hrs IMF
Sat, 14 Feb			Sat, 14 Feb
Lokenya Gopinath Boro International Airport Terminal T1			Tulihal International Airport
Value	Economy	Regular Fare	
Check-in: 15 Kgs (1 piece only) per Adult	Cabin: 7 Kgs per Adult		
TRAVELLER	SEAT	MEAL	
MR. NARENDRA MODI	1A		
Adult			

already in Assam today. Manipur is just an hour away.

Please go there as well. The presence of the Prime Minister can go a long way in reassuring

our people in Manipur.”

**‘WE HAVE EVEN BOOKED YOUR FLIGHT’**

In a pointed gesture, Khera claimed the Congress had “even booked” a



flight for the Prime Minister from Guwahati to Imphal.

“To make it easier for you, we have even booked your flight from Guwahati to Imphal, you just have to get on the plane,” he wrote, sharing what he described as a flight ticket.

“As I do not have your number, I am sharing your flight ticket here. Kindly use it and show that the ‘PM CARES’,” he added, in a swipe at the Centre. The post quickly drew sharp reactions online, with supporters amplifying the demand for a prime ministerial visit and critics questioning the tone of the message.

**MANIPUR IN THE SPOTLIGHT**

Manipur has witnessed prolonged unrest since 2023, with periodic flare-ups intensifying political tensions.

Opposition parties have repeatedly criticised the Centre’s handling of the situation and called for a direct intervention by the Prime Minister, while the government has maintained that efforts are underway to restore peace and normalcy.

Khera’s remarks seek to sharpen that demand, arguing that a visit by the Prime Minister would send a message of reassurance to residents of the strife-torn state. There was no immediate response from the Prime Minister’s Office to the Congress leader’s post.

## Delhi HC transfers Priya Kapur’s defamation suit against sister to family property bench

**New Delhi.(Agency)**

A Delhi court on Thursday extended the judicial custody of Al Falah University Chairman Jawad Ahmad Siddiqui by 14 days in a case being investigated by the Enforcement Directorate (ED) in connection with the Red Fort terrorist attack. The November 2025 terrorist car bomb attack near Delhi’s Red Fort, which killed at least 15 people, was



carried out by operatives employed as doctors at Al Falah University. Large amounts of explosives were seized from the university campus hours before the attack, and the campus in Faridabad emerged as a key hub in the terror conspiracy in the probe. The court directed that Siddiqui remain in judicial custody until the next hearing on March 27.

During the proceedings, the court also issued a notice to the Enforcement Directorate on a plea filed by Siddiqui. In his application, he sought copies of documents related to the prosecution complaint (chargesheet) filed in the case, urging the court to direct the ED to furnish all documents relied upon in the complaint to enable him to prepare his defence. The court took the plea on record and asked the central agency to respond.

## PWD’s signature roundabout project delayed due to GRAP restrictions in Delhi

**New Delhi.(Agency)**

Pollution-related curbs on construction activity have delayed the PWD’s roundabout beautification project, with a fresh deadline now set for next month, government officials said on Friday. “Our target is to complete work at more than 40 roundabouts, likely by the end of March this year. Due to GRAP restrictions, work was stalled for several days. Hence, the project deadline has been slightly shifted,” an official said.

The PWD, in the first week of November last year, launched a beautification initiative under which 41 major roundabouts across the city are being themed on different States and Union Territories (UTs). The project aims to showcase India’s cultural, architectural, and historical richness, ensuring that the heart of Delhi reflects the spirit of the entire nation. According to officials, work is progressing rapidly at several locations. However, concerns over the security of installed items were discussed in a recent meeting with senior government officials. The project was originally scheduled for completion by late January 2026, ahead of the peak tourist season, but was delayed due to the implementation of the Graded Response Action Plan (GRAP). The revised deadline is now the end of March. “The initiative is expected to enrich Delhi’s visual identity and reinforce its image as a true capital that reflects the cultural spirit of the entire country,” the official added.

“We have seen that within a few months of completing projects, issues such as theft, sanitation, maintenance arise. PWD is an engineering agency concerned with roads and buildings; controlling theft is a law-and-order matter,” he said.

In the past, the PWD has faced theft of electrical parts and iron grilles, along with damage to horticulture items at major locations. Expensive installations inside Pragati Maidan Tunnel, parts of escalators on foot overbridges, and electric wires of musical fountains on Mathura Road have also been stolen or damaged, rendering them unusable. Officials said a policy decision is needed to address these concerns. Under the plan, each roundabout will highlight the distinctive art, heritage, and traditions of different States and UTs. Designs include Rajasthan’s forts and palaces, Odisha’s Konark Sun Temple, Uttar Pradesh’s Ayodhya Ram Temple, Kerala’s backwater-inspired patterns, Gujarat’s Statue of Unity, and bamboo artistry from the North-East.

## PWD proposes 10 infras projects to decongest some of Delhi’s busiest corridors

**New Delhi.(Agency)**

Infamous for traffic congestion, key arterial stretches like Mathura Road, Ring Road, SP Mukherjee Marg near Old Delhi railway station, Mehrauli-Mahipalpur Road, Rani Jhansi Road, MB Road, Dwarka and Aurobindo Marg are likely to undergo a mega upgrade in the coming year. The Public Works Department (PWD) has proposed at least 10 major infrastructure projects to decongest some of the city’s busiest and critical corridors to provide smooth connectivity between North-South, South-Central as well as Old Delhi and Delhi-NCR, officials said.

“These proposals are for the year 2026-27 and are likely to be mentioned in the upcoming Budget. Following an internal inspection and inputs from the traffic police, the PWD has come up with an integrated transit corridor

redevelopment plan at critical choke points to ease traffic movement and provide smooth connectivity between arterial stretches,” said a senior PWD official. “These proposals are in the



initial stage and have been discussed in multiple meetings. After the department gets heads up from the higher authorities, it will appoint consultants to conduct feasibility study and prepare a detailed project plan,” said the official.

According to an official document, the PWD has proposed an elevated corridor parallel to the Outer Ring Road with suitable slip roads for entry and exit. The Outer Ring Road – a 47-

km-long stretch that encircles the Capital anti-clockwise, starting from North Delhi’s Civil Lines and ending at South East Delhi’s Kalindi Kunj – passes through some prominent locations in South Delhi, including Modi Mill, IIT flyover and RK Puram among others. “With the increasing number of people, houses and vehicles on the road, the Outer Ring Road is facing heavy traffic. It has around 14 junctions that see heavy traffic throughout the day. Some of these include Subroto Park, Vasant Kunj, Munirka and the Okhla to IIT stretch. These stretches also provide connectivity to IGI Airport, Gurgaon, Faridabad and Noida,” said the official.

## Punjab clarifies inquiry into Atishi’s Sikh Gurus remarks after Delhi Assembly privilege row

**Officials stated that before this communication, the Department of Home Affairs had not received any direct correspondence from the Assembly Secretariat on the issue.**

**New Delhi.(Agency)**

The Punjab government has issued a formal clarification regarding the ongoing inquiry into alleged remarks made by Atishi related to Sikh Gurus, officials said on Friday. According to the office of the Additional Chief Secretary (Home), the clarification comes in response to a communication dated February 5 from the Delhi Legislative Assembly Secretariat, which had sought written comments from Punjab in a breach of privilege and contempt matter.

Officials stated that prior to this communication, the Department of Home Affairs had not received any direct correspondence from the Assembly Secretariat on the issue. However, the



department facilitated legal and technical reviews, and comments from the Director General of Police, Punjab, the Commissioner of Police, Jalandhar, and the state Forensic Science Laboratory have already been forwarded to authorities in Delhi.

A comprehensive reply from the Additional Chief Secretary is being

finalised and has been sent for approval of the competent authority, officials said.

The matter was earlier referred to the Committee of Privileges by Speaker Vijender Gupta on February 4, following a complaint by Minister Kapil Mishra. The Speaker observed a prima facie case of breach of privilege and contempt.

The controversy arose after the Punjab Police registered an FIR based on a complaint alleging that a video of Assembly proceedings had been doctored. However, the Speaker noted that Assembly proceedings fall under legislative privilege and should have been verified with the Secretariat before any police action. He also termed the police response unsatisfactory and flagged the non-submission.

## Djinns, occult rituals to treat kidney stones: Cops gather proof against ‘godman’ arrested over Peeragarhi car deaths

**New Delhi.(Agency)**

A piece of paper containing a mantra to summon djinns as well as occult rituals to treat kidney stones and impotency, pictures of women holding placards declaring their ‘virginity’ status: these are part of the evidence that the Delhi Police has gathered against self-styled godman Kamruddin, who was arrested on Wednesday for killing three persons in Outer Delhi after promising them quick money. Kamruddin was arrested after the bodies of Randhir Singh (76), Shiv Naresh Singh (47) and Laxmi Devi (40) were found dead inside a car on Peeragarhi flyover on Sunday. He allegedly fed the trio sweets laced with poison and fled with their cash amounting to Rs 2 lakh. Police said that after his death, a piece of paper was found on Naresh in which a 100-word mantra was written, allegedly to summon a djinn. The phrase started with a line ‘hush ki Pari’, and mentioned the word ‘djinn’ more than three times, they added.

“A diary was also recovered from Laxmi, which had details of multiple women: from measurements of the body parts to a history of the surgeries they have undergone and the medications they took,” said a senior officer.

“Multiple pictures of these women were recovered from Laxmi’s phone. They were holding placards containing their personal details. Based on these details, Kamruddin would choose a ‘perfect’ woman: someone who is ‘untouched’ before marriage and has never been bitten by an animal,” the officer added. “Kamruddin would then tell the victims that if they pay him Rs 2 lakh, a djinn would make ‘physical’ contact with one of the ‘selected’ women, and they would experience dhanvarsha,” the officer further said.

Police said Kamruddin claimed to treat

medical problems as well via occult practices. He allegedly charged between Rs 5,000 and Rs 7,000 to treat kidney stones.



“He would put a cloth around the stomach of the patient. He would then clinch his fist, hiding a stone and wet sindoor, and move the same under the cloth. He would then take out his hand and open it. People would see his red-coloured hand and a stone, and assume

that it’s blood from the kidney,” the officer said.

Kamruddin allegedly operated a ‘tantric’ centre in Loni in Ghaziabad and Firozabad. Police said that over the years, Kamruddin had amassed enough money to open a restaurant in Loni and a marriage hall in Firozabad for two of his sons. He was also very well aware of his surroundings, often asking his victims to drop him off in deserted areas with no CCTV cameras. “He was tracked after we found Laxmi’s phone... She had sent Kamruddin’s location to Naresh on the day of their meeting. When our team reached Loni, he tried to jump off a 15-foot wall to escape,” the officer said. Maintaining that several unsaved contacts have been found from Kamruddin’s analogue cell phone, the officer added, “He didn’t save any number to avoid being traced. He would memorise important ones.”

## In MCD’s 17,583-cr Budget, sanitation, education get top allocations

**At Rs 4,797 crore, the sanitation sector gets the highest allocation, followed by the education sector, which gets Rs 3,265 crore.**



**New Delhi.(Agency)**

The Municipal Corporation of Delhi (MCD) on Friday passed an overall budget of Rs 17,583 crore for 2026-27 with an addition of nearly Rs 1,000 crore to the estimates presented in December last year. At Rs 4,797 crore, the sanitation sector gets the highest allocation, followed by the education sector, which gets Rs 3,265 crore.

The public health and medical aid sector gets an allocation of Rs 1,925.6 crore. The Engineering department has been allocated Rs 1,884.43 crore, marking the fourth-largest allocation. The overall budget is around 3.4% higher than last year’s 17,002 crore. As he presented the Budget, Leader of the House Pravesh Wahi highlighted multiple new initiatives — ranging from property tax relief in rural areas to the regularisation of daily wage employees. He underlined that no new taxes have been added. The Budget was presented following deliberations with the Standing Committee chairpersons, the Opposition and all the councillors, he said.

Highlighting that sanitation and environmental management remain top priorities, Wahi announced that Bhalswa and Okhla landfill sites will be cleared by the end of 2026, and the Ghazipur landfill by the end of 2027.

Mayor Raja Iqbal Singh said, “The Budget has been prepared keeping in mind the needs and expectations of the residents of Delhi.” Wahi announced tax relief and benefits for rural areas, outlining that ancestral houses — up to 500 square meters — in 49 villages declared fully “rural” will be granted complete exemption from house tax. In urban villages, he said, property tax on residential buildings — up to 200 square meters — owned by original residents will be waived.



## NEWS BOX

## Babar Azam's formula to tackle India vs Pakistan pressure: Look straight ahead

New Delhi. (Agency)

Pakistan's star batter Babar Azam has revealed his formula for handling the pressure of facing India ahead of the T20 World Cup 2026 on Sunday, February 15. Babar will be one of the key players for Pakistan in their much-anticipated clash in Colombo as both teams aim to maintain their unbeaten start to the tournament. Babar played a crucial role in Pakistan's win over India in the 2021 edition of the T20 World Cup as they won by 10 wickets on that occasion, and spoke about how the match is a high-intensity affair. The Pakistan star noted that the expectations during the clash go to a completely different level. "Look, as we discussed, an India-Pakistan match is always high-intensity. The whole world is involved — all the fans, both countries — and like you said, it feels like the entire world is watching. It



then goes to a different level, and the expectations also rise to a completely different level," said Babar in a video released by ESPNcricinfo. The star batter, who has faced India five times in T20Is, said that it is always best to keep yourself calm and relaxed ahead of an India vs Pakistan match and shut out the outside, an advice he gives to the younger players in the squad as well. We have played quite a few such matches, and we've learned that the calmer and more relaxed you keep yourself, and the less you listen to outside noise, the better it is. If you stay straightforward and focused, that helps a lot. "From our experience, we talk to the youngsters as well and tell them that yes, there is excitement, but the more you stay easy and tension-free, the better it will be for you," said Babar.

What is Babar's record vs India?

Babar has managed only 105 runs in five T20Is against India, averaging 26.25 with a strike rate of 128.05. After his unbeaten 68 in the 2021 T20 World Cup, the Pakistan captain has struggled for impact, recording scores of 10, 14, 0 and 13 in subsequent meetings with India.

## India will win vs Pakistan, just play safe against Usman Tariq: Harbhajan Singh

New Delhi. (Agency)

Former India spinner Harbhajan Singh has expressed full confidence that India will overcome arch-rivals Pakistan in their much-awaited T20 World Cup showdown, but he also flagged one key danger the men in blue must handle carefully. With the blockbuster clash scheduled for February 15 in Colombo, Harbhajan believes Pakistan's mystery spinner Usman Tariq could play a decisive role if India are not cautious. Speaking to ANI ahead of the marquee Group A contest, Harbhajan said India have the strength and balance to win, but warned against taking unnecessary chances against Tariq's bowling.

"India will win the match," Harbhajan said.



"Pakistan has a spinner (Usman Tariq), he is a good spinner, we have to play him safely," Harbhajan also urged Suryakumar Yadav's side to approach the game with the same calm mindset they have shown in previous India-Pakistan encounters. "The Indian team is capable; it is a very good team," he said. "We hope they play the way they have always played, play without any pressure and wave the flag of victory."

WHO IS USMAN TARIQ?

Usman Tariq has quickly become one of the most talked-about names in Pakistan's camp ahead of the India clash. Though still new to international cricket, the 28-year-old has already built a reputation as Pakistan's surprise spin card in this World Cup. Tariq has featured in only four T20 Internationals so far, but his returns have been impressive, with 11 wickets and an economy rate below six. His unique stop-and-pause action has generated plenty of discussion, with batters finding it difficult to settle into a rhythm against him.

# Dominating the Premadasa: India's T20I history in Colombo before India vs Pakistan

**T20 World Cup: USA batter Shayan Jahangir has urged the ICC to increase funding and exposure for Associate nations ahead of their must-win clash against the Netherlands in Chennai. He believes better support will help emerging teams thrive globally.**

NEW DELHI. (Agency)

After all the off-field drama and political noise that briefly threw the marquee clash into uncertainty, the most anticipated match of the T20 World Cup is finally set to go ahead as scheduled. India and Pakistan will face off in Colombo on Sunday at the R Premadasa Stadium, with the excitement around the rivalry undiminished for cricketing reasons above all else. Many would put India as the firm favourites of this clash because of their utter dominance over the fixture, and their performance in this T20 World Cup so far has

only added to that argument.

India began their campaign with a win over the United States, with Suryakumar Yadav playing a crucial innings to rescue the team from a precarious position and guide them to victory. Thereafter, India came out firing and took down Namibia by 93 runs at the Arun Jaitley Stadium in New Delhi. It also happened to be their biggest victory by margin of runs in the history of T20 World Cups. Ishan Kishan and Hardik Pandya laid the platform with half-centuries after which the spinners came to the party to restrict their opponents. Pakistan, on the other hand, looked in all sorts of trouble against the Netherlands before Faheem Ashraf's timely cameo took them past the finish line in a thrilling encounter. They followed it up with a much more clinical performance against the USA, making it two wins out of two in the tournament so far. The clash on Sunday is expected to be a high-voltage thriller. India, being on top of their game with a series of wins under their belt, will carry the momentum and have the upper hand going into the match. Their dominating record over Pakistan in international cricket over the last decade also provides them with a psychological edge.

However, going into this marquee clash, it is important to consider what India might need to do to secure a win. The Premadasa Stadium is a venue where India has played for a very long time, and the conditions are



familiar rather than alien. Here, we take a look at India's past performances at the Premadasa and the trends that have emerged at the venue, which could shape the outcome for the Indian team on Sunday.

How have India performed in Colombo?

India have enjoyed remarkable success at the R Premadasa Stadium in Colombo, establishing themselves as one of the most

dominant sides at the venue. Since 2009, they have played 15 T20I matches here, winning 11 and losing just four, underlining their consistency in Sri Lankan conditions. The T20 World Cup 2012 highlighted India's prowess, as they won four out of five games at the ground, with their sole loss coming against Australia. Notably, apart from the hosts Sri Lanka, only Australia has managed to defeat India at the Premadasa, showcasing India's stronghold and confidence when playing at this iconic Colombo stadium.

India's T20I record at RPS in Colombo

How much does India need in Colombo?

At the R Premadasa Stadium in Colombo, the advantage has often been with teams chasing,

highlighting the value of putting runs on the board. The average score in 51 T20Is at the venue is 152, with sides successfully chasing targets in 28 matches. However, in the ongoing tournament, chasing has proven tricky, as Ireland experienced twice and Australia once. The chasing teams have lost all three matches at the Premadasa in the ongoing competition.

## Abhishek Sharma's parents reach Colombo while IND vs PAK availability still uncertain

Colombo., (Agency)

India batter Abhishek Sharma's parents have landed in Colombo ahead of India's blockbuster T20 World Cup clash against Pakistan, even as the opener's availability for February 15 remains up in the air. Their arrival has added a touch of family support to the build-up, with India still waiting on the final word over Abhishek's recovery from a stomach infection. Abhishek travelled with the Indian squad on Friday, which has naturally raised hopes that he could yet make it back in time for the big one at the R Premadasa Stadium. But with only a few days left, India are in no mood to take shortcuts when it comes to his fitness. The timing has made Abhishek's situation one of the most talked-about subplots of India's World Cup campaign, especially since his tournament so far has been more stop-start than explosive.

WHAT HAPPENED TO ABHISHEK SHARMA?

Abhishek was hospitalised in Delhi earlier this week after suffering from a stomach infection, forcing him to sit out India's group-stage



fixture against Namibia. The illness came at the worst possible moment, right when the tournament was beginning to gather momentum. His only appearance at the T20 World Cup so far is also one he will want to forget quickly. In India's opener against the USA, Abhishek was dismissed for a golden duck, making his absence in the next match even more frustrating as he looked for an immediate comeback. Although he has since been discharged from hospital, the focus has been firmly on ensuring he regains full strength rather than rushing him into action prematurely.

WILL ABHISHEK SHARMA PLAY IND VS PAK?

India are still awaiting a final call on Abhishek's fitness ahead of Sunday's showdown. Captain Suryakumar Yadav had said at the toss against Namibia that the opener would be unavailable for "a game or two", leaving the Pakistan match hanging in the balance.

## U19 World Cup done, Vaibhav Sooryavanshi's next test is Class 10 board exams

NEW DELHI. (Agency)

Vaibhav Sooryavanshi barely has time to put his Under-19 World Cup medal away before life throws him into the most familiar pressure of all, board exams. Just days after scripting India's title triumph with a breathtaking final innings, the 14-year-old is now gearing up for his Class 10 examinations. Following his match-winning 175 against England in the final in Harare, which powered India to their sixth U19 World Cup crown, Sooryavanshi will soon return to a normal student routine, with exams beginning on February 17. Neel Kishore, principal of Podar International School in Samastipur, confirmed the teenager's participation and made it clear that there would be no special treatment despite his newfound stardom. "Cricketer Vaibhav Sooryavanshi will appear for the Class 10th board exams at our school. He has received his admit card," Kishore said. "There is excitement among everyone, be it teachers, students or parents, for his arrival. However, we have made arrangements

with that in mind, as he is still a student and will be appearing for his examination. This is an academic pitch, not a cricket pitch. All the facilities, safety, and security will be the



same for all. Exams will start on February 17," he added.

HOW DID VAIBHAV SOORYAVANSHI PLAY IN U19 WC?

Sooryavanshi was the headline act of the ICC Under-19 World Cup 2026, producing one of the greatest final knocks the tournament has seen. His 175 off just 80 balls against

England was a fearless assault, filled with 15 fours and 15 sixes, the most maximums ever hit in a single U19 World Cup innings. He finished the competition as the second-highest run-getter with 439 runs in seven matches at an average of 62.71 and a strike rate close to 170. With a century and three fifties, he was the driving force behind India's title run.

His six-hitting was just as staggering. Sooryavanshi smashed 30 sixes across the tournament, breaking Dewald Brevis' previous record of 18 by a huge margin, and now holds the record for the most sixes in U19 World Cup history.

HOW GREAT HAS VAIBHAV SOORYAVANSHI BEEN?

Vaibhav Sooryavanshi's rise has been nothing short of meteoric. After a breakout IPL 2025 season, which began with him becoming the youngest player ever to earn an IPL contract through a Rs 1.1 crore deal with Rajasthan Royals, the teenage batter only kept climbing. He soon made even bigger headlines by smashing an unbeaten 101 off just 38 balls against Gujarat Titans, becoming the youngest T20 centurion in history.

## Matchday Preview: South Africa, New Zealand look to strengthen Super 8 chances

NEW DELHI. (Agency)

Day 8 of the T20 World Cup promises another gripping triple-header as the fight for Super 8 qualification gathers pace. Ireland and Oman, both nursing two consecutive defeats, begin the day at the Sinhalese Sports Club in Colombo. With their campaigns on the line, the encounter shapes up as a virtual knockout, where only a win will keep their hopes alive. The action then moves to Eden Gardens in Kolkata, where England look to bounce back in a crucial Group C clash against Scotland. After scraping past Nepal and then suffering a setback against West Indies, England will be eager to rediscover rhythm and momentum at a key stage of the tournament. The day wraps up in Ahmedabad at the Narendra Modi Stadium, where New Zealand and South Africa face off in a high-stakes Group D contest that could significantly boost the winner's chances of progressing to the Super 8s. MATCH 1 Prediction: Ireland vs Oman in Colombo Ireland and Oman face off in a crucial Group B clash at the



Sinhalese Sports Club in Colombo, with both teams staring at elimination. After losing their opening two matches — Ireland to Sri Lanka and Australia, and Oman to Zimbabwe and Sri Lanka — the equation is straightforward: win or exit. With the race for the Super 8s intensifying, this fixture has effectively become a do-or-die contest. Ireland's task has been made tougher by the loss of captain Paul Stirling, who has been ruled out of the remainder of the tournament with knee ligament damage sustained against Australia. The

experienced opener's absence is a significant blow to Ireland's batting strength and leadership, particularly given his influence at the top of the order. Uncapped 20-year-old left-handed batter Sam Topping has been named as his replacement, adding youthful promise but no international experience to the squad. Historically, Ireland hold the edge in this head-to-head, winning four of their last six T20I meetings with Oman, including the last three in succession. However, Oman will draw confidence from their ability to compete with and upset stronger sides in major tournaments, and they will be eager to turn around their campaign and secure their first win. For Ireland, Stirling's absence increases the responsibility on players such as Harry Tector, Mark Adair, Lorcan Tucker and Ross Adair to step up with both bat and ball. Oman, meanwhile, will rely on experienced names like Jatinder Singh, Mohammad Nadeem and Aamir Kaleem to deliver under pressure.

# Premier League: Frank sacked at Spurs as Carrick lifts United and chaos spreads

**Tottenham's decision to sack Thomas Frank has been linked to dressing-room unrest, with players reportedly frustrated by his constant praise of Arsenal. The Premier League week also saw Michael Carrick's United bounce back and injury woes deepen for Liverpool.**

CHENNAI. (Agency)

The Premier League never stays quiet for long, and this week has delivered drama on multiple fronts. Tottenham's latest managerial change has sparked fresh debate about dressing-room power, while Manchester United's interim revival under Michael Carrick is offering supporters a very different kind of storyline. Elsewhere, instability continues at Nottingham Forest, transfer rumours have been firmly batted away by Chelsea's Cole Palmer, and

Liverpool are once again counting the cost of injuries at the worst possible time. Arsenal, meanwhile, are hoping Viktor Gyokeres can rediscover his scoring touch with the help of Mikel Arteta's guidance. There is also movement in the market, with Tottenham eyeing German midfielder Felix Nmecha, Bournemouth celebrating another smart piece of recruitment in teenage Brazilian Rayan, and West Ham slowly finding hope under Nuno Espirito Santo. Even with the window shut, a list of notable free agents remains available for clubs looking to strengthen.

Spurs sack Thomas Frank

When chants of "You're getting sacked in the morning" come from your own fans, you know as a coach that your job is in serious jeopardy. The problem for Thomas Frank was that many players wanted him gone too. Several senior players held dressing-room discussions and voiced their frustration, annoyance and, in one or two cases, anger that Frank had continually

praised bitter rivals Arsenal for their performances. He often used Mikel Arteta's



tactics as an example. The level of dissatisfaction with their own coach reached senior management and eventually the owners. Players felt that instead of pointing out Arsenal's superiority, Frank should have concentrated on improving the Spurs set-up tactically. He also had both public and private disagreements with Micky van de

Ven, Djed Spence, Yves Bissouma and Mathys Tel. One player said, "We just wanted him to shut up about Arsenal!" Frank met with the club owners on Monday and left with the impression that he had their support. Two days later, after yet another embarrassing home loss, this time to Newcastle, he was shown the exit door. CEO Vinai Venkatesham was ashen-faced, as he and Frank believed Tottenham could win the match. Frank leaves with Spurs in 16th place and uncomfortably close to the relegation zone, having managed only two wins in 17 Premier League games.

Newcastle boss Eddie Howe knew he also had to win this game, or at least come away with something, as he is under immense pressure too. Howe sympathised with Frank and said the manager's job is difficult and demanding, and with Tottenham's long injury list it is not always just the manager's fault.



# Looking for a Job You could get Rs 1,500 monthly under the Yuva Sathi scheme

New Delhi.(Agency)  
New Delhi.(Agency)  
The West Bengal government’s “Banglar Yuva Sathi” scheme aims to provide financial support of Rs 1,500 per month to unemployed youth while they search for jobs or pursue skill development opportunities. The programme is expected to be rolled out from April 1, 2026, with applications being accepted through special registration camps.Under the scheme, educated unemployed individuals aged between 21 and 40 years who have passed at least the secondary (Class 10) examination can apply for the allowance. Applicants must also be residents of West Bengal and should not be receiving benefits from most other state welfare schemes, although certain scholarships will not affect eligibility. The monthly stipend will continue until the beneficiary finds employment or for a maximum period of five years, whichever comes first. The financial assistance is intended to help young job seekers meet basic expenses and remain connected to employment opportunities and skill-building programmes.To apply, eligible candidates must submit documents such as identity proof, bank account details, photographs, and educational certificates during the registration process. The initiative is part of the state government’s broader effort to support unemployed youth and improve workforce participation through targeted assistance programmes.

# Ixigo to acquire 60% stake in Spanish train booking platform Trenes

New Delhi.(Agency)  
Travel aggregator Ixigo's board has approved the acquisition of a 60 per cent stake in Spain's second-largest train booking platform Online Travel Solutions (Trenes), for 11.70 million euro (over Rs 125 crore).The proposed acquisition will help leverage Ixigo's product, technology and AI leadership in the European OTA market as Trenes is engaged in the business of providing an online platform for train ticket bookings, primarily catering to the Spanish market, with operations extending to certain other parts of Southern Europe. Consequent to the acquisition, Online Travel Solutions, S.L. will become a step-down subsidiary of Ixigo, it stated in a late-night regulatory filing on Friday.The board of directors of Ixigo also approved the acquisition of a 45.02 per cent stake in Squad As Service, S.L., Spain (Sqaas) for a total consideration of 0.45 million euro (over Rs 4.83 crore). The total consideration for both acquisitions includes non-compete fees and authorisation of the signing of definitive agreements, subject to completion of procedural formalities and regulatory requirements in Spain.After the acquisition, Squad As Service, S.L. (Sqaas) will become an associate company of Ixigo.Sqaas is engaged in the business of providing technology-driven solutions, with a focus on artificial intelligence-enabled software and related services.

# Infosys declares 85% average Q3 bonus for employees after strong results

New Delhi.(Agency)  
Infosys has announced an average organisation-wide performance bonus payout of 85 per cent for the quarter ended December, according to a report by the Economic Times. This offers a morale boost to employees at a time when technology stocks are under pressure over concerns that artificial intelligence could automate large portions of IT services work. The payout will be disbursed along with the February salary, according to an internal communication rollout, the report noted. Employees said individual payouts ranged between 75 per cent and 100 per cent of target variable pay. Some reported receiving up to 15 per cent more than in the previous quarter, while a few said they received the full 100 per cent.The company had paid an average of 75 per cent of the target bonus for the July–September quarter. According to a person aware of the matter, who spoke to The Economic Times, the payout is the highest in FY26 so far and exceeds any quarter in the previous financial year. Strong business performance The higher payout follows a quarter marked by steady business momentum and deal wins. While announcing its third-quarter results in January, the company raised its revenue guidance, citing a strong performance and favourable demand environment. At a town hall meeting last month, Chief Human Resources Officer Shaji Mathew had indicated that employees could expect improved variable pay compared with earlier quarters.Infosys has around 323,000 employees. The company completed its appraisal cycle for the period November 2024 to October 2025 and released individual ratings in December. Awaiting clarity on salary hikes Employees are now awaiting communication on annual salary revisions. Ahead of the town hall, several had sought clarity on timelines for increments. Last year, the company issued salary revision letters in February, granting raises of between 5 per cent and 8 per cent to most employees, depending on performance ratings. The latest payout comes even as technology shares witnessed volatility on concerns that rapid advances in AI could reshape demand for traditional IT services. However, the improved bonus may help stabilise employee sentiment within the sector.

# IndiGo plans to hire over 1,000 pilots after December flight crisis

Hiring comes after over 5,000 flight cancellations in December 2025 due to new DGCA rest rules; airline increases crew strength, training and schedule buffers to avoid repeat disruptions

New Delhi.(Agency)  
India’s largest airline, IndiGo, is planning to hire more than 1,000 pilots in one of the biggest recruitment drives undertaken by an Indian carrier, according to a report by The Economic Times. The move comes in the aftermath of widespread flight disruptions in December 2025, when the airline was forced to cancel over 5,000 flights in seven days after facing an acute shortage of crew. The crisis followed the implementation of revised pilot duty and rest norms by the civil aviation regulator. The fresh recruitment will include trainee first officers, senior first officers and captains, according to the notice on the

company’s website. One of the hiring notices also states that the airline is open to recruiting pilots without prior experience on the Airbus A320 aircraft, the primary aircraft type in its fleet.Scrutiny following the flight crisis The disruption stemmed from new rest regulations introduced by the Directorate General of Civil Aviation (DGCA). The rules capped the number of landings a pilot can perform between midnight and 6 am and increased weekly rest requirements. An investigation by the regulator found that IndiGo had not adequately scaled up hiring or accelerated training to align with the new norms. As a result, pilots were stretched thin, with frequent reassignments, longer duty hours and extended “deadheading”, where crew travel as passengers to operate flights from another location. The DGCA’s probe highlighted what it described as an overriding focus on ‘maximising utilisation of crew, aircraft

and network resources’, which significantly reduced roster buffer



margins. Crew rosters were structured to maximise duty periods, relying heavily on tail swaps, extended duty patterns and minimal recovery time. This, the regulator said, compromised roster integrity and weakened operational resilience. The investigation revealed that while IndiGo required 2,422 captains to operate its schedule, it had 2,357 at the time. However, after the crisis, DGCA granted temporary exemptions from night-duty

restrictions until February 10 to ease immediate operational pressures. Expanding the training pipeline The report cited a senior official as saying that the airline is now proactively building a pipeline of pilots to match its rapid aircraft induction plan. IndiGo inducts around four new aircraft every month and requires a steady expansion of crew to sustain high utilisation levels. The airline upgrades approximately 20 to 25 first officers to captains each month through its internal training pipeline. However, trainee first officers require about six months of training before they can operate as full-fledged first officers. Only those with a minimum of 1,500 flying hours are eligible for captaincy, though airlines may impose higher thresholds. While the DGCA mandates three sets of pilots per aircraft, including one captain and one first officer in each set, IndiGo’s high aircraft utilisation means its effective requirement is more than double that baseline.

# Salary hike denied, surveillance increased — Tech worker’s post sparks debate

New Delhi.(Agency)  
A technology professional recently shared frustration online after their company reportedly skipped annual salary increments while introducing employee-monitoring software that captures screenshots every 10 minutes. The post, shared on social media, quickly gained attention and sparked debate about workplace surveillance and employee morale.According to the employee, the company described the monitoring tool as a productivity-tracking measure, designed to ensure that employees remain focused during working hours. The software allegedly records screen activity at regular intervals, allowing managers to review how time is spent on work tasksThe incident triggered strong reactions online, with many users



questioning whether constant digital monitoring could undermine trust between employers and employees, especially in remote or hybrid work

said companies are increasingly adopting such tools to manage distributed teams.Employeee-monitoring software has become more common in recent years as organisations try to track productivity, improve compliance, and reduce data-security risks. However, the growing use of such tools has also raised concerns about privacy, workplace culture, and job satisfaction in the evolving post-pandemic work environment.Overall, the viral post reflects a broader conversation about how far companies should go in monitoring employees, particularly when compensation growth slows and workplace expectations continue to shift.

# After months of delay, Wipro announces salary hikes for employees



The salary revision had earlier been deferred from September, reflecting the cautious approach taken by many companies in the Indian IT sector amid uncertain global demand and geopolitical challenges.

MUMBAL.(Agency)  
IT services major Wipro will begin implementing salary hikes for employees from March 1, 2026, ending a delay in increments that had been expected earlier. The decision was communicated internally to employees and is expected to bring relief to the company’s workforce. The salary revision had earlier been

deferred from September, reflecting the cautious approach taken by many companies in the Indian IT sector amid uncertain global demand and geopolitical challenges.While the company confirmed that all employees will receive the salary increase, the exact percentage of the hike has not been disclosed yet.The move comes at a time when several IT firms have been

careful about compensation decisions due to slower business growth and pressure on margins. For instance, some companies postponed appraisal cycles or implemented modest increments as they navigated market uncertainty. Overall, Wipro’s decision to resume increments signals a gradual return to the normal appraisal cycle in the IT industry, even as companies continue to monitor global economic conditions and client spending trends.



long break in contribution.To claim the EDLI benefit, the nominee or legal heir must submit Form 5 IF along with required documents, such as the death certificate, bank details, and identity proof, through the employer or directly to the EPFO office. Once verified, the EPFO processes the claim and releases the insurance amount to the nominee. The EDLI scheme remains one of the less-known but important social security benefits available to EPF members, providing financial protection to families without any extra cost to employees.

# Will AI change how you invest your money in stocks and mutual funds

The next market shift may not come from earnings or interest rates. It may come from AI. In this article, we explore how it could reshape your stock and mutual fund investments.

New Delhi.(Agency)  
Every investing era has a moment when markets realise the rules are changing. For the dot-com boom, it was bandwidth. For smartphones, it was mobile data. For cloud computing, it was subscription software.Now, the defining force of this cycle is artificial intelligence or AI.AI has been affecting how companies hire, allocate costs and plan productivity improvements. The shift was visible inside boardrooms. But it had not yet truly made its presence felt on global equity markets. That changed last week.The trigger was a product launch in the United States. Anthropic, the AI company behind the Claude models, introduced tools capable of drafting contracts, reviewing compliance documents and writing software code. These are tasks that sit at

the core of global IT services.Investors reacted immediately. Technology stocks in the United States turned volatile as markets reassessed business models built around human expertise. The concern was not about falling demand. It was about automation accelerating.Dalal Street is feeling the heat too. In a single week, the Nifty IT fell roughly 8%. Shares of IT giants Infosys and Tata Consultancy Services (TCS) dropped sharply. Nearly \$50 billion in market value was erased.Nothing collapsed. No crisis erupted. But markets have begun pricing in a new possibility. That AI may alter how value is created. But there is a quieter question beneath the sell-off. Is AI also slowly reshaping how we look at investments? AI-DRIVEN PANIC The correction in IT stocks was not triggered by weak earnings or macroeconomic shock. It was driven by a reassessment of future business models. For decades, Indian IT companies have grown through a labour-intensive



services model. Revenue has been closely linked to skilled engineers building, maintaining and modernising enterprise software systems.More complexity meant more billable hours. More billable hours

meant more revenue.Advanced AI tools challenge that structure. If coding, testing, documentation, and parts of integration can be automated or accelerated, the revenue equation shifts. Investors are not waiting for confirmation. They are adjusting expectations.That is what markets do when they sense structural change.

BUT IS AI REALLY A THREAT? The pessimistic argument is straightforward. If AI enables enterprises to build and manage software internally with far less effort, external IT services providers and even some software businesses could face erosion of their core model.In its extreme form, this view suggests that traditional IT services could become structurally obsolete.But according to N. ArunaGiri, CEO of TrustLine Holdings, that conclusion may be overstretched.“There are currently two sharply contrasting views on the impact of AI in the IT services and software space,” he told IndiaToday.in.“On the more pessimistic side, the argument is that AI will enable enterprises to develop software in-house with significantly less effort. In its extreme form, this suggests a structural erosion of traditional IT services and software providers.”





# Tejasswi Prakash

## Can't Stop Blushing As Raj Kundra Calls Her 'Bhabhiji'

Tejasswi Prakash and Karan Kundrra are one of the cutest couples in town. While fans can't get enough of them, even celebrities enjoy teasing the duo about each other, and a recent moment proved just that. At a sports event attended by Tejasswi, Raj Kundra, who was also at the event, couldn't resist playfully teasing her, creating a fun and lighthearted moment that had everyone smiling.

### Raj Kundra Screams 'Bhabhi' On Seeing Tejasswi Prakash

At a recent sports event, Tejasswi Prakash grabbed attention as she made a stylish appearance in a cute white floral dress. Surrounded by security, she was seen walking toward the stands, smiling as she glanced around the venue. Seated in the stands was Raj Kundra, who couldn't resist teasing her. Spotting Tejasswi, he loudly called out, "Bhabhi ji, namaste!" His playful remark made her blush and respond, "Stop, yaar!"

Not one to back down, Raj continued jokingly, "Arey, bhabhiji namaste bolunga, aur kya bolunga?" Tejasswi funnily protested again. As she walked over to greet him with a hug, Raj added another witty comment, "Kundra-Kundra toh bhabhiji hue na aap!" His joke was a playful reference to the fact that his surname and Tejasswi's boyfriend Karan Kundrra's surname are the same. By that logic, Raj teased that Tejasswi was literally his bhabhi.

Raj's antics didn't end there. As he and Tejasswi Prakash shared a warm hug, he turned toward the camera with a mischievous grin and dramatically mouthed, "Bhabhi," while pointing at the actress. The light-hearted banter left everyone around them laughing and added a fun moment to the event.

### Tejasswi Prakash Exits With Jannat Zubair, Reem Shaikh

Another video from the same event that is now going viral shows Tejasswi Prakash exiting the venue alongside Jannat Zubair and Reem Shaikh.

The three actresses were seen holding hands as they made their way out, chatting along while the paparazzi eagerly captured the moment. Their cheerful camaraderie and effortless style added yet another delightful highlight to the star-studded evening.

## Khanzaadi Has This To Say About The 50 Controversy: 'Reaction Was Shown, But...'



Khanzaadi's exit from the reality show The 50 raised many questions. She had been embroiled in controversy for her remarks on Chahat Pandey on the show before her exit. While many of her fans came to her support, Khanzaadi has now shared what actually happened on the show. She also claimed that only her reaction was shown but Chahat's actions were not as it was too indecent for national television. Khanzaadi shared a video explaining the indecent action Chahat Pandey did towards her on the show and how she linked her name with another person as well. In the caption she wrote, "Only my reaction was shown, not the provocation. Chahat Pandey's abusive words, derogatory behavior, and actions toward me were completely cut because they couldn't be aired on national TV, so the context was missing and I looked aggressive without reason."

### Khanzaadi On The 50's Impact

Speaking about the impact of the situation, she mentioned, "It affected me and that's why my reaction came from shock and discomfort, I said ye Gawar aurat hai For me, "gawar" is not about education it's about someone who goes below the belt to this level jo koi soch bhi nahi sakta, I was honestly shocked because I had never personally witnessed this kinda act in my entire life. I come from a very respectful family. My upbringing doesn't allow me to be around such woman."

### Khanzaadi's Note For Fans

Khanzaadi also sent a message to all her fans. She wrote, "My msg To all the innocent admirers. Stay aware, think for yourself, and choose wisely who you admire. Agar tum ese logo ko support karte ho toh tumme aur inme koi farq nahi. Lots of love."

In the show, tensions rose when Khanzaadi clashed with Digvijay Rathee after Chahat reminded him of her previous remarks. Khanzaadi escalated the fight by dragging Chahat into it, making disparaging remarks and using foul language. Ridhi and Karan Patel were taken aback, while Manisha Rani intervened to urge Khanzaadi to use proper language in front of senior cast members. The final blow came when Khanzaadi received zero votes and was eliminated.

## Ayesha Khan Proves Less Is More With Her Latest Red Carpet Fit



The glamour of Bollywood blended seamlessly with emerging cinema as Bolti Khidkiyaan, presented by Mukesh Chhabra Casting Company, rolled out its red carpet on February 12. The short film festival aims to spotlight new voices and creative storytelling in Indian cinema. The event witnessed an impressive celebrity turnout, adding star power to the celebration of fresh talent. Bollywood personalities such as Rajkumar Rao, Farah Khan, Sonam Bajwa, Abhishek Banerjee and Ayesha Khan were spotted at the festival, lending glamour and industry support to the occasion.

### Ayesha Khan Turns Heads With Her Gen Z Fashion

Ayesha Khan made a striking appearance at the event, confidently posing for the paparazzi. She opted for a relaxed yet trendy Gen Z-inspired outfit, pairing a muted grey long-sleeved mock-neck top with high-rise, wide-leg cargo pants. Her look was completed with a small black crossbody bag and dark open-toed heeled sandals, striking a balance between edgy and elegant.

### From Red Carpets to Live Concert Stages

Ayesha Khan's energetic presence and evolving fashion choices have been grabbing attention across public appearances. She was recently spotted at singer Jasmine Sandlas' Delhi concert, where she went beyond being a spectator.

The actor later joined Jasmine Sandlas on stage during the performance of Shararat, earning cheers from the audience.

### Ayesha Khan's Rising Popularity in Music and Films

Ayesha Khan has also been widely appreciated for her performance in the song Shararat from Dhurandhar. Sharing screen space with Krystle D'Souza, Ayesha brought infectious energy and charm to the track, which has resonated strongly with viewers. She was last seen in Kis Kisko Pyaar Karoon 2, starring Kapil Sharma. Directed by Anukul Goswami, the film also features Manjot Singh, Hira Warina, Tridha Choudhary and Parul Gulati.

### Bolti Khidkiyaan: A Platform for New Filmmaking Talent

Bolti Khidkiyaan is dedicated to discovering and nurturing emerging filmmakers. The festival offers selected creators opportunities for film financing, professional mentorship, and curated screenings. The top five short films receive direct guidance from renowned casting director Mukesh Chhabra, along with mentorship from leading Bollywood directors, providing young talent with a strong industry launchpad.

# Rashmika Mandanna

## Cheers For Shahid Kapoor's O Romeo, Says 'I Know How Hard You Have Worked For This'

Rashmika Mandanna has extended her warm wishes to Shahid Kapoor as his film O Romeo releases today. Her heartfelt message has quickly caught fans' attention online. The actress took to social media to praise Shahid's intense look from the film and applaud his dedication to the project. Taking to her Instagram stories, Rashmika Mandanna shared the poster and wrote, "Shahid, O Romeo is looking good!! I know how hard you have worked for this one and wishing you all the best

laughed and laughed. To catch your tropes is like playing a thrilling game while relishing this new world. That BGM @tripti\_dimri ferocity with innocence. I almost typed Afshan, you became her. A woman of power, who doesn't wield it heavily @iamnanapatekar looks can kill @tamannaahspeaks E T H E R E A L @nadiadwalagrandson @avinashstiyary15 @hussain.dalal @dishapatani And their entire cast & crew of O'Romeo: Ta Tha Thaiya! @shahidkapoor My Romeo, your best yet. Not a beat that missed," read the note.

### Shahid Talks About His Character Ustraa

Shahid described his character, Ustraa, as "dark yet soft and can also be very funny. He's a complete laundiya baaz, yet falls in love to a degree that he loses himself." Unlike his intense roles in Haider or Kabir Singh, Ustraa combines humour, romance and gangster-like bravado, even fearing his grandmother, played by Farida Jalal. The actor admitted the toughest part of filming was physical: "The toughest real estate in this film was actually my body! It was covered in tattoos; it would take.



for the release!!" Ishaan Khatter have also praised the film.

### Mira Rajput Calls Her 'Romeo' Shahid Kapoor Best

Mira Rajput recently took to social media to shower love on her husband Shahid Kapoor and O Romeo team. She shared a heartfelt note that quickly caught the attention of fans. She referred to Shahid as her "Romeo" and praised his dedication. O Romeo, also starring Triptii Dimri, has released today in theatres. Taking to her Instagram stories, Mira Rajput shared a sweet note and congratulated the team. "TEAM O'ROMEO You'll created a world and a whirl.@vishalrbhardwaj you are a genius of finesse. And I will always cherish the times we







# Protect your Skin, hair during harsh Summer

Cleansing is of great importance for the working woman who leaves home to get to work, battling traffic and exposing herself to the grime and pollutants in the air. Always cleanse the skin at night, before going to bed, so that you can remove make-up, stale sweat and oil deposits, as well as dirt and pollutants. A tulsi neem face wash would be ideal for summer. It would help to remove impurities and soothe and protect

the skin from eruptions and rashes. After cleansing, tone the skin with chilled rose water or a rose-based skin tonic. It not only refreshes and cools the skin, but also helps to stimulate blood circulation to the skin surface and add a glow. A matte moisturizer is ideal if the weather is hot and humid. For dry skins, spray on a moisture mist. If your work entails traveling, apply a sunscreen. For oily skin, oil-free sunscreen is available.

Use a facial scrub two or three times a week. A facial scrub helps to remove dead cells and provides deep cleansing of the skin. It brightens and refines the skin. If your skin is dry, nourish it at night, after cleansing. Apply a nourishing cream and massage it into the skin, using circular strokes. The pressure should be more as you go upwards and slightly outwards. Wipe it off after three to four minutes of massage. Twice a week use a face mask. Apply it on the face, avoiding the lips and area around eyes. Wash it off when it is dry. To refresh your make-up, you need to carry a few items in your handbag. During summer, fragrant wet tissues can be most refreshing. They are easily available. Use them to cleanse skin and remove grease and sweat. A powder compact of pressed powder is also handy. It helps to get rid of that oily look in summer. First wipe

with the tissues and then dab the powder. You also need a lipstick to touch-up after lunch. Apply powder on the lips and then apply lipstick. Remember to carry a small bottle of cologne, or your favourite deodorant. Hair: Although long hair is in fashion, avoid keeping it loose while you are at work. This is more so in summer. Fussing with the hair is most distracting. Put it up in a roll or pin it up. It can also be tied back in a pony tail. Actually, pony tails are in fashion. You can have a high or low pony tail, tied back with ribbons. In fact, match the ribbon with the colour of your outfit. Or, use a hair accessory. Many kinds of clips and other attractive hair accessories are available. But they should not be too decorative for work. You can even curl the ends of the hair with curlers and then tie them in a pony tail, or pin then up with a clip.



## ‘Zero-water’ beauty Treatments

With the water crises looming overhead in Mumbai, beauty regimens that use 'zero water' or just '1 per cent water, are fast becoming popular. At a time when the city has been called on to try and do their best to adjust with the ongoing situation, these treatments seem to be the apt new go-to fads for the summer when water cuts are going to be the norm of the day. Here's what they are about...

**Waterless mani-pedis**  
The usual pampering involves immersing the hands or feet in water. That's not needed with this. Manicures and pedicures that use gloves that contain moisturisers and exfoliators are the new fad. You simply slip them on and that's it! Dermatologist Dr Geeta Oberoi explains: "In the glove manicure, you wear plain cotton gloves with a blend of botanical extracts for two hours. These contain green tea, rosemary, jasmine and orange extracts, which act as natural moisturisers and soften the skin. There is no water used. The contents have ethanol, which is antibacterial and protects the skin. The urea in them aims to soften the skin, while the alpha and beta hydroxy peel in the solution gently peels away dead cells, so it's all taken care of without using water. Finally, you take off the glove and wipe off any unabsorbed contents." The dry mani is also said to be a more hygienic option. Adds beauty expert Jo Gaglani, "For one, it eliminates any microbial or fungal scares because it is a waterless or dry pedicure. Also, foot filing on wet skin will make the tissues soggy, and the file will roll over the skin rather than scraping evenly. Plus, the skin is weakened by soaking the feet and is more likely to tear and make skin condition worse. Instead, the foot treatments now use a foot mousse, lotion and an emu oil-enriched nail and cuticle serum, which takes care of everything."

**Caramel and ice cream on your skin, too**  
Forget those mint and rose serums, the new manis and pedis use a host of delicious food ingredients to pamper skin and cut down drastically on water usage. Get ready for ice cream, caramel-cane sugar, chocolate and cocktail treatments, that you simply

- **The usual pampering involves immersing the hands or feet in water.**
- **Forget those mint and rose serums, the new manis and pedis use a host of delicious food ingredients to pamper skin and cut down drastically on water usage.**



take off with a steamed towel! In the caramel manicure, hands and feet are soaked in cane sugar. A sugar scrub is then used to exfoliate the skin to clear a dead layer. Then, a caramel-cane sugar pack is applied and finally steamed off with a cloth. Another popular treatment, the candle manicure, aims to leave the hands soft and detanned. Says Amyn Manji, spa expert, "In this, warmed candle wax is poured onto the skin. Once it hardens, it is removed with the help of hot wet towels." Skin pampering also comes in the way of a new 'cocktail manicure' where tempting flavours like pina coloda, mojito and strawberry margarita are applied in a fizz ball liquid on the skin. "This involves cocktail flavour-infused cuticle serums, lotions and a pack and leaves the skin refreshed and smelling good," he adds. If you love ice cream, slather on the ice cream skin treatment. "In it, the ice cream fizz ball — comprising oil blends, minerals, epsom salt and fragrances — is used. The ingredients aim to hydrate and enrich the skin," informs expert Farheen Shaikh. And for chocolate lovers, here's another indulgence! A chocolate mani-pedi has a technician massaging the gooey goodness onto your skin in a cream and pack, which is finally wiped off with a hot towel.

## Keep aside bad hair days During summers

UV rays are as bad for your hair as they are for your skin. Avoid leaving your hair open and instead accessorise it instead. A scarf or a headband to wrap your hair can make for a great style statement. A stylish hat is another option. Get bows and flowery headbands for a hipster look. - Coloured hair tends to fade if you stay out for too long. So, avoid spending too much time in the sun. Also, avoid swimming as the chlorine in the water could strip the colour off your hair shaft. - Do not wash your hair daily. As an alternative, you can co-wash it. This procedure involves not using a shampoo but using a replenishing conditioner for a few minutes before

- **Coloured hair tends to fade if you stay out for too long**
- **Keep straightening, curling or any other treatments for that matter for later. Products used for hair styling could suffocate your hair.**

rinsing it off. Thus, you can wash your hair without shampooing it for three to four days. Furthermore, to retain natural moisture, avoid using a hairdryer and rely on letting it dry, naturally. - Escape any sort of hair treatments if need be. Keep straightening, curling or any other treatments for that matter for later. Products used for hair styling could suffocate your hair. - Ditch open hair for summer hairstyles in vogue. 'Tis the season for braids, ponytails, buns. Depending on where you are going (work, friends or party) bubble, high or tousled ponytails with ribbons are hot choices! - Go for regular haircuts. Trimming your hair every once in six to eight weeks ensures they are healthy and helps in speeding up its growth.



## Makeup artists now trying their hand at eye and lip art



If your definition of eye-catching eyes and lips is about unconventional colours, you need to up your game! Makeup gurus are now blurring the line between makeup and art to create stunning visuals on the eyes and lips, like realistic sunsets, to scenes from fairy tales, cartoon characters and food. This has been taking social media by storm. Apart from paint, the artists use anything from glitters, jewels and decals to create the breathtaking images. Many people are matching their nailpaint to the lip art for added effect.

## How to have a detox bath

While most of us can't go through week-long detox rituals, it's quite possible to have a quick relaxing detox bath at the end of a tiring day. Here's how you can rejuvenate your body and your mind by taking a simple but healthy bath. **Ginger bath** Sprinkle some fresh ginger shavings in your bath water. Ginger tends to make the body sweat more, thereby helping it release toxins. **Baking soda bath** Baking soda has the property of neutralizing chlorine in tap water, which aids the body in the detoxing process. **Apple cider vinegar bath** Not only will water mixed with apple cider vinegar help you sweat out toxins, it also helps with any inflammation of the skin. essential oil bath There are a number of great essential oils out there like lavender, peppermint and sandalwood, which are great for a detox bath. For best results, you can first add baking soda to your bath and then a few drops of an essential oil to get the full effects of the latter.

