

Indira Vikas Colony Land Scam: 1000 Crore Government Land Under Illegal encroachment Near Mukherjee Nagar, Delhi

The Sikh Times
Special
Correspondent

For the past several years, serious allegations have been raised regarding massive illegal encroachment on government land in Indira Vikas Colony, situated near Dr. Mukherjee Nagar, Delhi – 110009. Despite repeated representations, complaints, and detailed reports published earlier with documentary references, no concrete action has been taken by the authorities so far. Allegation: ₹1000 Crore Government Land

Encroached Reliable sources and previous investigative reports have highlighted that nearly ₹1000 crore worth of prime government land has allegedly been encroached upon in Indira Vikas Colony. The land, which belongs to government authorities, is reportedly being used for unauthorized residential and commercial construction. This is not the first time the matter has been brought into the public domain. Earlier detailed stories exposed: Large-scale illegal constructions, alleged builder–official nexus, unauthorized sale and purchase of plots, violation of municipal building norms, fire safety and civic hazard risks &



heavy financial loss to the Delhi Government. Yet, no visible demolition drive or major enforcement action has



taken place. Previous Representations & Official Silence

Repeated complaints were reportedly submitted to:

Delhi Government departments, Municipal authorities, Land-owning agencies, Vigilance authorities.

Despite assurances and file movements, ground reality remains unchanged. The silence of concerned officials has raised serious questions. Many residents and observers are asking if the land is government property worth ₹1000 crore, why has no strict action been initiated? Unchecked Unauthorized Construction. Indira Vikas Colony today reportedly presents: Congested unauthorized buildings, Narrow lanes without proper planning, Lack of basic infrastructure compliance, Fire safety risks, Absence of legal ownership clarity,

Urban planners warn that such unchecked growth may lead to: Structural collapse risks Major fire tragedies Law and order complications 1. Who is the original custodian of the land ?? How were plots sold if the land is government-owned? 3. Why were registry and electricity/water connections allegedly allowed? 4. Was there administrative negligence or collusion? 5. Why has demolition or eviction not been executed? These questions still remain unanswered. [Continued news page 2](#)

Rahul Gandhi disconnected from ground realities: Navjot Kaur Sidhu's big attack

Expelled Congress leader Navjot Kaur Sidhu has openly criticised Rahul Gandhi's leadership, alleging corruption within the party and predicting a no-show for the Congress in the 2027 Punjab Assembly polls.

New Delhi (Agency) Expelled Congress leader Navjot Kaur Sidhu has launched a blistering attack on party leader Rahul Gandhi, accusing him of being disconnected from ground realities and predicted the party's defeat in the 2027 Punjab Assembly polls.

Speaking at a rally in Tamil Nadu's Coimbatore, Sidhu said Gandhi "talks sense" but fails to match words with action. She claimed she had sought time for eight months to flag alleged wrongdoing in the Punjab unit, including claims that election tickets had already been "sold", but were ignored.

"If you don't know what's happening beneath you, then I'm sorry. You don't deserve that chair," she said, holding Rahul Gandhi responsible for the situation and sparking internal rumblings within the Punjab Congress unit.

Sidhu also alleged that promises made to her

and her husband, senior leader Navjot Singh Sidhu, including a deputy chief minister's post and an MP ticket, were not honoured.

Questioning Gandhi's anti-corruption pitch,

you wanted them to be run according to the CM. Why are you talking against corruption when your own people are corrupt? You're liking those corrupt people around you. The people surrounding you

are totally corrupt. You have no time for the honest people who want to come and tell you that this is going wrong," she said.

WHY WAS NAVJOT SIDHU EXPELLED?

Sidhu's remarks came after she was expelled from the Congress on February 6 amid a row over her claim that aspirants for the Punjab chief minister's post were expected to pay "Rs 500 crore in a suitcase" — a charge that drew sharp backlash

and further deepened the party's crisis in the state. "We do not have Rs 500 crore to give to sit in the chief minister's chair. The one who gives a suitcase of Rs 500 crore becomes the CM," she had said. Sidhu, who later said her remarks.

"You gave us local bodies and tourism, and



Sidhu accused his inner circle of shielding corrupt leaders and sidelining honest voices, warning that the party would "not win Punjab" if the course was not corrected.

"You gave us local bodies and tourism, and

"Not Shaky": Congress MP Rejects Strain In 20-Year Alliance With DMK

Chennai (Agency)

Congress MP Vijay Vasanth has dismissed speculation that the party's two-decade-old alliance with the Dravida Munnetra Kazhagam (DMK) is on shaky ground, amid rising critical voices within the Congress against its ally.

In an exclusive conversation with , Vijay Vasanth asserted that the "DMK-Congress alliance is not on a shaky ground", adding that discussions with the DMK would happen once formal seat-sharing talks begin on February 22.

The DMK has already ruled out any scope for power sharing if it returns to office, even as some Congress leaders have publicly pushed for a share in governance and a higher number of seats. Adding to the buzz, AIIC general secretary KC Venugopal is holding consultations in Chennai and Puducherry on Tuesday to firm up the party's strategy in the state where polls will precede the end of the Assembly's term in May.

On whether power-sharing would be a deal breaker, Vasanth said the demand would be taken up during negotiations, even though the DMK has publicly said no. "These are matters to be negotiated across the table," he said.

Addressing suggestions that the Congress may be overestimating its strength - especially after being allotted 25 seats in 2021 and winning 18, Vasanth rejected the claim. "Congress isn't overestimating itself in Tamil Nadu. The party

The DMK has already ruled out any scope for power sharing if it returns to office, even as some Congress leaders have publicly pushed for a higher number of seats.

is widely spread across the state," he said, underlining its organisational presence and vote



base. Calling the DMK-Congress partnership a "20-year-old successful alliance", he maintained that periodic differences should not be mistaken for a rupture. On the possibility of an alliance with actor Vijay's party Tamilaga Vettir Kazhagam, he declined to comment saying any such decision rests solely.

French President Macron Arrives In Mumbai For AI Summit, Bilateral Talks

Mumbai (Agency)

French President Emmanuel Macron arrived in Mumbai on Tuesday, ahead of his meeting with Prime Minister Narendra Modi, where the two leaders will review the progress made in the India-France strategic partnership. Maharashtra Governor Acharya Devvrat and Chief Minister Devendra Fadnavis were present at the Mumbai airport to receive the French leader. "Bienvenue à Mumbai! A very warm welcome to the President of France, H.E. Emmanuel Macron and First Lady Brigitte Macron as they arrive in Mumbai! Maharashtra welcomes you! Wishing Hon President Macron and the entire French delegation a pleasant stay and a successful visit," Fadnavis posted on X around 2 am, shortly after Macron landed in Mumbai.

Deputy chief ministers Eknath Shinde and Sunetra Pawar were also present to greet Macron.

As he boarded the flight for India, Macron had posted on X: "En route to India! Three days from Mumbai to New Delhi to take our strategic partnership even further. On board with me: business leaders and the economic, industrial, cultural and digital players who give real, tangible life to the ties between India and France. Together, we will go even further in our cooperation. See you tomorrow, my dear friend @NarendraModi!" Modi and Macron's discussions will focus on cementing the strategic ties and further diversifying them into new and emerging areas.

Both the leaders will also exchange views on issues of regional and global importance. They will review the progress made in the India-France strategic partnership.

President Macron is on an official visit to India from February 17 to 19 at the invitation of PM Modi to participate in the AI Impact Summit hosted by India, as well as hold a bilateral summit with the latter in Mumbai. This is President Macron's fourth visit to India and his first visit to Mumbai. On Tuesday afternoon, the two leaders will hold bilateral engagements at Lok Bhawan in South Mumbai. Later, they will inaugurate the India-France Year of Innovation 2026 and address a gathering of business leaders, start-ups, researchers and other innovators from both countries.

Cabinet Minister Gurmeet Singh Khuddian inaugurates 86th Kila Raipur Rural Olympics

The Sikh Times

Kila Raipur (Ludhiana), Feb 17: The Kila Raipur Rural Olympics-2026 kicked off with immense enthusiasm and fanfare on Tuesday in Ludhiana, marking the much-anticipated revival of the iconic bullock cart races after a 12-year hiatus. The event was inaugurated by Punjab Cabinet Minister Gurmeet Singh Khuddian at the stadium in Kila Raipur village. The resumption of these world-famous bullock cart races drew massive crowds, with spectators flocking from across Punjab and beyond to witness the thrilling spectacle deeply rooted in the state's rural heritage. Accompanied by MLA Jiwan Singh Sangowal and Dr KNS Kang, Minister Khuddian highlighted the cultural significance of the races, noting their strong connection to Punjab's historical and traditional rural roots. He credited Chief Minister Bhagwant Singh Mann for making the revival possible through the enactment of the Punjab Prevention of Cruelty to Animals (Punjab Amendment) Act, 2025 which introduced safety standards for the animals, addressed legal obstacles and

paved the way for resumption of these races. The Minister



expressed optimism that the Kila Raipur Rural Olympics plays a key role in fostering a strong sports culture across Punjab and uncovering hidden talent from every corner of the state. He highlighted the government's commitment to supporting athletes, noting that cash awards have been sig-

nificantly increased for those securing medals at the Olympics and other major international competitions. Additionally, Olympic medal winners have been provided prestigious government jobs in the Punjab Civil Services (PCS) and Punjab Police Services (PPS). The Minister further stated that the government has provided nearly 64,000 government jobs on a purely merit-based basis, ensuring transparency and fairness in recruitment. He also pointed to the state's major infrastructure achievements, including historic projects to construct and upgrade approximately 40,000 km of roads. Furthermore, the government has delivered 600 units of free electricity per household over the last four years often resulting in zero bills for many families providing substantial relief to residents. The Minister announced an allocation of Rs 30 lakh for the veterinary hospital to ensure high-quality medical services for livestock in the region. Additional Deputy Commissioner Amarjeet Bains, SDM Jasleen Kaur Bhullar, District Sports Officer Kuldeep Chugh, representatives from the Kila Raipur Sports Society among others.

Contd.....page-7

Punjab Government Under Attack Over Top Cops' Presence In Anti-Drug Rally

The government's "War Against Drugs" event in Moga was attended by Chief Minister Bhagwant Mann, AAP convener Arvind Kejriwal, senior leader Manish Sisodia, and several cabinet ministers.

Chandigarh (Agency) The Opposition parties in Punjab have raised multiple questions regarding the government's anti-drug rally and have objected to the presence of government officials on the occasion. The government's "War Against Drugs" event in Moga was attended by Chief Minister Bhagwant Mann, AAP convener Arvind Kejriwal, senior leader Manish Sisodia, and several cabinet ministers. The state's Chief Secretary and Director General of Police had also shared stage with them and addressed the crowd, sparking a massive political debate. The Opposition parties have not only targeted the AAP government's anti-drug campaign, the Chief Secretary and DGP have also faced criticism.

What Amarinder Singh Raja Warring Said

Punjab Congress chief Amarinder Singh Raja



Warring took jabs at the government and administration on social media, writing that 890 government buses were diverted for the rally. Patwaris, Divisional Public Prosecutors (BDPOs), Panchayat Secretaries, and other government officials were tasked with bringing

Aam Aadmi Party workers to the rally. The bill for the event will be paid by the state treasury, he alleged. "The Chief Minister and the DGP are addressing a political forum," he said.

Pratap Bajwa Targets Government

Congress leader and Leader of the Opposition Pratap Singh Bajwa expressed deep concern over what he called dangerous erosion of administrative neutrality in Punjab. He questioned the diversion of approximately 890 government buses and the presence of the Chief Secretary and Director General of Police on the political stage. "Governance cannot become a spectacle for political endorsements," Bajwa said. He further said the alleged deployment of state resources and top officials at an AAP event led by the Chief Minister and party chief Arvind Kejriwal sends a disturbing message to citizens.

Front continued news

Indira Vikas Colony Land Scam: 1000 Crore Government Land Under Illegal encroachment Near Mukherjee Nagar, Delhi

If the estimated valuation of ₹1000 crore is correct, the issue is not merely local encroachment but a major financial irregularity affecting public wealth. Such high-value land in North Delhi carries immense strategic and economic importance.

Social activists and concerned citizens have demanded: A high-level judicial or CBI inquiry, Identification of responsible officials, Immediate demarcation of land, Removal of illegal encroachments, Transparency in land records, Protection of government property.

The matter concerns not just one colony but the principle of protecting public land. Citizens question how such large-scale occupation could occur without administrative oversight.

If earlier warnings and investigative stories were ignored, the responsibility now becomes even more serious. The Indira Vikas Colony issue near Dr. Mukherjee Nagar is not merely a local land dispute—it is a test of governance, transparency, and rule of law. Until firm action is taken, the questions raised in earlier publications will continue to echo: Who will protect government land worth ₹1000 crore? When will accountability be fixed?

Rs 5,000-reward theft accused nabbed after 1km bike chase in Sohna

Gurgaon.(Agency)

A 23-year-old man carrying a Rs 5,000 reward on his head and allegedly involved in over three dozen theft cases was arrested by the crime branch, Sohna, after a brief motorcycle chase last week. The accused, Shahrukh, currently residing in Sohna, was intercepted around 9pm on Feb 7 while riding a motorcycle without a number plate near Sohna Ghati. When signalled to stop, he allegedly sped away. After a chase of nearly one kilometre, he lost balance and fell, following which he was overpowered by the police team. During a search, officers recovered a country-made pistol and a live cartridge from his possession. A case under the Arms Act was registered at City Sohna police station. As he sustained a leg injury in the fall, he was admitted to the govt hospital in Sector 10 and was formally arrested after being discharged on Feb 15. Police said Shahrukh was conducting recce in the area for a potential theft. Investigators claim he typically surveyed target shops two to three times during the day while working as an e-rickshaw driver. He allegedly operated alone but handed over stolen goods to a receiver from a nearby area, who is being traced. He is accused of targeting shops in Bhondsi, Badshapur and Sohna by climbing rooftops, cutting through roofs, stealing cash and valuables, and removing DVRs to destroy CCTV evidence. Police suspect the seized motorcycle is stolen as its chassis number was found erased. Further probe is underway.

Japan's Kewpie proposes Rs 200 crore food plant off Yamuna Expressway

Noida.(Agency)

Japan-based Kewpie Corporation has proposed an investment of about Rs 200 crore to set up a food processing plant in the industrial area of the Yamuna Expressway Industrial Development Authority (YEIDA). The company has sought 8–10 acres for the proposed unit. Senior officials of Yamuna Expressway Industrial Development Authority (YEIDA) last week held discussions with company representatives, who later inspected industrial parks.

The meeting was chaired by YEIDA CEO R.K. Singh and attended by additional CEO SK Bhatia and other YEIDA officials. The discussion focused on land availability, infrastructure support, and procedural requirements for establishing a manufacturing unit in one of YEIDA's industrial parks. Founded in 1919, Kewpie Corporation is engaged in the production of egg-yolk-based mayonnaise and other processed food products. The company holds around 60% share of the mayonnaise market in Japan and operates in 79 countries. It has manufacturing facilities in the United States, Thailand, Vietnam, Indonesia, and China. Its product portfolio includes mayonnaise, dressings, sauces, fruit jams, and fruit-based food solutions. Under its 'Make in Local' strategy for 2026, the company is focusing on expanding production bases in Asia-Pacific markets to strengthen supply chains and increase local sourcing. Officials said the company indicated a requirement of 8–10 acres for the proposed plant. The facility is expected to cater to the domestic market and support the company's expansion plans in India. During the meeting, the company representative reviewed connectivity, utilities, and logistics infrastructure in the industrial region. The official informed the authority that a formal investment proposal would be placed before the company's board for approval.

2 farmhouses on 26 acres in the Raisina hill area in Aravallis razed

Gurgaon.(Agency)

The forest department on Monday demolished a concrete wall and two farmhouses in the Raisina hill area after finding fresh construction activity underway in the protected Aravali landscape. The affected area spans around 26 acres. Officials said inspections revealed extensive concretisation and the use of earthmovers without permission.

Divisional forest officer (Gurgaon) Raj Kumar said action was taken after confirming that construction had resumed in violation of norms. An earthmover was used to dismantle the concretised wall and structures along a narrow forest path, with debris left scattered across the hillside. Officials said the area is covered under the Aravali Notification of 1992, which restricts construction of roads, boundary walls and buildings, and prohibits tree felling without approval. Non-forest activities are not allowed on land classified as gair

mumkin pahad (uncultivable hill) without statutory clearances. The action follows earlier reports of large-scale violations in Raisina. A previous TOI report had flagged a nearly 30-metre-wide road carved into the protected hills, with over 100 trees felled to clear the stretch. The road connected to an existing road below the forest belt, raising concerns about deeper access into the ridge and continued encroachment.

Officials said earlier inspections had also recorded large tracts of freshly cleared land, stripped vegetation, and piles of excavated soil and loose rock along the ridge. Cut branches, stumps and exposed roots were visible at several locations. Fresh boundary walls and gates were found to have come up soon after vegetation clearance. At multiple sites, boundary walls were constructed around standing trees,



enclosing them within private plots.

Environmentalists say such practices often precede complete land clearing. Flattened hilltops with houses and multi-storey buildings under construction were also recorded. Environmentalists have repeatedly warned that even repairing old paths with concrete permanently alters natural drainage, soil profile and wildlife movement. "Despite repeated demolition drives, encroachments continue and construction returns," said Col (retd) SS Oberoi. In 2024, National Green Tribunal took suo motu cognisance of a TOI report on illegal construction at Ansals Aravali Retreat in Raisina, terming the rebuilding of demolished structures a "flagrant violation" of its earlier orders. In Dec 2022, the tribunal had directed the Haryana and Rajasthan govt to set up a monitoring committee and conduct periodic reviews until all encroachments were removed from the Aravali land.

Cons make fake bank account, steal Rs 6.5L housing refund of retired Armyman from Gurgaon

Gurgaon.(Agency)

An ex-serviceman has alleged that officials of Haryana's housing board and employees of Sarv Haryana Gramin Bank siphoned off over Rs 6.5 lakh by opening a fake bank account in his name to divert a long-pending housing refund. Police on Sunday registered a cheating case. The complainant, Tejram, a resident of Tikli village, said he applied under a housing scheme for ex-servicemen in June 2014 and deposited Rs 5.21 lakh for the allotment of a house. After the scheme was closed in 2015, he applied for a refund. He was asked to submit a no-objection certificate (NOC) from the bank. Tejram claimed he submitted an NOC obtained from the bank's Sector 4 branch in April 2015.

According to his complaint, the housing board informed him on Sept 20, 2022, that Rs 6,55,459, including interest, had been refunded. However, he said he did not receive the amount. During later correspondence, an accountant at the housing board's Panchkula office informed him that the amount had been transferred through RTGS on Jan 23, 2024, to an account in his name at the bank's Defence Colony branch in Hisar. Tejram alleged that he never opened any account at the Hisar branch and did not authorise the transfer. He claimed that a fake account was opened in his name using forged documents to divert the funds. After failing to get relief despite repeated representations, Tejram sent a legal notice on Nov 11, 2025, to the housing board, the bank's Defence Colony branch in Hisar, its head office in Rohtak, and the vigilance officer concerned, seeking a refund of the deposited amount with 18% interest and action against those responsible. The bank replied that the amount had been credited to the stated account, but Tejram maintained he did not receive the refund. Based on his complaint, a case was registered under sections 420 (cheating) and 120B (criminal conspiracy) of the IPC and forwarded to the economic offences wing for investigation. Police said they are examining bank records and documents to determine how the account was opened and who authorised the transaction.

With 3 new cases, hepatitis tally now 32 in Palwal village

Gurgaon.(Agency)

Three fresh hepatitis infections—the first instances of Hepatitis B cases recorded in Chhainsa village of Palwal in recent weeks—have pushed the total number of confirmed cases to 32. Officials said the three new cases were detected during random screening, which was initiated against the backdrop of seven deaths reported over the past 15 days. Of the 32 cases so far, three are of Hepatitis B, while the remaining infections are Hepatitis C. "As of now, none of the patients has symptoms. We are prescribing medicines for them and immunising everyone against Hepatitis B and C," a senior doctor involved in the exercise said. Health teams have so far screened more than 800 residents and collected blood samples for viral load testing, which will determine the course and duration of treatment. "Treatment depends on the viral load. If the viral load is low, there is no need for long-term medication. As a precaution, medicines are being given for now. After 10-15 days, those with high viral load will continue treatment, while medicines will

be stopped for others," the doctor said. While the deaths have heightened anxiety in the village, officials said investigations were still underway to establish whether the fatalities were directly caused by hepatitis. In the wake of infections, many villagers have complained about fever, vomiting, body pain and cough.

At present, two patients are admitted to the civil hospital, while the rest are being monitored at home. Officials said those admitted earlier as a precaution have stabilised. The investigation has also turned the spotlight on possible water contamination. During inspections, the public health department found 25 illegal connections to drinking water pipelines, which led to leakages and raised fears of contamination. Officials said the connections have now been removed, and engineers are checking supply lines for further breaches. "Chlorinated water is being supplied now," an official said.

Water samples collected from six households have also tested positive for E. coli, indicating faecal contamination, while earlier tests showed inadequate

chlorination in stored water. Alongside screening, the health department has begun vaccinating close contacts to curb further spread of the infection. "If a parent is positive and children are negative, we are immunising the children as a precaution. Adults in contact areas who test negative are also being immunised," said Satinder Vashisth, the Palwal CMO.

Under a special drive, 80 people were vaccinated on Sunday and 70 on Saturday, while a special OPD tested 193 residents. Officials said most infections were detected among those with close contact with infected persons, with cases more common in the 15-35 age group. Officials have also flagged other possible routes of transmission. According to them, some village youths working as heavy vehicle drivers in other states may have contracted the infection there due to unsafe sexual practices. "In a few cases, the use of infected syringes for drug use was also detected," an official said, adding that Hepatitis B could also spread through steroid injections administered by unqualified practitioners.

Man hit with bat after honking row in Greater Noida, suffers skull injury

Noida.(Agency)

A late-night argument over honking spiralled into assault in Greater Noida West early on Feb 15, leaving a man with a skull fracture and several others injured, police said. In his complaint, Ayush Singh, a resident of Amrapali Leisure Park, said he was heading out for dinner with four friends around 1am when they found a Verna parked in the middle of the road near the society gate, blocking their way. Singh said he honked to ask the driver to move, which allegedly angered two occupants of the car, identified as Azeem and Shahrukh. What began as a verbal exchange quickly escalated. Singh alleged the two men intercepted him and his friends outside the society. A third man, Firoz, later joined the accused, he claimed. The trio, he said, were armed with baseball bats and hockey sticks and

smashed the windows of Singh's Creta and damaged the vehicle with repeated blows before turning on the group. Vedant, one of Singh's friends, sustained severe head injuries and collapsed unconscious at the spot. The assailants allegedly abused the group and issued death threats before fleeing. Singh and his friends alerted the police by dialling 112. Vedant was first taken to Yatharth

Hospital, before being referred to Manipal Hospital due to the seriousness of his injuries. Doctors confirmed he had suffered a skull fracture and remains under treatment. Police from Bisrakh police station later arrested Shahrukh of Ghaziabad and Azeem of Amroha, from a road connecting Char Murti to ATS. Officers recovered the Verna, along with a baseball bat and a stick.

Both accused were produced before a court and sent to judicial custody. SHO Krishna Gopal Sharma said a case has been registered under BNS sections 110 (attempt to commit culpable homicide), 115(2) (voluntarily causing hurt), 352 (intentional insult with intent to provoke breach of peace), 351(3) (criminal intimidation) and 324(4) (mischief causing damage to property).



Chemical drums explode in steel factory in Faridabad, 35 injured

Gurgaon.(Agency)

More than 35 people were injured on Monday after a short circuit inside a steel factory in Faridabad's Mujesar industrial area threw up sparks that raced into uncovered oil and chemical drums kept outside, triggering a series of explosions and a massive fire. Officials said the exact cause of the blasts and the blaze was still under investigation, but preliminary findings suggested that the fire started during steel-cutting operations around 4pm. According to them, a computer numerical control machine kept inside the workshop developed an electrical fault, causing sparks to quickly spread to the oil drums stored in the open. Police said the drums contained Mobil oil and other inflammable chemicals that were kept without any cover or adequate safety measures. As the sparks reached the containers, several blasts followed in quick succession, intensifying the flames and sending burning material across several

metres. According to cops, only five to six workers were inside the factory of Kalkaji Steel when the first explosion occurred. However, many of those injured were people on the road outside and workers from nearby factories who rushed in to help rescue those trapped and to douse the flames—only to be caught in further explosions as more drums went off. More than a dozen fire tenders were rushed to the spot to bring the blaze under control.

"Firefighters trained water jets on the chemical drums to prevent additional explosions. Thick plumes of smoke spread across the industrial area, which caused panic among people living nearby," an official said. Twelve of the injured workers were admitted to BK Civil Hospital and 23 others were taken to private facilities in Faridabad. A police officer said the number of injured could be around 50, with some shifted to Delhi's Safdarjung Hospital and AIIMS. Chief medical officer Jayant Ahuja said the civil hospital

cleared wards and reinforced emergency staff. "Based on preliminary clinical assessment, most of the injuries are superficial burns, primarily involving the skin. The nature of the burns appears to be chemical, possibly associated with metallic substances. This, however, will be confirmed after further medical evaluation," he said. "Some patients also suffered respiratory distress from chemical fumes. They are also being kept under continuous observation," he added.

A woman working in a nearby unit said the steel factory owner was also among those injured. Officials said at least eight persons were taken to Safdarjung Hospital and AIIMS till Monday night. "We made green corridors to transfer the injured workers. The alertness of officials helped us reach the critical victims to hospitals in the golden hour and avoid fatalities. The SDRF was also roped in to conduct rescue operations," an official told

TOI. According to the CMO, Ajneesh, a driver deployed with the Faridabad police emergency response vehicle, also sustained multiple burns during rescue operation. Two other cops who arrived after an alert from the police control room also suffered chemical burns. Several vehicles parked near the factory—cars, two-wheelers, and even cranes—were gutted. Police from Mujesar station cordoned off the area and restricted traffic as senior officials, including SDM Badkhal Trilok Chand, reached the site.

A senior official said police would soon register an FIR and carry out a detailed investigation to ascertain what caused the fire. The fire department will also prepare a report on lapses on the part of the factory management, if any. "Three cops and two firemen suffered injuries during the rescue bid. We are in the process of registering an FIR," said Yashpal Yadav, a police spokesperson.

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Video reveals chilling details of SUV crash in Dwarka that killed Sahil Dhaneshra

The Sikh Times

Chandigarh: The footage, reportedly filmed by the teen driver's sister sitting beside him, shows the SUV speeding recklessly on a road without a divided and ultimately colliding with Sahil's motorcycle on February 3. The video shows the SUV narrowly avoiding a bus before making a direct impact with Sahil, who was trying to overtake the bus on his motorcycle. Sahil's mother, Inna Makan, alleged that the clip had been trimmed at the end and did not show the actual moment of collision, reports NDTV. "My son was going to the office that day. The Scorpio driver, along with his sister, was out to make fun reels. The speed at which the SUV was being driven is clearly visible. This is not an accident; it is criminal activity," Makan told ANI.

PUBLIC NOTICE

It is for general information that I, MIRZA IFTAKHAR BAIQ S/O MIRZA MOBIN BAIQ R/O J-47 ABUL FAZAL ENCLAVE, JAMIA NAGAR OKHLA, NEW DELHI - 110025 declare that my name has been wrongly written as MIRZA IFTAKHAR BAIQ in my son's named MIRZA INZAMAM BAIQ class 10th educational certificate. My actual name is MIRZA IFTAKHAR BAIQ, which may be amended accordingly.

NAME CHANGE

I, hitherto known as GAUTAM S/O NARENDER KUMAR R/O H-364 Old Seemapuri East Delhi Delhi-110095, have changed my name and shall hereafter be known as GAUTAM SINGHAL.

NAME CHANGE

I, RABYA KHATOON W/O ABU HASAN R/O RZ-26A B BLOCK ARJUN PARK NAJAFGARH DELHI-110043, I have changed my name to RABYA KHATOON. Permanently for all Future purpose

NAME CHANGE

I, ABU HASANANSI S/O ELAHI MIYAN R/O WARD NO 13 HASANPUR, PARSAUNI KISUN, EAST CHAMPARAN, CHAKIA PIPRA, BIHAR 845416 I have changed my name to ABU HASSAN Permanently for all Future purpose

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NAME CHANGE

I, RAJYA KUMAR GUPTA (ADVOCATE) Off. 43B, 3rd Floor, Patparganj Village, Mayur Vihar, Phase-I, Delhi-1, M-NO- 725292875

NAME CHANGE

I, ISHAN S/O HARISH YADAV residing at C-368 KIDWALI GALI CHHAJJUPUR EAST BABARPUR SHAHDARA DELHI-110032, have changed my name to ISHAN YADAV for all future purposes

NAME CHANGE

I, ANITA legally wife of Army no 2089576m Sep Name DAHIPHALA DILIP VIKRAM Unit 22 maratha light infantry, presently residing At - A - khadoon, P.O - Gangakhed , Teh - Gangakhed, Dist - parbani, Pin 431514 have changed my name ANITA TO ANITA DILIP DAHIPHALA for all future purposes. vide affidavit dated 17/02/2026 before Notary Public, Delhi.

NAME CHANGE

I, PATHAN MARIFAHEMAN Khan S/o Pathan Mohammad usman Khan R/O FLAT NO. 834 ANANDKUNJ APARTMENTS VIKASPUR DELHI-110018, I have changed my name to Pathan Marifahem Khan Permanently for all Future purpose

NAME CHANGE

I, Asma Mushtaq Khan D/o Mushtaq Ahmed Khan R/O FLAT NO 723 ANANDKUNJ APARTMENTS VIKASPUR DELHI-110018, I have changed my name to Asma Shafiq Khan Permanently for all Future purpose

According to Makan, her son tried to navigate safely, but the SUV, coming from the opposite direction, collided with him and then struck a parked car on the roadside. She added that a taxi driver was also injured in the crash and had to be pulled out by the public. "The Scorpio driver did not even apply the brakes after hitting my son. Their reckless behaviour shows a mentality where money allows them to break rules. My child's life is gone because of a fun reel," she said. Delhi Police confirmed that the accident occurred near Lal Bahadur Shastri College in Dwarka South. Preliminary investigation

revealed that the Scorpio, allegedly driven by a minor, collided with Sahil's motorcycle and then hit another parked vehicle. Following a PCR call around 11:57 am, police reached the site and found three vehicles damaged and Sahil's motorcycle at the scene. He was declared dead immediately. The injured taxi driver was shifted to IGI Hospital, and his statement has been recorded. The postmortem report for Sahil has been obtained, and the final medical opinion is awaited. The accused driver, a minor, was found to be without a driving licence

NAME CHANGE

I, MOHD ILYAS KHAN S/O DEEN MOHAMMAD KHAN R/O B-219 GALLI NO-2 CHAND BAGH KARAWAL NAGAR NORTH EAST DELHI-110094 HAVE CHANGED MY NAME TO MOHD ILYAS

NAME CHANGE

I, TEHSEEN S/O NASEEM MOHD residing at E 10A-34 T HUTS NEW SELAMPUR NORTH EAST DELHI-110032, have changed my name to TAHSEEN AHMAD S/O NASEEM AHMAD for all future purposes.

PUBLIC NOTICE

Information is given to general public at large that our client Mrs. Indu Rani & Mr. Rajender Kumar are the absolute owner of Freehold Residential Built-up Property No. 1/10756, area measuring 88 Sq. Yds., out of Khasra No. 454/31. Situated in the area of Village Ulchhanpur in the Abadi of Subhash Park, Navin Shahdara, Ilqa Shahdara, Delhi-110032, with Regd. GPA along with ATS & Will dated 26.11.2002, now our client is declaring that any other Person does not have any right over the said property, and same property sold too be Mrs. Neetu Garg and same has been financed by Piramal Finance Ltd. Branch: Yamuna Vihar Delhi. If any person(s) have any objection(s) or claim(s) with respect to the right, title or interest in the Said Property then contact us within 07 days from the date of Publication of this notice and or the undersigned if found by anyone. Thereafter no claim shall be entertained

[NAVEEN KUMAR VERMA]
Advocate
F-211, Sector-3,
Vaishali, Ghaziabad
Uttar Pradesh-201010
(Contact at 0958871432)

PUBLIC NOTICE

Mr. Vivek Singh, Owner of the Residential Flat no 624, 3rd floor, Block - I, Sector - Chh - Greater Noida, Distt. Gautam Budh Nagar, U.P. Mr. Vivek Singh have lost Original Allotment Cum Allocation Letter dated 17/08/2009 issued by GNIDA in favour of Smt. Usha for which complaint lodged to the Police. Therefore, by way of this Public Notice it is hereby notified that any person, Attorney and/or entity, firm/company, society and/or member of the Society, Bank, HUF/member of HUF, Financial Institution having any claim, charge, interest, or lien whatsoever with respect to the Said House or otherwise, may notify to undersigned only on his rukhukumrata-281401@gmail.com with documentary proof within 15 days from the date of this publication of notice, failing which any such claim etc. shall be deemed to be null and void, whereas title shall be deemed to be clear, and marketable without any defect or encumbrance and free to create equitable mortgage

RAHUL KUMAR GUPTA
(ADVOCATE)
Off. 43B, 3rd Floor,
Patparganj Village,
Mayur Vihar, Phase-I,
Delhi-1, M-NO- 725292875

NAME CHANGE

I, ISHAN S/O HARISH YADAV residing at C-368 KIDWALI GALI CHHAJJUPUR EAST BABARPUR SHAHDARA DELHI-110032, have changed my name to ISHAN YADAV for all future purposes

NAME CHANGE

I, ANITA legally wife of Army no 2089576m Sep Name DAHIPHALA DILIP VIKRAM Unit 22 maratha light infantry, presently residing At - A - khadoon, P.O - Gangakhed , Teh - Gangakhed, Dist - parbani, Pin 431514 have changed my name ANITA TO ANITA DILIP DAHIPHALA for all future purposes. vide affidavit dated 17/02/2026 before Notary Public, Delhi.

NAME CHANGE

I, PATHAN MARIFAHEMAN Khan S/o Pathan Mohammad usman Khan R/O FLAT NO. 834 ANANDKUNJ APARTMENTS VIKASPUR DELHI-110018, I have changed my name to Pathan Marifahem Khan Permanently for all Future purpose

NAME CHANGE

I, RAJYA KUMAR GUPTA (ADVOCATE) Off. 43B, 3rd Floor, Patparganj Village, Mayur Vihar, Phase-I, Delhi-1, M-NO- 725292875

NAME CHANGE

I, ASMA MUSHTAQ KHAN D/o Mushtaq Ahmed Khan R/O FLAT NO 723 ANANDKUNJ APARTMENTS VIKASPUR DELHI-110018, I have changed my name to Asma Shafiq Khan Permanently for all Future purpose

NAME CHANGE

I, hitherto known as Lalita Rani W/o Anil Kumar R/o Kh No.123, Galli No-17, Block-B, Sector-3, Vaishali, Ghaziabad, Uttar Pradesh-201010 (Contact at 0958871432)

and was apprehended at the scene. He was later produced before the Juvenile Justice Board (JJB) and sent to an Observation Home. On February 10, 2026, the JJB granted him interim bail to appear for his Class 10 board examinations. Police have seized all three vehicles involved in the crash, conducted mechanical inspections, verified relevant documents, and collected CCTV footage from the

area. Further investigation is ongoing. Sahil's mother accused the teen and his family of negligence and wealth-based privilege. "He has no licence. His car already had 13 challans for overspeeding, yet his father allowed him to drive. People like them think their money lets them do whatever they want on the roads. My son is gone, but this must stop. No one is safe if such behaviour continues," Makan said. She

described the events leading to the crash, explaining that Sahil had been trying to overtake the bus because an e-rickshaw was on the left side of the vehicle. "The Scorpio came in the opposite lane, collided with him, and hit the parked taxi. The cab driver was seriously injured. Even after hitting my son, they did not stop. This shows a criminal mentality, not a mistake," she added. Makan called for strict action against

NAME CHANGE

I, hitherto known as SUNITA DHINGRA alias SUNITA DHINGRA D/O SHYAM LAL W/O Late RAJU KUMAR DHINGRA R/o B-32, First Floor, Derawal Nagar, Model Town, North West Delhi, Delhi - 110099 have changed my name and shall hereafter be known as SUNITA DHINGRA.

NAME CHANGE

I, hitherto known as RAJU W/O SHRI BHAGWAN R/O Flat No-669, Saheeda Bhagat Singh Apartment, DDA-LIG, Pocket-3, Near N.S.I.T, Dwarka Sector-14, Dwarka, Sector-14, Dwarka Sector-14, Noida, N.S.I.T, Dwarka, Dist: South West Delhi, Delhi - 110078 have changed my name and shall hereafter be known as RAJU BHAGWAN JANGRA.

NAME CHANGE

I, hitherto known as RAKHI W/O SHRI BHAGWAN R/O Flat No-669, Saheeda Bhagat Singh Apartment, DDA-LIG, Pocket-3, Near N.S.I.T, Dwarka Sector-14, Dwarka Sector-14, Noida, N.S.I.T, Dwarka, Dist: South West Delhi, Delhi - 110078 have changed my name and shall hereafter be known as RAKHI JANGRA.

NAME CHANGE

Hom Bahadur S/o Bahadur Thapa R/o Kupup PW, J N Road, Near Kupup School, Gnathanagar, GPN, East, Ksikim - 737102, have changed my name to Hom Bahadur Thapa.

NAME CHANGE

It is for general information that I, Sachidananda Das S/o Harinhar Das R/o Kusdik, Baleswar, Kusdik Odisha - 756035, declare that name of my father has been wrongly written as Harinhar Das in my 10th & 12th School Certificate Cum Marksheets. The actual name of my father is Harinhar Das, which may be amended accordingly.

NAME CHANGE

I, ARVIND YADAV S/o Shri Ramji Lal YADAV R/o Flat No. 1605, Tower KM 16, Jaypee Greens Kosmos, Sector 134, Noida, Noida Aditya Systems Gautam Buddha Nagar, Uttar Pradesh - 201304 have changed the name of my minor Son BABY ONE of ARCHANA KIRAR, aged 07 years and he shall hereafter be known as SARVIN YADAV.

NAME CHANGE

I, hitherto known as KHUSHI D/o RAM KUMAR R/o House No. C-45, R.K. Puram near Govindpuri, Govindpuri, Ghaziabad, Uttar Pradesh - 201013 have changed my name and shall hereafter be known as KHUSHI CHAUDHARY.

NAME CHANGE

I, Rasool Bee W/o Mohammad Razak R/o 12-2-126/1, MD Khaseem Basthi, Bellampalli, Adilabad, Telangana - 504251, have changed my name to Patima BH.

NAME CHANGE

I, ARVIND YADAV S/o Shri Ramji Lal YADAV R/o Flat No. 1605, Tower KM 16, Jaypee Greens Kosmos, Sector 134, Noida, Noida Aditya Systems Gautam Buddha Nagar, Uttar Pradesh - 201304 have changed the name of my minor Son BABY ONE of ARCHANA KIRAR, aged 07 years and he shall hereafter be known as SARVIN YADAV.

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NAME CHANGE

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NAME CHANGE

NEWS BOX

X briefly hit by 'international outages': Monitors**World. (Agency)**

Service was restored to Elon Musk-owned social network X Monday afternoon after it had failed to show posts to users in many countries.

The site was displaying content, allowing users to post and otherwise functioning normally again around 1530 GMT, after the Down Detector tracking website reported a spike in outage reports around two hours before X had appeared to be suffering "international outages," connectivity monitor Netblocks posted on the open-source social network Mastodon during the disruption. The breakdown was "not related to country-level internet disruptions or filtering", added Netblocks, which regularly flags technical issues with popular online services and sites as well as interference by national governments.

Its most recent posts about similar outages for X came on February 9, the day after the Super Bowl in the US, and February 1. AFP journalists in countries including France and Thailand had also been unable to access X on Monday afternoon. Spokespeople for X did not respond to AFP's request for comment on the outage before service was restored. Musk laid off thousands of people at the former Twitter and changed its name after buying the service in 2022. He has since merged it with his xAI company, which develops the Grok chatbot. xAI is set to in turn be absorbed by Musk's rocket firm SpaceX, with that merged entity expected to go public as early as summer this year.

China grants UK and Canada visa-free entry, raising total to 79 countries**world. (Agency)**

British and Canadian citizens can enter China without a visa starting Tuesday, bringing to 79 the number of countries granted visa-free access in bid to boost tourism and business. China has expanded eligibility for the program significantly in the last two years. Visitors can stay for up to 30 days for business, tourism, exchange programs and to visit family and friends. Most Europeans qualify for visa-free entry, along with some from select countries in other regions including Latin America, Southeast Asia and the Middle East. Citizens of a few other countries, including the United States and Indonesia, can enter for 10 days if they are in transit — meaning they have a ticket departing for a different country than they arrived from. Business executives and tourists have welcomed the change, as the China visa application process can be a relatively cumbersome one.

The U.K. and Canada are being added following visits to China last month by their prime ministers, Keir Starmer and Mark Carney. Both are relatively new leaders who are trying to revamp ties with Beijing after a downturn in recent years. For most countries, the visa-free access expires at the end of this year, but it has been extended in the past.

Under Fire At Home, Muhammad Yunus Brings Up China, India's '7 Sisters' In Exit Speech**World. (Agency)**

Facing sustained criticism at home for failing to fully restore democratic normalcy and protect vulnerable minorities, Bangladesh's outgoing Chief Adviser Muhammad Yunus used his farewell address to project defiance abroad, most notably through indirect but provocative remarks touching on India's northeastern region. Yunus headed the interim government amid intense domestic pressure following years of former Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina's authoritarian rule, widespread institutional decay, and a surge in law-and-order challenges, especially against the Hindu minority, after the July 2024 uprising in the Islamic nation.

Anti-India Rhetoric In his speech, which came at a politically sensitive moment, Yunus leaned heavily on nationalist rhetoric, repeatedly asserting that Bangladesh had reclaimed its "sovereignty, dignity, and independence" in foreign policy and was "no longer guided by others' directives."

While framed as a general principle, the language was widely read as directed at New Delhi, Dhaka's largest and most influential neighbour, especially given the regional references that followed. He spoke of future economic integration involving Nepal, Bhutan, and the "Seven Sisters" — a term often used to refer to India's northeastern states. Our open seas are not just borders — they are gateways to the global economy. With Nepal, Bhutan, and the Seven Sisters, this region has immense economic potential. Economic zones, trade agreements, and duty-free market access can establish us as a global manufacturing hub," he said. By grouping India's northeastern states — an integral part of India — alongside sovereign countries in a single economic vision, Yunus appeared to blur established political boundaries and can be perceived as an attempt to provoke New Delhi and affect the reset of India-Bangladesh ties under the newly elected government. His remarks suggested a regional economic space centered on Bangladesh's ports and maritime access, implicitly positioning Dhaka as a gateway not just for neighboring countries but also for India's landlocked northeast.

Israeli approval of West Bank land registration draws outrage**JERUSALEM. (Agency)**

Israel's government has approved a process to register land in the West Bank as "state property", drawing condemnation from Arab nations and critics who said it would accelerate annexation of the Palestinian territory. Israel's foreign ministry said the measure, approved late Sunday, would enable "transparent and thorough clarification of rights to resolve legal disputes" and was needed after unlawful land registration in areas controlled by the Palestinian Authority. Egypt, Qatar and Jordan criticised the move as illegal under international law.

In a statement, the Egyptian government called it a "dangerous escalation aimed at consolidating Israeli control over the occupied Palestinian territories".

Qatar's foreign ministry condemned the "decision to convert West Bank lands into so-called 'state property'", saying it would "deprive the Palestinian people of their rights". The Ramallah-based Palestinian Authority called for international intervention to prevent the "de facto

beginning of the annexation process and the undermining of the foundations of the Palestinian state". Israeli anti-settlement watchdog Peace Now called the measure a "mega land grab". Jonathan Mizrachi, the Israeli NGO's co-director, told AFP on Monday that the measure would attribute new resources for land registration in the occupied West Bank. The process will take place only in Area C, which constitutes some 60 percent of West Bank territory and is under Israeli security and administrative control. "There was a lot of ambiguity regarding the land, and Israel decided now to deal with it," he said, adding that the existing ambiguity over Area C land ownership is likely to be used against Palestinians. "A lot of land that Palestinians consider theirs, they will find out it's not theirs under this new registration process," he said, adding the move will further the Israeli right's annexation agenda. Changing demography

Palestinians see the West Bank as foundational to any future Palestinian state, but many on Israel's religious right want to

take over the land. Last week, Israel's security cabinet approved a series of measures backed by far-right ministers to tighten control over areas of the West Bank administered by the Palestinian Authority



control. Israel has occupied the West Bank since 1967.

The latest Israeli initiatives come amid a wider context of increasing attacks by Israeli settlers against Palestinians in the territory, according to rights groups.

"We are witnessing rapid steps to change permanently the demography of the occupied Palestinian territory, stripping its people of their lands and forcing them to leave," UN rights chief Volker Turk said in a recent statement. US President Donald Trump has opposed Israel's annexation of the West Bank, saying stability in the territory helps keep Israel secure.

However, Trump has held off from directly criticising the latest Israeli measures, despite the international outrage. Excluding Israeli-annexed east Jerusalem, more than 500,000 Israelis live in West Bank settlements and outposts, which are illegal under international law.

Palestinians report restrictions as Israeli police to deploy around Al-Aqsa mosque ahead of Ramadan**world. (Agency)**

APalestinian officials reported restrictions being imposed around the Al-Aqsa Mosque, ahead of the Muslim holy month of Ramadan, as Israeli police said Monday that they would deploy in force around the mosque, which is Islam's third-holiest site. Over the course of the month of fasting and prayer, hundreds of thousands of Palestinians traditionally attend prayers at Al-Aqsa, located in east Jerusalem, which Israel captured in 1967 and later annexed. The Palestinian Jerusalem Governorate said in a statement it had been informed that permits to enter the compound would be restricted to men over 55 and women over 50, mirroring last year's criteria. It said Israeli authorities had blocked the Islamic Waqf — the Jordanian-run body administering the site — from carrying out routine preparations, including installing shade structures and setting

up temporary medical clinics. A Waqf source confirmed the restrictions and said 33 of its employees had been barred from entering the compound in



the week before Ramadan. The Al-Aqsa compound is a central symbol of Palestinian identity and also a frequent flashpoint. Under longstanding arrangements, Jews may visit the compound — which they revere as the site of their second temple, Temple Mount, destroyed by the Romans in 70 AD — but they are not permitted to pray there. Israel says it is committed to

maintaining this status quo, though Palestinians fear it is being eroded.

In recent years, a growing number of Jewish ultranationalists have challenged the prayer ban, including far-right politician Itamar Ben-Gvir, who prayed at the site while serving as national security minister in 2024 and 2025. Arad Braverman, a senior Jerusalem police officer, said forces would be deployed "day and night" across the compound and in the surrounding area. He said thousands of police would also be on duty for Friday prayers, which draw the largest crowds of Muslim worshippers. Braverman said police had recommended issuing 10,000 permits for Palestinians from the occupied West Bank, who require special permission to enter Jerusalem. He did not say whether age limits would apply, adding that the final number of people would be decided by the government.

"Deeply Regret My Association": Hyatt Executive Resigns Over Epstein Ties**World. (Agency)**

The executive chairman of the Hyatt hotel chain stepped down Monday after emails revealing his ties to sex offender Jeffrey Epstein came to light.

US businessman Thomas Pritzker maintained contact with Epstein well after the latter was convicted of soliciting prostitution from a minor in 2008.

Epstein died in prison in 2019 awaiting charges of sex trafficking girls, in what was ruled a suicide.

"Good stewardship... means protecting Hyatt, particularly in the context of my association with Jeffrey Epstein and Ghislaine Maxwell which I deeply regret," Pritzker said in a statement picked up by US media. Maxwell, Epstein's associate, is serving



a 20-year sentence for her role in a conspiracy to traffic girls with the disgraced financier. Hyatt in a statement said -- without mentioning Epstein -- that Pritzker would retire from his role as executive chairman of the board of directors and that he would not seek reelection to the board at the company's shareholders meeting in May.

US media reported on an email exchange from 2018 where Epstein asked Pritzker to help secure reservations for a woman traveling in Asia.

The woman told Pritzker she was "going to try to find a new girlfriend for Jeffrey," to which Pritzker replied, "May the Force be with you."

Files on Epstein released by the US government, including troves of his email correspondence, have exposed his ties to the rich and powerful around the world. Many have resigned from their positions in scandal and tainted by association with Epstein, even if the files do not prove they committed a crime.

Pritzker is the cousin of Illinois Governor JB Pritzker, a possible contender for the Democratic presidential nomination in 2028.

At least 14 killed in spate of attacks in northwest Pakistan**PESHAWAR/PAKISTAN. (Agency)**

Two bomb attacks and a gunfire between police and militants in northwest Pakistan killed at least 11 security personnel and three civilians, including a child, a security official said. The separate incidents on Monday in Khyber Pakhtunkhwa province, which left at least 25 others wounded, come as Pakistan's security forces battle intensifying insurgencies in southern and northern provinces that border Afghanistan.

This month the Islamic State group (IS) claimed responsibility for a massive suicide blast at a Shiite mosque in the capital Islamabad that killed at least 31 people, with 169 more wounded. Speaking on condition of anonymity, the security official told AFP that on Monday evening a suicide bomber rammed an explosives-laden vehicle into the wall of a religious college in the tribal district of Bajaur in Khyber Pakhtunkhwa. "As a result, eight police and Frontier Corps personnel present inside the seminary

were martyred and 10 others injured," he said. "The blast also caused the roofs of several nearby houses to collapse, killing a child."

He added the death toll may rise.

In another attack in the town of Bannu, a



bomb planted in a rickshaw exploded at the Miryan police station, killing two civilians and wounding 17 others, the official said. Chinese targeted

Elsewhere, three police personnel and three militants were also killed during a search operation in Shangla district. The Khyber Pakhtunkhwa police force

said in a statement, also late on

Monday, that the three militants who died in the firefight had been involved in "attacks targeting Chinese nationals". Beijing has poured billions of dollars into Pakistan in recent years, but Chinese-funded projects have

sparked resentment and their citizens have frequently come under attack. In March last year, five Chinese nationals working on a major dam construction site were killed along with their driver when a suicide bomber targeted their vehicle, which plunged into a deep ravine off the mountainous Karakoram Highway. Beijing is Islamabad's closest regional ally, readily providing financial assistance to bail out its often struggling neighbour. The China-Pakistan Economic Corridor (CPEC) has seen tens of billions of dollars funnelled into massive transport, energy and infrastructure projects — part of Beijing's transnational "Belt and Road" scheme. The police statement said.

Kremlin rejects European assessment that Navalny died of poisoning**MOSCOW. (Agency)**

The Kremlin said Monday that it "strongly rejected" an assessment by five European countries that Russian opposition leader Alexei Navalny died from poisoning two years ago, as his supporters marked the anniversary of his death in prison.

Navalny, a charismatic anti-corruption campaigner who rallied hundreds of thousands to the streets in protest at the Russian leadership, was Russian President Vladimir Putin's fiercest domestic opponent for years. He died in an Arctic prison colony in February 2024 while serving a 19-year sentence for "extremism", a charge that he and his supporters say was punishment for his opposition work. Britain, Sweden, France, Germany and the Netherlands issued a joint statement on Saturday saying they believed he had been poisoned with epibatidine — a toxin found in poison dart frogs — and that the Russian state had the "means, motive and opportunity" to administer it. "We naturally do not accept such accusations.

We disagree with them. We consider them biased and baseless," Kremlin spokesman Dmitry Peskov told reporters, including AFP, during a daily briefing call.

"In fact, we strongly reject them," he added.

Dozens of people visited his grave in Moscow early Monday, among them foreign diplomats, according to an AFP reporter at the scene. Some of those who attended wore masks or scarves over their faces. Russian authorities designated Navalny and his organisation "extremist" before his death, and anyone who mentions him or his exiled anti-corruption foundation are liable for prosecution. Navalny, a Yale-educated lawyer, was the most widely known Russian opposition figure and galvanised thousands of young people to protest against Putin. He had already survived a suspected poisoning with the Novichok nerve agent in 2020.

Ecuadorian dart frog

Navalny's mother Lyudmila told reporters she felt vindicated by the European

statement and called for those responsible to be held accountable. "This confirms what we knew from the very beginning. We knew that our son did not simply die in



prison, he was murdered," she said outside the cemetery where he was buried in Moscow. "I think it will take some time, but we will find out who did it. Of course, we want this to happen in our country, and we want justice to prevail," she added.

Navalny's widow, Yulia Navalny, said on Saturday it was now "science proven" that her husband had been murdered. She had

previously said in September that laboratory analysis of smuggled biological samples found that her husband was poisoned. Epibatidine, found in the Ecuadorian dart frog, causes muscle paralysis and eventual asphyxiation. Experts have said the toxin can also be produced synthetically, instead of extracting it directly from the frog itself. The European statement did not say how it was administered or by whom. Britain's foreign office said the poison is not found naturally in Russia and that "only the Russian state had the means, motive and opportunity to deploy this lethal toxin." Russia's prison service said he died after going for a walk and falling ill. Since Navalny's death, Russia's opposition has remained largely exiled and fragmented. Navalny's widow Yulia vowed to take the mantle of Russia's opposition in the wake of his death but has struggled to galvanise widespread support.

NEWS BOX

Shake-up in BJP stronghold: Mass resignations in Jalalpore

Surat. (Agency) As many as 20 leaders, including five newly inducted members of the BJP, have resigned from organisational posts since Friday in Navsari. The leaders who left claimed that Jalalpore was sidelined in the new organisational list, announced a few days ago. Majority of the leaders who resigned belong to the Koli Patel community and are from the Jalalpore taluka, which is represented by BJP MLA R C Patel in the state assembly. Though they have resigned from their posts, these leaders will remain party workers.

The waves of resignations started after Ashok Patel of Jalalpore Taluka, who was made vice-president of Navsari District BJP organisation, quit last Tuesday. Patel resigned after he was not given the post of district general secretary.

Those who followed him include Vijay Patel (general secretary of Bakshi Panch Morcha), Prakash Patel (general secretary of Kisan Morcha), and Jalalpore Taluka Panchayat member Chetan Patel (BJP's district organisational secretary).

BJP's Jalalpore President Hitesh Patel said, "We will continue to work for the party. The leaders of Jalalpore have not been given importance or space in the district BJP's organisational body. Ashok Patel's request for the post of general secretary of the Navsari District BJP organisation was not heard. Even the Jalalpore BJP MLA, R C Patel, who has been elected six times in a row, was not given a post in the state cabinet or the state BJP organisation. There is anger among the people and even more people are ready to resign from their post in the party."

Navsari's BJP president Bhurulal Shah said, "The decision for different posts of the district BJP organisation is taken by the state party chief and others. We are looking into the issue, and we are trying to convince these leaders to change their minds."

Days after death of 2 labourers while cleaning sewer in Vadodara, 2 contractors booked

Ahmedabad. (Agency)

The Vadodara district police have booked proprietors of two infrastructure companies for negligence causing the death of two workers, who died due to alleged inhalation of toxic gases while cleaning a sewage drain in Khatambra area of the district on February 13. Vadodara Deputy Superintendent of Police Milan Modi said that Mehsana-based proprietor of Jayanti Super Infrastructure Private Limited, Jayanti Patel as well as the proprietor of Grishwa Infra Project LLP, Ahmedabad, Sanjay Khunt, had been booked under Sections of the Bharatiya Nyay Sanhita, The Prohibition of Employment As Manual Scavengers and Their Rehabilitation Act 2013, as well as the The Scheduled Castes and the Scheduled Tribes (Prevention of Atrocities) Act, 1989 after prima facie negligence had been found on their part.

DySP Modi said, "The incident took place on February 13, when two workers, who went inside the sewer line to fix a problem died due to the inhalation of gas inside the sewer... The FIR has been registered at Varnama police station in this serious incident under BNS, Atrocity and Manual Scavenging Acts against the proprietors of the two firms involved in the project. Further investigation and procedure to formally arrest the two accused is underway."

Manipur Higher Secondary examination begins

Imphal. (Agency)

The Class 12 board examinations organised by the Council of Higher Secondary Education, Manipur (COHSEM) commenced across the state on Tuesday, with more than 31,500 candidates appearing at 117 examination centres, according to official of the Council.

The examinations, scheduled to conclude on March 20, 2026, are being held in a single shift from 10 AM to 1 PM as per the official timetable released by COHSEM.

Authorities have stated that all necessary arrangements have been put in place to ensure the smooth and fair conduct of the examinations, including strict monitoring and supervision at all centres.

All district administration officials issued prohibitory orders around the examination centres. In the run-up to the exams, practical assessments for Class 12 were conducted from January 2 to January 31, 2026, with institutions required to upload students' practical marks ahead of the theory papers.

With the state's Class 12 students beginning their final board papers, preparations have also been underway locally to help learners adjust to examination pressures.

All Manipur Recognized Private School Welfare Association initiated Pre-Council Examinations for Class XII students, aimed at boosting their confidence and readiness for the main exam session. Around 50 schools and some 5,000 students participated in the preparatory tests.

Meanwhile, Manipur Chief Minister Yumnam Khemchand extended his best wishes to students appearing for the Class X and Class XII CBSE Board Examinations 2026 in a social media post.

Karnataka's Ulsoor Lake desilting taken up after 20 years

GBA hopes to fill the water body with rainwater after summer

BENGALURU. (Agency)

The historic Ulsoor lake, measuring 108 acres, is almost dry as the lake engineers attached to Bengaluru Central City Corporation (BCCC) have begun development of the main water body as well as the sedimentation tank and Kalyani. As per officials, the lake desilting is being taken up under a Rs 4 crore National Disaster Mitigation Fund (NDMF) grant, and the work of desilting is being done after nearly two decades. The work began by diverting the water through the outlet. The lake is still receiving 1.5 MLD of treated water from Bangalore Water Supply and Sewerage Board (BWSSB), and officials concerned have been asked to study the situation and explore the option to divert the treated water into the major drain until the desilting is completed.

"The desilting work will begin in the next two weeks in full swing, and the tank will become empty. The fishing contractors were asked to clear the remaining stock from the water body, and accordingly, they have caught the fish and cleared, and release the fishlings once the restoration is completed," said Shilpa,

Assistant Executive Engineer, Lakes, BCCC. She added that the fish contractor's period will be extended as the development work will be taken into consideration. The 120 members from the fisherman community under the banner name 'Bengaluru Meenu Utpanna

water levels have been reduced to 3 feet, and fishing with a net is not possible. Last time complete desilting was done in 2001-2002, and since then, no complete desilting has been done," said Subbaiah, Secretary of the Sangha.

He added that after partial cleaning in 2020, the contract was also renewed. The association paid Rs 50,000 for the lease period and released fishlings worth lakhs, but within a few days, the fishlings and small fish died. The treatment was done, and the issue was addressed. "Now once the desilting is completed, which may take three months to four months, and water is filled again, the fishing will be taken up," he said. Meanwhile, regular walkers and activists have also expressed joy over the development and say that the pathway has been developed from the RBNAMS College side up to the Fire and Emergency Service Head Office side.

"Since the work is happening on the site, walking on one stretch for the public has been stopped by the authorities, and once completed, walkers can have access to Annaswamy Mudaliar Road side of the park."



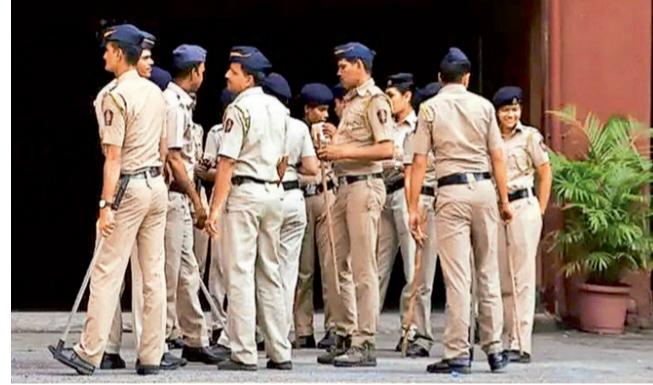
Mattu Maratagara Sangha' have been involved in fishing and maintenance of the lake for the last 14 years. They say the BCCC officials had set January 31 as a deadline to clear the stock, and accordingly, the activity was stopped. "The

Over 40 schools in Gujarat get bomb threats, all hoax: Police

Ahmedabad. (Agency)

Several schools in Ahmedabad, Gandhinagar and Vadodara districts received bomb threats by email on Monday morning. After the premises were checked by the police, all the threats were declared hoaxes. A total of 23 schools in Ahmedabad and Gandhinagar districts received bomb threats on Monday. These included 15 schools and a university in Ahmedabad city, 5 schools in Rural Ahmedabad, and 2 schools in Gandhinagar.

Meanwhile in Vadodara, as many as 18 schools received emails threatening simultaneous bomb blasts



will thwart any further action. We have received such mails in the past and looking at the content of the mail, it appears to be a mischievous act. We have assured the school management and parents that we are making all attempts to ensure that their academic sessions and scheduled examinations go off smoothly."

Senior police officers said the schools received the emails around 7 am on Monday with the message threatening detonation of the bombs by 1:11 pm. The email also claimed that bombs were planted in cars and school buses. Most schools were dismissed for the day with parents being told to collect their children. "The email had been sent to our office.

The administrative staff noted the email after the school had just commenced... We informed the police and decided to disperse the students. The parents were called, and we handed over their wards to them safely in order to avoid any untoward incident," said a principal of a school in Patel.

In the meantime, the police informed the parents that the school would be closed for the day.

Greater Chennai Corporation spent 42 per cent of budget on climate action

Sector-wise, urban flooding and water scarcity account for the largest share (62.24%) of climate expenditure, followed by waste management (26.15%) and sustainable mobility (9.96%).

CHENNAI. (Agency)

Even as the vagaries of climate change threatens Chennai in the form of heavy rain and extreme heat, a report prepared by the Greater Chennai Corporation (GCC), along with 40 Cities, has revealed the GCC has spent around 42% of its 2025-26 budget towards climate mitigation and adaptation projects.

As per 'Greater Chennai Corporation Climate Budget Report 2025-2026', released by Mayor R Priya on Monday, GGC has earmarked Rs 3,190.61 crore towards capital expenditure for 2025-26 fiscal, of which Rs 1,341.2 crore (42.04%) has been identified as climate-relevant spending.

Sector-wise, urban flooding and water scarcity account for the largest share (62.24%) of climate expenditure, followed by waste management (26.15%) and sustainable mobility (9.96%).

Notably, adaptation initiatives constitute the largest component of the climate budget at 62.8%,

followed by initiatives under mitigation (37.06%) and resilience (0.13%).

Climate-relevant projects implemented by the GCC during the year, as per the report, include the upgradation of stormwater drains and culvert, biomining at Kodungaiyur and Perungudi

"The quantified actions under this year's (2025-26) climate budget are expected to deliver an estimated reduction of 4.1 million metric tonnes of CO2 equivalent (tCO2e)," the report estimated.

Projections done for the preparation of Chennai Climate Action Plan warned that by 2050, if no action

is taken (BAU scenario), emission of greenhouse gases (GHG) are projected to nearly quadruple from 2018 levels, reaching 55.08 million tCO2e by 2050 due to high population and GDP growth.

In the Existing and Planned scenario, emissions would still rise to 27.08 million tCO2e, whereas the

Ambitious scenario could limit them to 12.5 million tCO2e by 2050. The Extended scenario adopts more aggressive strategies, projecting a 2% increase by 2030, and thereafter, reductions of 36% by 2040 and 87% by 2050, compared to 2018 levels.



dumping grounds, complete streets and health walkways initiatives, development of sponge parks and rainwater harvesting systems, restoration of lakes, pond rejuvenation and energy-efficient interventions in school buildings, among others.

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Madhav Viradiya emerges Maharashtra topper with 100 percentile in JEE Main

As the Joint Entrance Exam (JEE) Main Session 1 results were declared on Monday evening, a Gujarat boy—Madhav Viradiya—has emerged as Maharashtra topper with 100 percentile score. Driven to become an IITian, Madhav has been staying in Mumbai for JEE preparation. He is a student at Narayana Junior College in Andheri, which is an integrated [...]

Nagpur. (Agency)

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He is a student at Narayana Junior College in Andheri, which is an integrated coaching institute for JEE preparation. Despite having multiple similar coaching centres in Gujarat, Madhav decided to shift his base to Mumbai after a friend recommended this particular coaching centre for JEE.

"A friend who studied here cleared JEE-Advanced with impressive All India Rank, which was in top 50. He spoke highly about this institute. And with my aim to join IIT Bombay, which is most difficult to get in, I wanted the best coaching,"

said Madhav who will appear for JEE Main's second session to be held in April.

"That is only for practice. But now I am more focused to clear JEE-Advanced, which is IIT entrance test," he said while adding that currently he is appearing for Class 12 examination of CBSE.

Madhav's elder brother Poojal is already an IITian. "He is studying metallurgical engineering at IIT Jodhpur. He had gone to Kota for his JEE preparation," said Madhav who feels that it was his father who encouraged him towards engineering, "And my brother inspired me to join IIT," he said. Their father is also from engineering background. A total of 13,04,653 students across country had appeared for Session 1 of JEE Main, which candidates have to clear to appear for JEE-Advanced. Of these, 12 students scored 100 percentile including one from Maharashtra.

Feasibility report picks Alandur-Villupuram line for RRTS

The RRTS may reduce the travelling time between the two districts from four hours (via public transport) to one hour, sources said.

CHENNAI. (Agency)

The final feasibility report for the proposed Regional Rapid Transit System (RRTS) between Chennai and Villupuram has pitched the Alandur-Villupuram alignment as the preferred corridor between the two bustling districts. The report, prepared by Balaji Railroad Systems, has pegged the estimated project cost at '75,000 crore, official sources said.

The RRTS may reduce the travelling time between the two districts from four hours (via public transport) to one hour, sources said. The Alandur-Villupuram corridor records the highest projected ridership among the alternatives studied, with the daily ridership estimated at 2.18 lakh by 2032. The proposed alignment originates at Alandur and runs via the Chennai International Airport, Tambaran, Kilambakkam integrated bus terminus, Chengalpattu, Madurantakam and Tindivanam before terminating at

Villupuram. Report positions V'puram RRTS as a multi-purpose economic corridor. The proposal also includes a spur linking Puducherry and Cuddalore, taking the total network length to about 146 km, including a 64.1-km spur, sources said. Designed as a high-speed mass transit system for medium-distance travel of up to 180km, it has the potential to be scaled up to 300kmph. Within Chennai, the corridor is planned entirely underground between Alandur and Kilambakkam to address dense development issues and right-of-way constraints. Beyond Kilambakkam, it transitions to elevated and hybrid sections along road medians, roadsides and greenfield stretches, broadly following the GST Road and the Chennai-Nagapattinam Highway.

Strategically, the corridor is envisaged as a southern growth spine for TN, easing congestion along NH-45, enabling multimodal integration and supporting Chengalpattu has emerged as a major

environmentally sustainable regional mobility. Officials said the project would also help manage urban sprawl by enabling people to live in satellite regions while



accessing metropolitan job markets, reducing logistics costs, and improving regional connectivity. Chengalpattu has emerged as a major

employment and trip-attraction hub, driven by large IT parks and tourism-linked travel, while Villupuram's growing residential, transport, educational, and commercial functions reinforce its role as a regional connectivity centre. Together, Chennai, Chengalpattu and Villupuram form an integrated urban-economic corridor with sustained travel demand.

The feasibility report also proposes night-time freight operations, positioning the RRTS as a multi-purpose economic corridor rather than a passenger-only system. The approach aligns with Atmanirbhar Bharat objectives by strengthening Make-in-India supply chains, lowering logistics costs — currently about 13-14% of GDP — and improving infrastructure asset utilisation. Further, the report proposes a maximum operating speed of 160 kmph, with scope for future upgrades, subject to design provisions.

Ghatkopar businessman's death: Stringent sections added against minor for driving car, causing accident

Mumbai. (Agency)

The Mumbai police on Monday added the section of culpable homicide not amounting to murder in the case against a 17-year-old boy who rammed his four-wheeler on a bike on February 5 which led to the death of 33-year-old Ghatkopar businessman Dhrumil Patel on Sunday. He was fighting for his life in the hospital for the past 10 days. The police had earlier arrested the boy's father for allowing a minor to drive a four-wheeler.

Patel's wife Minal (32), who also sustained injuries in the accident, is currently in a hospital recovering from her injuries. The police on Monday produced the minor before a Juvenile Justice Board (JJB) after stringent sections were added following Dhrumil's death on Sunday. An officer said while they had arrested the boy's father after the accident, they had produced the minor before the JJB last week where he was given a provisional bail as he was to appear for his HSC exams. Sources said that after adding the stringent section, the boy was produced before the JJB again on Monday. Ruben M ascarenhas, who is representing the victim's family, said that the police should put in an application seeking that the minor be tried as an adult.

"There were previous videos on Instagram where he is seen doing stunts which have mysteriously disappeared. The police should make an application before the JJB seeking permission to try him as an adult," M ascarenhas said.

The incident had taken place near Somaiya College on February 5 around 11.15 pm when the couple after closing their shop in Patel were returning home when a car coming from the opposite side rammed them. The couple was admitted to the hospital where the man succumbed to the injuries.

India's urban AI journey can be a role model for Global South

India is at a turning point in its urban growth and transformation. As projected by the National Commission on Population in 2020, nearly 39.15 percent of Indians are expected to live in cities by 2036. This scale of urbanisation places sustained pressure on transport systems, public safety, sanitation, utilities, and city management. Cities already play a critical role in India's economic output, with major metropolitan regions such as Mumbai, Delhi, Bengaluru, Chennai, and Hyderabad contributing significantly to national GDP. Meeting these challenges is not only a matter of capital investment. While World Bank estimates indicate that India will need to invest over \$840 billion in urban infrastructure over the next 15 years, outcomes depend equally on how cities manage assets, infrastructure and decision-making processes. In this context, artificial intelligence is increasingly being integrated into urban governance as an operational capability that strengthens responsiveness, efficiency and resilience. Over the past decade, India's cities have progressed from basic digitisation towards data-driven and AI-enabled urban operations. National initiatives such as the Smart Cities Mission, AMRUT (Atal Mission for Rejuvenation and Urban Transformation) and the National Urban Digital Mission have created the enabling digital and institutional foundations for this transition. Importantly, AI adoption in Indian cities has focused on embedding intelligence into daily civic functions rather than treating AI as a standalone technology intervention. In Gorakhpur (Uttar Pradesh), recurrent urban flooding during the monsoon posed a persistent governance challenge due to the city's low-lying, saucer-shaped geography. Until recently, flood management was largely reactive, with pumps and personnel mobilised only after flooding had already occurred, resulting in response times of 10 to 12 hours. In 2022, the city implemented an AI-enabled urban flood management system that integrated rainfall forecasting, predictive analytics, sensor data and historical flood patterns. Vulnerable wards could be identified up to 24 hours in advance, with automated pump operations supporting preparedness. Emergency response times were reduced to under two hours, pump downtime declined significantly, and authorities were better equipped to manage flooding proactively.

In Prayagraj (Uttar Pradesh), large-scale crowd management posed a distinct challenge. During major religious congregations, the city hosts hundreds of millions of visitors over short periods. In preparation for recent events, including deployments beginning in 2023 and scaled further in 2024, authorities adopted AI-enabled crowd analytics and decision-support systems. Trained on historical footage and local operational inputs, these systems enabled real-time crowd density estimation, prediction of congestion zones and dynamic redirection of crowds and traffic. AI functioned as an operational support layer for administrators, enhancing situational awareness and response capability across a vast geographic area. In Ahmedabad (Gujarat), traffic congestion and violations put sustained pressure on enforcement capacity. Beginning around 2021, the city deployed an AI-enabled traffic monitoring and enforcement system using computer vision and automatic number plate recognition, integrated with national databases. Implemented across more than 90 intersections using thousands of cameras, the system supported consistent enforcement and contributed to a gradual reduction in violations. Over time, authorities observed behavioural change alongside improved traffic flow, without requiring proportional increase in manpower. Pimpri-Chinchwad (Maharashtra) illustrates the value of phased AI adoption. Facing public safety and surveillance coverage gaps, the city began deploying AI-enabled systems in 2022, starting with pilot implementations before scaling. Over time, coverage expanded to hundreds of locations supported by fixed cameras, ANPR systems and AI analytics licences.

Corps of Signals: The silent backbone of national security

As warfare expands beyond land, sea and air into cyberspace and outer space, the Corps of Signals has emerged as a key enabler of India's military space capabilities

As the Indian Army's Corps of Signals marks its 116th Raising Day on February 15, it is an appropriate moment to draw public attention to a formation whose influence on India's national security has been decisive, yet largely unseen. In an era when wars are increasingly shaped by information dominance, secure networks, cyber operations and space-enabled capabilities, the Corps of Signals stands as the quiet architect of India's military effectiveness. Raised in 1911, the Corps of Signals has evolved from an organisation handling telegraph wires and manual exchanges into the backbone of India's military communications, electronic warfare, cyber operations and space-enabled command-and-control systems. Its journey mirrors the transformation of warfare itself—from physical manoeuvre to multi-domain operations where information is both weapon and shield.

Foundations in secure communication and intelligence

The Corps' association with intelligence and secure communications dates back to the early 20th century and deepened significantly during World War II, when Signals personnel undertook organised cipher duties and communications intelligence tasks. These early efforts laid the institutional foundations for what would later mature into indigenous signal intelligence and secure military communication practices.

After Independence, at a time when India was consolidating its defence structures with limited resources, the Corps of Signals assumed a central role in sustaining military communications and handling sensitive information securely. Its officers and personnel ensured continuity, technical competence and operational reliability when the nation needed it most.

During the 1960s, the Corps also contributed significantly to India's emerging defence research ecosystem, lending expertise to early electronic warfare and command-and-control initiatives that later became part of the Defence Research and Development Organisation's work.

Enabling nation-building through connectivity

The contribution of the Corps of Signals extends beyond the battlefield into the broader project of nation-building. It established critical communication links during major national operations, such as the integration of Hyderabad in 1948 and the liberation of Goa in 1961.

In subsequent decades, Signals units worked in some of the country's most inhospitable terrains—Jammu and Kashmir, the North-East and high-altitude border regions—laying communication infrastructure that enabled governance, security and development to take root. Technological foresight has been a hallmark of the

Corps. It pioneered the induction of teleprinter networks in the Indian military, significantly improving the speed and reliability of message transmission. This marked a decisive shift from manual signalling to automated systems and prepared the ground for the digital transformation that followed.

Building India's secure military networks

The 1990s marked a watershed in India's military communications. The induction of the Army Static Switched Communication Network (ASCON) provided a secure, nationwide backbone for voice and data, dramatically enhancing operational reliability. This was



followed by the Army Wide Area Network (AWAN), which enabled secure digital messaging across commands and formations. In the early 2000s, the Corps introduced closed and exclusive mobile communication systems for military use, addressing the growing need for mobility while preserving security. By the mid-2000s, it had transitioned to fully Internet Protocol-based secure architectures. Today, the Corps operates a standalone, pan-India secure network that underpins joint and Tri-service operations, a prerequisite for modern integrated warfare.

From cyberspace to outer space

As warfare expands beyond land, sea and air into cyberspace and outer space, the Corps of Signals has emerged as a key enabler of India's military space capabilities. Secure satellite communications, resilient data dissemination and assured connectivity between space assets and terrestrial networks fall squarely within its professional domain.

Signals personnel are deeply involved in integrating and protecting satellite-based systems that support command and control, intelligence dissemination and operations in remote areas. Their expertise in encryption, spectrum management and network resilience is central to

safeguarding these capabilities against disruption and hostile interference. In effect, the Corps provides the connective tissue that makes space power operationally meaningful.

Innovation at the technological frontier

The Corps of Signals has remained firmly at the cutting edge of military technology. It has fielded one of the earliest large-scale indigenous secure military mobile communication ecosystems, built around end-to-end encryption and sovereign control over hardware and software. This initiative has significantly reduced reliance on commercial platforms for sensitive communication. At its premier training institution, the Military College of Telecommunication Engineering in Mhow, the Corps is preparing for future warfare through early investments in quantum technologies, artificial intelligence and advanced analytics. These efforts are not experimental indulgences but operationally driven initiatives aimed at enhancing decision-making, network resilience and information superiority.

Dominance in the invisible domains

Modern conflict is increasingly fought in invisible domains—the electromagnetic spectrum, cyberspace and information space. Here, the Corps of Signals plays a decisive role. It enables electronic warfare, signal intelligence and spectrum operations that allow the armed forces to sense, disrupt and protect across contested environments. Signals units operate and sustain indigenous electronic warfare systems in partnership with India's defence industry, supporting interception, direction-finding, jamming and protection across the spectrum. These capabilities are vital not only in conventional conflict but also in countering asymmetric threats, such as unmanned aerial systems.

In the cyber domain, Signals personnel form a substantial part of the armed forces' cyber expertise, contributing to both defensive and offensive capabilities.

Service beyond combat

Beyond warfighting, the Corps of Signals has repeatedly provided critical communication support during natural disasters, humanitarian assistance missions and internal security operations—often restoring connectivity when civilian networks fail. Through these efforts, it has reaffirmed its role as a national asset, not merely a military one.

An enduring, understated legacy

The Corps of Signals' motto—TeervaChaukas (Swift and Secure)—captures the essence of its mission. For over a century, it has adapted to every technological shift, ensuring that India's soldiers, commanders and decision-makers remain connected under all conditions.

Creamy layer quota: Supreme Court's nudge to Centre merits rethink

The apex court's openness to sub-classification within the SC/ST groups reflects an acknowledgement that equality of opportunity requires finer

THE Supreme Court's recent decision to seek the Centre's stand on excluding the creamy layer from Scheduled Caste and Scheduled Tribe reservation benefits has reopened a debate that India has long deferred. By asking the Union government to clarify its position, the SC has signalled that affirmative action cannot remain frozen in doctrine when social realities evolve. At the heart of the issue lies a tension between constitutional intent and policy design. Reservations for SCs and STs were conceived as a remedy for historical exclusion rooted in caste-based discrimination, not merely economic deprivation. This is why the creamy layer principle, firmly embedded in OBC reservations, has been kept out of SC/ST quotas. The concern has been that introducing income or status filters risks diluting protections meant to counter entrenched social stigma. Yet



the counter-argument has gained force. Over decades, reservation benefits have not been evenly distributed within SC and ST communities. A relatively small, better-

off segment, often with access to education, networks and secure employment, tends to corner opportunities, while the most marginalised remain stuck at the bottom. The court's recent openness to sub-classification within the SC/ST groups reflects an acknowledgement that equality of opportunity requires finer targeting.

The onus now is on the Centre to move beyond reflexive positions. Simply asserting that the Constitution does not envisage a creamy layer for SCs and STs avoids the harder question: how to ensure that reservation benefits reach those who need them most. At the same time, any move to introduce exclusion criteria must be grounded in robust data and social context, not borrowed wholesale from the OBC framework. Caste disadvantage does not disappear with income alone and policy must recognise this distinction. The debate, therefore, should not be framed as inclusion versus exclusion, but as refinement versus stagnation.

Bangladesh has passed the litmus test, for now

The 16th Finance Commission has added a new criterion for devolution of funds — the amount of funds a state gets from the Centre will now depend upon how much it contributes to the national GDP

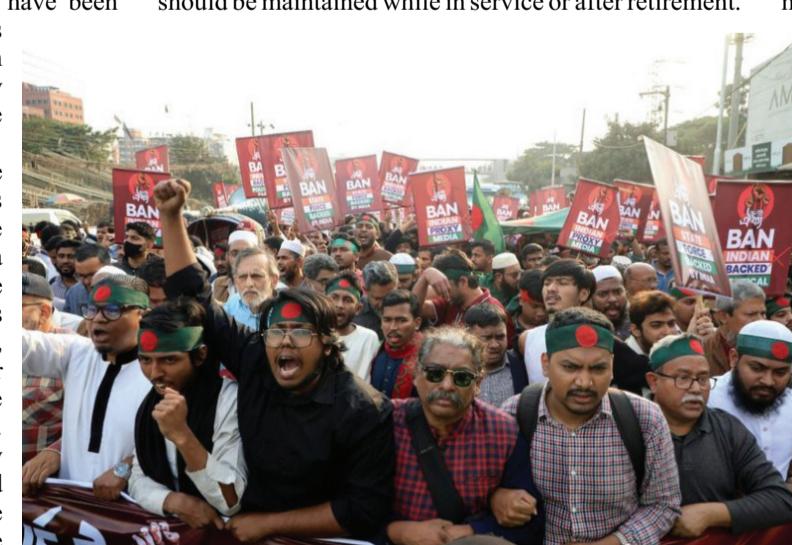
In Bangladesh, Tarique Rahman's Bangladesh Nationalist Party won a majority in the February 12 election in the 350-member Parliament. If the poll mandate spurs transparency, accountability and genuine reform, it could mark the birth of a resilient democracy, writes our Deputy Editor Vikramdeep Johal in his Edit piece Trial by fire for Bangladesh. Perhaps the most hopeful sign is the importance of young voters, when nearly 5 million citizens voted for the first time. A stable, peaceful Bangladesh is of immense importance to India. The US and China are among the other key stakeholders, he writes. The primary expectation is that the government will make parliament the central platform for all national decisions, writes Bangladesh-based researcher & political analyst Altaf Parvez in his article A new mandate for the renewal of Bangladesh. To counter the seeds of armed extremism, three vital things will have to be done — a pro-poor economic reform; ensuring democratic practice at every level of administration and firm policing against any form of extremism. Without these measures, securing a peaceful future will be difficult, he writes. Back home, the 16th Finance Commission's recommendation to withdraw Revenue Deficit Grants from states has created an uproar, the worst hit being the small hill state Himachal Pradesh. The Commission has rewired the devolution of funds from the Centre to the states by adding a brand new criterion — the amount of funds a state gets from the Centre will henceforth depend upon how much it contributes to the national GDP. This means that resilient and investor-friendly states like Tamil Nadu, Karnataka and Maharashtra will benefit; while states like Himachal, whose capacity to earn is limited, will be hurt, writes Editor-in-Chief Jyoti Malhotra in her weekly column The Great Game. A strategy forged from revenue deficit.

However, it is fascinating to see that Himachal has actually got a greater share of funds from the 16th Finance Commission than the 15th. So, the FinMin babus will rightfully point out the Congress government must learn to do a better job of managing its finances, she writes. Another big takeaway is that BJP-ruled states like Bihar, Uttar Pradesh and Madhya Pradesh have been given a lower share of taxes this time, as compared to last time. So, it's clear the 16th Finance Commission has sown the seed. Now to water the plant and see how it blooms, she sums up.

The Commission's decision to withdraw the RDG (revenue deficit grant) rang alarm bells in the power corridors of the hill state Himachal Pradesh. This move reflects a mindset of over-centralisation, where the Union consolidates fiscal power while states are reduced to implementation agencies, writes former Shimla deputy mayor Tikender Singh Panwar in his Op-Ed piece How the RDG cut pushes Himachal to the brink. Revenues from HP projects flow overwhelmingly to Central utilities and private corporations. The resource is local, the land is local, the risks are local; the profits are not, he argues. When the Centre withdraws support without building alternative revenue pathways, it pushes the state towards alienation and political resentment, he writes.

Former Army Chief General Manoj Mukund Naravane's book 'Four Stars of Destiny' created quite a stir, thanks to LoP Rahul Gandhi. Giving a perspective, former MEA Secretary Vivek Katju writes in his Op-Ed article Why Parliament needs quiet conversations, 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 have to be conscious that their interaction with the political leadership, while they were in service, was always based on trust, and this trust should be maintained while in service or after retirement.



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, he feels. Referring to the June 2020 Galwan skirmish in Ladakh between Indian and Chinese armies which Naravane's book talks about, ex-Deputy Chief of Army Staff Lt Gen Raj Kadyan (retd) writes in his Op-Ed piece When military leadership is put to the test that instead of

taking a decision on a problem, which at the time was purely of a military nature, the Army Chief chose to raise it with the political leadership. This amounts to a shifting of responsibility. At that instant, for the Army Chief to ask the political leadership 'what are my orders?' is strange, he writes. General Naravane has also reportedly mentioned his apprehension of the incident ending his career, or words to that effect. The occurrence of such a thought at a time when national security and lives of subordinates are at stake goes against the very ethos of the military, he writes. Looming American sanctions have put Iranian Chabahar port project in jeopardy. It's puzzling that India transferred \$120 million to Iran despite warnings about US sanctions, writes P Stobdan ex-Ambassador and Senior Fellow, Delhi Policy Group, in his Edit piece Tightrope walk for India on Chabahar. India's delays in Chabahar led Iran to ally with China, which has invested significantly there. India aims to maintain access to Afghanistan while navigating US sanctions. How? India should propose linking the Kandla port to Almaty and Kashgar, bypassing Pakistan, he writes. Improved connectivity via China can enhance India's access to Afghanistan and Central Asia and beyond, but a border agreement is needed to get things going, he writes. Engaging with any Islamic regime poses risks as Central Asian nations don't view India as a viable energy partner. Chabahar was set to lower shipping costs and times, and boost trade with Iran, Afghanistan and Central Asia, while connecting to the International North-South Transport Corridor (INSTC) and countering China's Belt and Road Initiative (BRI) as well as the China-Pakistan Economic Corridor (CPEC).

Major fire in former Panchayat Head's house in Shimla district leaves several injured

Shimla.(Agency)

A major fire broke out at the residence of former Gram Panchayat Pradhan Sushil Chauhan in Kyari village of Kotkhai subdivision in the district, causing extensive damage to the property and leaving several people injured.

According to initial reports reaching here, the fire erupted at Chauhan's house during the early hours. The exact cause of the blaze is yet to be ascertained.

Residents rushed to the spot on noticing flames engulfing the structure and made efforts to douse the fire before the arrival of the fire brigade. During the firefighting operation, some persons reportedly sustained burn injuries. The injured were shifted to the Civil Hospital for treatment. Their condition is stated to be stable, though official confirmation is awaited.

Police and revenue officials have reached the spot to assess the situation and initiate necessary proceedings. The extent of property loss is being evaluated.

Authorities stated that a detailed report regarding the cause of the incident and the total damage would be available after the preliminary inquiry.

UP Board High School and Intermediate Examinations begin

Varanasi.(Agency)

The Uttar Pradesh Board of Secondary Education (UP Board) High School and Intermediate examinations began on Tuesday. The examinations are being conducted in two shifts. The first shift will run from 8:30 a.m. to 11:45 a.m., and the second shift from 2:00 p.m. to 5:15 p.m. Electronic devices of any kind are strictly prohibited. A total of 118 examination centers have been set up in the Varanasi district. Over 5.2 million students are appearing in the UP Board exams in the state in which 2.7 million will appear for 10th Board and 2.4 million for 12th Board. Varanasi District Magistrate Satyendra Kumar said that zonal and static magistrates have been deployed at each examination center.

Approximately 92,000 students will appear for the examination in the district. The examinations are being conducted under the surveillance of CCTV cameras.

Flying squads have been formed to prevent cheating. Officials will also conduct surprise inspections at examination centers. All centers are being continuously monitored from the control room. Candidates will be admitted only after thorough checking at the gates.

All examination centers have been pre-inspected by senior officials from the Education Department, magistrates, and police. Stationery and photocopy shops near the examination centers will remain closed. Police are taking special precautions regarding traffic arrangements at railway stations, bus stands, and major roads to ensure no candidate faces any inconvenience.

Record 1,067 special trains operated during Magh Mela in UP



Prayagraj. (Agency)

Indian Railways set a new record during this year's Magh Mela in Prayagraj by operating 1,067 special trains to manage the unprecedented rush of pilgrims.

According to official figures, more than 220 million devotees took a holy dip at the Sangam during the religious congregation.

To handle the massive turnout, the Railways operated over 1,000 special trains for the first time in the history of the Magh Mela. Railway officials said that between January 2 and February 15, a total of 9,135 trains were run, including 8,068 regular services and 1,067 special trains. In previous editions of the Magh Mela, the number of special trains had never exceeded 400.

Officials said close coordination among the North Central Railway (NCR), Northern Railway (NR) and North Eastern Railway (NER) ensured smooth and efficient transportation for pilgrims, especially on the main bathing dates.

Cabinet Minister Gurmeet Singh Khuriani inaugurates 86th Kila Raipur Rural Olympics

Contd.....Front page

This year's edition of the festival, running until February 19 features not only the much-anticipated return of bullock cart races after a 12-year hiatus but also a vibrant lineup of traditional sports such as kabaddi, hockey, athletics, cycling, tug-of-war, and more. The revival of the iconic bullock cart races has sparked tremendous excitement, promising a thrilling display of strength, speed, and deep-rooted cultural pride for participants and spectators alike.

Congress MP Sukhjinder Singh Randhawa writes to Centre complaining about Punjab DGP, chief secretary sharing 'AAP stage'

Gurdaspur MP Sukhjinder Singh Randhawa said the display of AAP flags and insignia, partisan sloganeering by the audience, and the presence of Arvind Kejriwal and Manish Sisodia lent the event a distinct political colour.

Chandigarh. (Agency)

Sukhjinder Singh Randhawa, the Congress MP for Gurdaspur, wrote to Dr Jitendra Singh, Minister of State of the Department of Personnel and Training (DoPT) in the Prime Minister's Office (PMO), on Tuesday, raising objections over Punjab's chief secretary and DGP sharing the stage at a Moga event attended by Arvind Kejriwal and other leaders of the ruling AAP.

Randhawa described the matter as a serious constitutional and legal issue, calling on the DoPT to obtain a detailed report and review any potential breach of the All India Services Conduct Rules.

"I write to place on record a matter of serious institutional concern relating to an event held today at Moga, Punjab, which was projected as part of the State's campaign against drugs.

While the stated theme of the programme pertained to the State's anti-drug efforts, the

character of the gathering, by all visible indications, was that of a political rally organised by the Aam Aadmi Party," the MP wrote in his letter. Randhawa said the repeated display of

complexion. Senior AAP leaders, including Manish Sisodia, were also present on the dais, he wrote.

"Further, it was widely noted that Kejriwal's concluding remarks expressly cast the event in political terms, ending with an appeal/hope directed towards the party's political objectives. Quite apart from the content of any individual speech, such framing at the culmination of the programme is a strong indicator that, in protocol and substance, the event functioned as a partisan political platform rather than a neutral governmental programme," said the MP.

Randhawa added that the chief minister was also present in what appeared to be a political capacity. Against this backdrop, the presence and reported participation of the serving chief secretary and the director-general of police on the platform raises grave legal and constitutional questions, he said.



party flags and insignia, partisan sloganeering by the audience, and the presence of AAP national convenor Arvind Kejriwal as the chief guest lent the function a distinctly political

Mother of four daughters sells fifth newborn girl for Rs 2.10L, arrested

The police have also arrested a childless woman from Moga who had allegedly agreed to buy the newborn, along with three other accomplices of the Ludhiana woman who had "negotiated" the deal including a BAMS doctor, said additional DCP Sameer Verma.

Ludhiana .(Agency)

The Ludhiana Police Monday arrested a woman for allegedly selling her "unwanted" newborn girl for Rs 2.10 to a childless couple. The woman was already having four daughters and did not want to raise the fifth one, said the police.

The police have also arrested a childless woman from Moga who had allegedly agreed to buy the newborn, along with three other accomplices of the Ludhiana woman who had "negotiated" the deal including a BAMS doctor, said additional DCP Sameer Verma.

The arrested accused were identified as Sunita Devi of Shaheed Bhagat Singh Colony, Sherpur Kalan (the newborn's mother), Mandeep



Kaur of Nangal, Moga (the prospective buyer), Praveen of Police said three more accused are of Sant Kabir Nagar, Daba Road. Police said three more accused are abounding including an ASHA worker identified as Pamma from Amritsar, a private hospital nurse named Asha, and her associate

Gurmeet Kaur of Moga

Police said that the case came to light on Sunday when the accused assembled at a park near Gurdwara Chhewin Patshahi to hand over the newborn to the Moga-based buyer. However, a local man overheard their conversation and informed the police. Acting swiftly, a police team reached the spot and apprehended the mother before the baby could be handed over.

ADCP Verma, while addressing a press conference, said: "Sunita gave birth to a baby girl at a private hospital on February 13.

The fifth girl was unwanted as she already had four daughters and did not want to raise the fifth one. She discussed the matter with her friend Praveen, who contacted a nurse at the hospital."

Sub-Inspector killed, seven policemen injured as speeding police Scorpio crashes into tree in Gorakhpur

Gorakhpur.(Agency)

A speeding police vehicle crashed into a tree early Tuesday morning in Uttar Pradesh's Gorakhpur district, killing a sub-inspector and injuring seven other personnel. The accident occurred around 6:30 am in the Katarai area under the Shyamdeurwa Police Station limits. The police team from Ramgarh Police Station was returning after conducting a raid in a fraud case in the Khadda area of Kushinagar.

According to initial investigations, the driver of the Scorpio allegedly dozed off while driving on the highway. The vehicle first climbed onto the divider and then rammed into a tree. The severity of the crash caused extensive damage to the front portion of the SUV.

Hearing screams after the crash, residents rushed to the spot and helped pull the injured officers from the wreckage before they were taken to the hospital.

Sub-Inspector Santosh Kumar, who was posted at Ramgarh police station, succumbed to his injuries during treatment at BRD Medical College.

Senior Sub-Inspector Ramesh Chandra Kushwaha, Sub-Inspector Geeta, the driver, and five other policemen were injured in the accident. Officials said the condition of the senior sub-inspector and the female sub-inspector remains critical, while the driver is out of danger. Two constables sustained minor injuries. Senior police officers reached the medical college after being informed of the incident and inquired about the condition of the injured.

The deceased Inspector Santosh Kumar was a native of Sahasrawan village in Siwan district of Bihar and was currently posted in Gorakhpur. Upon receiving news of the tragedy, his family left their village for Gorakhpur.

Indian Railways Expands Train Halts Across the Region Strengthening Access and Passenger Convenience

The Sikh Times

Maligaon, 17th February 2026:

Indian Railways has introduced additional train stoppages across Assam, West Bengal and Bihar under the jurisdiction of the Northeast Frontier Railway effective 17th February 2026. The move has been widely welcomed, sparking heartfelt appreciation and celebrations among passengers and local communities. For countless families, students, traders, and patients, these new stoppages signify more than operational adjustments; they represent long-awaited opportunities for smoother, faster and more dignified travel. Train No. 75729/75730 (Guwahati - Silghat Town - Guwahati) DEMU has been provided with new stoppages at Digaru Railway Station, which were formally flagged off by Smt. Bijuli Kalita Medhi, Hon'ble Member of Parliament (Lok Sabha) from Digaru Railway Station. Similarly, the Hon'ble Minister of State for Education &

Development of North Eastern Region, Government of India, Dr.



Sukanta Majumdar, flagged off the new stoppages of Train No. 13063/13064 (Howrah - Balurghat - Howrah) Express and Train No. 13161/13162 (Kolkata - Balurghat - Kolkata) Express at Daulatpur Hat Railway Station. He also flagged off Train No. 15464/15463 (Siliguri Jn. - Balurghat - Siliguri

Jn.) Intercity Express, introducing its new stoppage at Rampur Bazar



Railway Station. Additionally, Train No. 15483/15484 (Alipurduar Jn.-Delhi-Alipurduar Jn.) Mahananda Express has been provided a new stoppage at Naksalbari Railway Station. Train No. 75705/75706 (R a d h i k a p u r - S i l i g u r i Jn.-Radhikapur) Intercity Express

now have stoppage at Batasi Railway Station and Adhikari Railway Station. Likewise, Train No.

15463/15464 (Balurghat-Siliguri Jn.-Balurghat)

Intercity Express has also been allotted a new stoppage at Adhikari Railway Station. These new stoppages were ceremonially flagged off by Shri Raju Bista, Hon'ble Member of Parliament (Lok Sabha), from Naksalbari, Batasi and Adhikari Railway Stations, marking a significant boost to regional connectivity and passenger convenience. On 16th February 2026, Train No. 15484/15483 (Delhi-Alipurduar Jn.-Delhi) Mahananda Express and Train No. 15778/15777 (Alipurduar Jn.-New Jalpaiguri-Alipurduar Jn.) Tourist Express were ceremonially flagged off with their newly introduced stoppages Sivok and Gulma Railway Station respectively. These inaugurations were flagged off by Hon'ble MP of Lok Sabha Shri Tariq Anwar and Hon'ble MLA Sangita Devi from Teltar and Sudhani Railway stations respectively, marking another step forward in improving regional railway accessibility for local passengers. Across all these stations, people have shared a strong feeling of gratitude and hope. They see the new train stoppages not just as better travel facilities, but also as recognition of their needs and the growing importance of their region. Through these people-focused steps, Indian Railways and the Northeast Frontier Railway have improved both connectivity and public trust, showing their continued commitment to inclusive services and passenger well-being.

Fortis Hospital in Mohali on high alert after bomb threat email warns CM Bhagwant Mann of 'fate similar to Beant'

Authorities clarified that there are no plans to shift CM Bhagwant Mann, who was admitted on Monday, and both Mohali police and the CM's security team are fully alert.

Mohali. (Agency)

Punjab Chief Minister Bhagwant Singh Mann, who is admitted at Fortis Hospital in Mohali, became the focus of a major security scare on Tuesday after the hospital received a bomb threat email. The message claimed that Mann had been "infected with polonium by the heirs of Bhai Dilawar Singh". It further warned that if he survived, "he would meet a fate similar to Beant," alleging that "only CM Mann's body would come out of Fortis Hospital". Former Punjab police officer Dilawar Singh had tied a belt of explosives around his waist, which led to the blast that killed the then CM Beant Singh and 16 others in August 1995. Polonium, mentioned in the threat, is a rare radioactive substance known for its extreme toxicity. Mann was admitted to the hospital for the second time, after returning from a rally in Moga on Monday. Authorities clarified that there are no plans to shift Mann, and both Mohali police and the

CM's security team remain fully alert. Officials also noted that similar emails received on February 11 were later declared hoaxes. However, taking no chances, security agencies are strictly enforcing all safety protocols. The bomb threat email triggered panic on Tuesday, prompting swift action by Mohali police and security agencies. The hospital premises were placed under heavy security, and anti-sabotage teams conducted an extensive search. As a precaution, non-essential hospital services were temporarily suspended.

Mohali Superintendent of Police Dilpreet Singh told the media that the pattern of the threat email is similar to the messages received earlier this month. He confirmed



that five anti-sabotage teams were deployed immediately. Besides Fortis Hospital, nearly 16 schools in Mohali also received similar threat emails on Tuesday, prompting heightened vigilance and security checks

across educational institutions. Police officials stated that earlier threat emails were sent from "spoofed" sources, with IP addresses traced to the United States and recovery emails originating from Bangladesh. Initial investigations suggest that the latest email may also have been sent using spoofing techniques through browsers to conceal the sender's identity. Police further said that such emails often include names of organisations to appear credible, but previous investigations have found them to be false.

A detailed probe is underway to identify the sender and ensure the safety of the chief minister, students, hospital staff, and the general public, officials said.

Delhi biker was speeding: Teen SUV driver's brother on crash

In his account to India Today, the accused's brother alleged that the victim's bike emerged from behind a bus at high speed. He maintained that the teen did not flee but helped the injured, countering the victim's mother's claim that her son was left unattended for two hours.

New Delhi.(Agency) The brother of the teen driver accused in the crash that killed a man in Delhi asserted that his sibling was at fault only for not having a valid licence and claimed that he acted responsibly after the accident and did not attempt to flee the scene. Talking to India Today, the accused's brother claimed that the victim's bike had emerged from behind a bus at high speed before the collision. The brother also claimed the accused could have run away but instead attended to the injured and even lifted the victim. This follows repeated allegations by the mother of the victim, Sahil Dhaneshra, that her son was left unattended on the road for two hours. "He did not try to flee from the crime scene. He went and attended the victim and lifted him up. He also went to see the cab driver -- he was injured, and we sent him to the hospital," he said.

Questioning claims that the Scorpio was being driven at high speed, he asked why his brother had remained unscathed if the impact was so severe. "There was not even a single drop of blood. He had his seat belt on and was travelling at slow speed," he said, reiterating their version of events. "My brother is a gold medalist student. He has always done well in his exams," he further told India Today, maintaining that the teenager's academic record reflects his character. The family's house, he said, was barely 200 metres from the crash site. "After coming for 100 metres, my brother took a left turn. After taking a left turn, how much can you speed your car in the next 25 metres?" he asked, arguing that the vehicle could not have been travelling fast. Responding to the victim's mother's allegation that the family had threatened her and offered money to keep quiet, the brother dismissed the charges as baseless.



IT Minister apologises for AI Summit Day 1 chaos, promises smoother experience

New Delhi.(Agency) Electronics and IT Minister Ashwini Vaishnaw on Tuesday apologised to the people who faced chaos on the first day of the India AI Summit, billed as the world's largest such artificial intelligence event, saying the response was phenomenal. He said the government is open-minded and ready to make efforts to address suggestions to give a smooth user experience. Responding to online criticism over overcrowding due to heightened interest in the event, Vaishnaw said over 70,000 people have attended the summit today and the energy is palpable among the visitors,



dignitaries and exhibitors.

"This is the biggest AI Summit in the world. The response was phenomenal. The energy is palpable. We can see the organisation is very smooth now. If anybody has faced any problems yesterday, we apologise for that," he said at a press conference at Delhi's Bharat Mandapam where the summit is happening.

"Whatever feedback you have, please share with us. We are open-minded. We will make efforts to make the experience smoother and enjoyable for all of you. We have a war room which has been operating since yesterday. My entire team is working hard day and night for this summit," he said. This is a developing story. It will be updated.

Caught on camera: Kerala man, 28, falls into pit after bike loses control; dies

New Delhi.(Agency) A 28-year-old man in Kerala's Idukki died after his motorcycle lost control and fell into an open pit on the side of the road. The incident triggered the memories of the 27-year-old techie, Yuvraj Mehta's death, whose Grand Vitara car fell into a water-filled pit last month while returning home in Noida's Sector 150 from the office.

A CCTV camera that was placed nearby recorded the footage of the accident that occurred last night. It showed that the victim, identified as Jaice Benny, suddenly lost control while riding the motorcycle and fell into the pit, which was dug beside the road many years back for a culvert. As he was severely injured, the locals rushed to



him and took him to the hospital. However, he could not be saved.

Meanwhile, the incident triggered a public stir. The locals raised fingers at the authorities for not filling the pit even after the culvert work could not proceed. Many of them held the local authorities responsible for the death of the youth.

A month ago, Yuvraj Mehta, a software engineer working at Dunhnumby in Gurugram, met with a similar fate to Benny after his car fell into the water-filled pit. Despite repeated cries for help and a prolonged rescue operation carried out in the presence of his father and police personnel, he could not be saved.

Police further registered an FIR in the case based on the family's complaint and launched an investigation into alleged negligence.

From Nabh Drishti to XFace, Army showcases indigenous systems at AI summit

New Delhi.(Agency) Uttarakhand government has cancelled the licences of 178 private hospitals in the state following complaints and inspections, of which 59 were later restored after hearings before the competent authority, Deputy Chief Minister Brajesh Pathak informed the Assembly on Monday. Additionally, cases had been registered against 281 hospitals that were allegedly operating in violation of norms, he added. Around 500 complaints have been received, and "we have cancelled the licences of 178 hospitals. After cancelling the licences, the hospitals appealed to an entitled to cashless treatment up to Rs 5 lakh in empanelled government and private hospitals under prescribed packages, while senior citizens above 70 years were covered under the

Ayushman Vay Vandana Yojana. Other solutions include EKAM, a secure indigenous AI cloud platform ensuring data sovereignty, and PRAKSHEPAN, an AI-driven climatology and disaster-



prediction system capable of issuing advance alerts for floods, landslides and avalanches. The Army also introduced XFace for facial recognition-based security and identity verification, along with Nabh Drishti, a

mobile telemetry-based real-time reporting and visualisation platform. Operational safety and logistics are addressed through a driver fatigue detection device for real-time drowsiness alerts, an AI-in-a-Box portable edge computing system for deployment in remote environments, and an AI-powered vehicle tracking system for fleet monitoring and optimisation. In addition, deepfake detection and AI-powered cybersecurity tools have been developed to counter synthetic media, malware and emerging cyber threats.

The initiatives reflect what the Army described as a decisive move toward a secure, networked and AI-empowered ecosystem aimed at strengthening defence preparedness while also enhancing disaster resilience, cybersecurity capabilities and broader national development.

Delhi Police bust inter-state fake stock trading racket; 4 arrested

New Delhi.(Agency) The Delhi Police has arrested four people after busting an inter-state gang of scammers who used to dupe people under the pretext of providing investment and stock-related advice. The move follows after a case was registered in the wake of a man being defrauded of Rs 45 lakh. While cases of financial fraud have witnessed a noticeable increase in recent years, this particular group allegedly employed highly technical tactics to accomplish its sinister goals. Besides the arrests, a woman has also been 'bound down', which refers to being mandated to appear before the police whenever summoned.

HOW THE GANG LURED TARGETS

The alleged fraudsters would approach their targets over WhatsApp and X. According to the police, they would then

pose as investment experts and use hollow promises of high returns to lure them.



The gang would also share fake screenshots of profitable trades and sham customer testimonies on WhatsApp groups to build credibility before unsuspecting individuals.

TRICKED TO INSTALL FAKE APP

According to investigators, the accused tricked the complainant into installing a

fake trading app on his smartphone. The gang even fooled the man by showing growing profits in his portfolio on the app, per the police.

This encouraged the man to invest further. However, when he expressed the desire to withdraw his balance, the gang deactivated its WhatsApp account and X handle. Meanwhile, the smartphone app became dormant.

HOW THE GANG WAS BUSTED

The accused were operating in a highly co-ordinated manner, the police said. They were arrested from various locations across Delhi, Punjab and Rajasthan.

Technical surveillance and examination of bank accounts by the police established a money trail. The investigators found that the Rs 45 lakh stolen from the complainant was disbursed to eight different bank accounts.

Why US envoy's rare Indian Army command visit near Pakistan border sparked buzz

New Delhi.(Agency) A heavily publicised visit by the US envoy and the US Indo-Pacific commander to the Army's Western Command near the Pakistan border has generated considerable buzz in political circles. The opposition has portrayed it as the government pandering to American interests. However, such visits, though rare, are not unprecedented. It comes as India and the US look to deepen their defence ties after a reset in relations following the trade deal. But, behind the optics, lies a broader message. Stay with us, and we will explain the significance of the visit.

Now, why is the Western Command so crucial? The command, whose headquarter is located in Chandigarh, deals with border areas with Pakistan -- encompassing Akhnoor in J&K to Fazilka in Punjab. Significantly, the command, which oversees 200 bases, was in the thick of

things during Operation Sindoos last year as the military pounded terror camps and air bases in Pakistan. Against this backdrop, the visit by US envoy Sergio Gor and the US's Admiral Samuel J Paparo held much significance and garnered attention.

WHY US ENVOY VISITED ARMY COMMAND?

This was the first such visit by any foreign delegation after the three-day India-Pakistan hostilities last year. While finer details of the meeting were not revealed, the Army said Gor, Donald Trump's close aide, and Admiral Paparo were briefed on the Western Front perspective -- a reference to the volatile Pakistan border -- as well as the execution of Operation Sindoos.

The delegation was comprehensively briefed on the Western Front perspective,

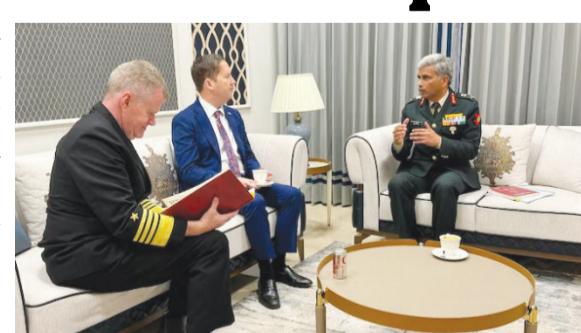
including operational preparedness, distinguished legacy, execution of Op Sindoos and the pivotal role being played by the Indian Army in nation-building and strengthening regional stability," the Western Command tweeted.

However, visuals of the US delegation visiting the Western Command and holding talks with Lt. Gen. Manoj Kumar Katiyar invited sharp reactions from the opposition. Notably, Gor also serves as the

US special envoy for South and Central Asian countries, which includes Pakistan.

OPPOSITION QUESTIONS VISIT

Expressing concern, Rajya Sabha MP Priyanka Chaturvedi alleged that India's strategic interests were being increasingly tied to US expectations. A case in point that Chaturvedi referred to was Trump taking credit for the India-Pakistan ceasefire last year and announcing it first on social media before Delhi or Islamabad. India has, however, maintained that the truce was reached through direct talks. "Since India's national strategic interests are now tied to what the US wants India to do, this visit seems to sync with that... The US Ambassador is doing the job for his nation, who is doing for us? The answer is blowing in the wind," the MP said.

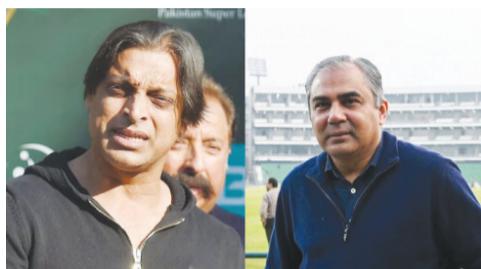


NEWS BOX

Shoaib Akhtar's rapid U-turn: Mohsin Naqvi incompetent to good man in 24 hours

New Delhi. (Agency)

Pakistan legend Shoaib Akhtar has made a swift U-turn on his criticism of Pakistan Cricket Board chairman Mohsin Naqvi, calling him "a good guy" just a day after his comments were widely interpreted as a scathing attack on the PCB chief following Pakistan's humiliating defeat to India in the T20 World Cup. Akhtar, who had erupted in frustration after Pakistan's crushing 61-run loss in Colombo on February 15, has now clarified that his remarks were not aimed at Naqvi personally. The former fast bowler claimed that Indian TV channels twisted his words and insisted he never intended to label the PCB chairman incompetent. Speaking on a Pakistani news show, Akhtar sought to set the record



straight, stressing that his criticism was directed elsewhere. My comments were never aimed at Mohsin Naqvi. The remark about incompetence was not directed at him at all — it was meant for the top brass who run international cricket. Some Indian TV channels twisted my words," Akhtar said.

"In the same programme, I even asked people not to say anything negative about Mohsin bhai, because I won't tolerate that. I've always said he's a good person who genuinely wants to help Pakistan cricket. But at the same time, he isn't always given the right advice," he added.

The clarification comes after Akhtar's fiery outburst earlier this week, when his post-match rant was seen as a direct swipe at Naqvi and the PCB leadership.

What Akhtar said after Pakistan's defeat

Following Pakistan's latest one-sided loss to India, Akhtar had launched a blistering critique of the board's functioning and the leadership overseeing Pakistan cricket.

The former pacer warned about the dangers of placing unqualified individuals in positions of power, suggesting that poor decision-making at the top inevitably spills onto the field. Many viewers interpreted his comments as being aimed squarely at Mohsin Naqvi, who has remained a central figure in Pakistan cricket's recent controversies, particularly in the build-up to the high-voltage India clash.

Jose Mourinho's Benfica not banking on miracles against a wounded Real Madrid

New Delhi. (Agency)

Jose Mourinho believes Real Madrid will respond fiercely after their shock loss to Benfica, warning that a "wounded king" is often the most dangerous.

Benfica stunned the 15 time European champions 4-2 in the final round of the league phase, a result that denied Madrid automatic qualification for the round of 16 and pushed them into the playoffs. The two sides meet again in Lisbon on Tuesday in the first leg of their knockout tie.

A WOUNDED KING IS DANGEROUS



Speaking ahead of the clash, Mourinho said the defeat has only sharpened Madrid's edge. "They are wounded," Mourinho said. "And a wounded king is dangerous. We will play the first leg with our heads, with ambition and confidence. We know what we did to the kings of the Champions League." Despite Benfica's recent victory, Mourinho made it clear he understands the size of the task. "I do not think it takes a miracle for Benfica to eliminate Real Madrid," he said. "I think we need to be at our highest level. I do not even say high, I mean maximum, almost bordering on perfection, which does not exist. But not a miracle." He was equally respectful of Madrid's stature. "Real Madrid is Real Madrid, with history, knowledge, ambition. The only comparable thing is that we are two giants. Beyond that, there is nothing else. But football has this power and we can win." Benfica's dramatic win in Lisbon three weeks ago came courtesy of an extraordinary moment, as goalkeeping Anatoliy Trubin scored a last minute header to secure progression on goal difference. Trubin will not be in the attack this time," Mourinho joked. A veteran of European knockout football, Mourinho also dismissed the idea that the first leg would define the tie. "I am very used to these kinds of ties, I have been doing it all my life," he said.

SPORTS

How Sri Lanka learned from Australia's mistakes to secure Super 8 spot

T20 World Cup 2026: Pathum

Nissanka said Sri Lanka knew Australia were 20 runs short, planned a calm 12-over approach and executed perfectly to seal an eight-wicket win and Super 8 spot.

Kandy. (Agency)

Sri Lanka's passage into the Super 8s of the T20 World Cup was shaped as much by Australia's dramatic collapse as it was by Pathum Nissanka's brilliance with the bat. SL vs AUS: Full Scorecard | Highlights Australia looked set for a massive total in Pallekele. Mitchell Marsh and Travis Head added 104 runs in just 51 deliveries, putting Sri Lanka under immense pressure early on. At 151 for 4 after 15 overs, a score in excess of 200 appeared certain. But the innings unravelled spectacularly. Sri Lanka's spinners tightened the screws, exposing Australia's struggle to adapt to the slowing surface. Dushman Hemantha struck key



blows, while Dushmantha Chameera delivered a clinical finish at the death. Australia lost six wickets for just 30 runs in the final five overs, slipping from dominance to vulnerability in a matter of minutes. That collapse dragged them down to 181 — a total that suddenly felt under par. Speaking at the

post-match press conference, Pathum Nissanka said Sri Lanka sensed the shift immediately.

"We felt they were short by around 20 runs," Nissanka said. "At one stage we thought they could get 200 or even 210. Our aim was to keep them under 200."

SMART CHASE BUILT ON PATIENCE

Armed with the belief that Australia had fallen 20 to 30 runs short, Sri Lanka approached the chase calmly. Nissanka and Kusal Mendis planned to bat normally for the first 12 overs, avoiding panic or reckless shots. "We planned to play normal cricket for about 12 overs," Nissanka explained. "Kusal batted well, so it was easier for me to bat along with him. We didn't have to force anything."

The pair rotated strike, capitalised on loose deliveries and kept the required rate in check. With no scoreboard pressure, the chase unfolded smoothly. Nissanka's unbeaten 100 off 52 balls sealed the win in style. His favourite shot of the night — a reverse sweep against a left-arm spinner — underlined his confidence. The "shush" celebration that followed his century, he clarified, was not aimed at anyone in particular.

In the end, Sri Lanka combined sharp game awareness with clinical execution. They punished Australia's late collapse and paced their reply perfectly to book a deserved Super 8 berth.

Ian Healy slams Australia's selection calls after SL defeat: It's an unbalanced team

Colombo. (Agency)

Former Australia wicketkeeper-batter Ian Healy has strongly criticised Australia's team selection following their defeat to Sri Lanka in the ICC Men's T20 World Cup 2026, a result that has left them on the brink of elimination. Australia were hammered by eight wickets by the co-hosts after failing to defend 181 in Pallekele. Pathum Nissanka (100* off 52) struck a magnificent century to guide his side home in just 18 overs. With only one group-stage fixture remaining against Oman, Australia now face a must-win scenario to keep their Super 8 hopes alive. Speaking on SEN Cricket, Healy did not hold back in questioning the balance of the side and the rationale behind the changes made for the crucial encounter. He criticised the team management for not including Steve Smith in the playing XI after he had been drafted into the squad as a replacement for Josh Hazlewood. "We had two bowlers and our best batsman dropped in what was probably our final match for one all-

T20 World Cup. With the team already in the Super 8s, the priority for Gambhir is to guide the side through the business end of the tournament.

The former opener also has a proven track record in the IPL, making him an attractive figure for franchises looking for leadership at the top. Gambhir has been at the heart of Kolkata Knight Riders' three IPL titles, winning twice as captain and once as mentor. He also served as mentor for Lucknow Super Giants, who finished third in consecutive seasons and qualified for the playoffs under his watch.

While Rajasthan Royals may be looking to bring in a figure of Gambhir's stature during their ownership revamp, the India head coach's current national commitments leave little room for such move, at least in the foreseeable future. With the 2027 World Cup cycle and the prospect of the 2028 Olympics on the horizon, Gambhir's roadmap appears firmly aligned with Indian cricket rather than a return to franchise leadership.

BCCI and the national setup. Gambhir's contract with India runs through the 2027 World Cup, and he remains focused on India's ongoing title defence at the 2026

World Cup. With the team already in the Super 8s, the priority for Gambhir is to guide the side through the business end of the tournament.

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Big names, big winners

The award was picked by a grand jury featuring tennis legend Leander Paes, Paralympic star Deepa Malik and long-jump icon Anju Bobby George.

The night also belonged to chess prodigy Divya Deshmukh, who won Emerging Player of the Year after her stunning FIDE Women's World Cup triumph at just 20.

Preethi Pal was named Para-Sportswoman of the Year for winning two bronze medals in athletics at the 2024 Paris Paralympics, while shooter Anjali Bhagwat received the Lifetime Achievement Award for her trailblazing career on the world stage.

rounder and one bowler. And the captain himself returned. This was to lengthen our batting order. Cooper Connolly, really? How much is that going to lengthen our batting order? He hasn't made double figures in six games. Connolly must wait. If Glenn Maxwell finishes and starts to develop better as his replacement, then maybe. But the fact that he was in our bowling attack as a frontline bowler is just not good enough," Healy said.

Australia's batting order once again struggled to find fluency in Sri Lankan conditions, and Healy argued that the constant reshuffling had only compounded the issues.

"It left us full of finishers and no starters. They can't get started in Sri Lanka, as we've just talked about. Cameron Green at three, Tim David at four, Josh Inglis at five, having been opener and seven — he's getting bounced around, and they're wasting his good form. It's just an unbalanced team. Then there's Sean Abbott, Steve Smith, and Matt Renshaw waiting for Oman now," he added.

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Sensex, Nifty open lower but IT stocks rally

New Delhi.(Agency)

Benchmark stock market indices opened lower on Tuesday, dragged by a fall in metal and financial stocks in early trade, but IT shares gained. However, Dalal Street rebounded to trade in green. The S&P BSE added 42.49 points to 83,319.64, while the NSE Nifty 50 lost 17.05 points to 25,665.70 as of 10:10 am. Dr. VK Vijayakumar, Chief Investment Strategist, Geojit Investments Limited, said that despite the sell-off in capital market-related stocks due to RBI's tighter rules on loans to proprietary traders and brokers, Nifty jumped 211 points yesterday. "This is a reflection of the underlying resilience of the market. This resilience primarily stems from India's improving macros and its implications for corporate earnings, going forward. The 14.7% growth in corporate earnings reflected in the Q3 results has come better-than-expected and the momentum is set to continue in Q4, accelerating in FY 27," he added. FIIs cannot ignore this positive development and, therefore, will turn significant buyers in India, despite the occasional selling in response to events like the AI shock impacting IT stocks. The market will respond to geopolitical developments like the US-Iran stand-off. Corrections can be used as buying opportunities. The impressive credit growth happening now has positive implications for leading banking stocks which are fairly valued."

New Aadhaar App 2026: What is new for customers? Key features explained

New Delhi.(Agency)

Unique Identification Authority of India (UIDAI) has recently launched the Aadhaar App -- an ext-generation mobile application designed to provide Aadhaar Number Holders (ANH) with a secure, convenient and privacy-first way to carry, share, show and verify their digital identity. The Aadhaar App supports a wide range of real-life use cases. These include hotel check-ins through Offline Verification Seeking Entity's (OVSE) QR code scanning. It allows optional face verification, age verification for cinema ticket bookings, hospital admissions for visitors and attendants, verification of gig workers and service partners among many such use cases. The app also includes advanced functionalities such as face verification for proof of presence, biometric lock/unlock in a single click, viewing of authentication history, and a QR-based contact card for easy sharing of contact details. It allows management of up to five Aadhaar profiles on a single device, enabling the concept of "One Family - One App." In addition to address updates, residents can now update their registered mobile number through the app, with more update services planned in the future. A key feature of the app is selective credential sharing. Residents can share only the specific identity fields required for a particular use case through customised QR codes generated by requesting entities. This ensures that Aadhaar numbers are not stored by verifiers and only digitally signed verifiable credentials are shared, promoting data minimisation in line with the Digital Personal Data Protection (DPDP) Act.

Infosys shares rise 3% after AI partnership with Anthropic

BENGALURU. (Agency)

Shares in Infosys climbed nearly 3% to about Rs 1,407 on Tuesday after the technology company announced a strategic partnership with artificial intelligence firm Anthropic to develop advanced AI solutions for businesses.

The two companies plan to help organisations in tightly regulated industries use AI more effectively. Telecommunications, financial services, manufacturing and software development are the main sectors expected to benefit. "There's a big gap between an AI model that works in a demo and one that works in a regulated industry -- and if you want to close that gap, you need domain expertise," said Dario Amodei, CEO and co-founder of Anthropic. "Infosys has exactly that kind of expertise across important industries: telecom, financial services, and manufacturing. Their developers are already using Claude Code to accelerate their work and to create AI agents for industries that demand precision, compliance, and deep domain knowledge," he said.

The partnership focuses on building intelligent AI tools for enterprise use. Anthropic's Claude AI models, including Claude Code, will be combined with Infosys' Topaz AI platform. Together, they aim to create customised AI agents capable of handling complex tasks independently. The collaboration will begin in the telecommunications sector, where a dedicated Anthropic Centre of Excellence will be set up. It will later expand into other industries. In telecoms, AI is expected to modernise network systems, improve customer service and speed up operations through smarter automation. In BFSI, the technology will help identify risks more quickly, automate compliance reporting and offer customers personalised advice based on account data and market developments. Manufacturers will be able to use AI simulations to design products more quickly, reducing research time. Software development teams will receive support in writing, testing and correcting code. "AI is not just transforming business -- it is redefining the way industries operate and innovate," said Salil Parekh, the CEO of Infosys. "Our collaboration with Anthropic marks a strategic leap toward advancing enterprise AI, enabling organisations to unlock value and become more intelligent, resilient, and responsible."

Star Health rejects Lucknow man's viral allegation over mother's insurance claim rejection

In a post, the man said he had been paying around Rs 50,000 every year as premium for his mother's health insurance policy. When she fell ill, he went to the Lucknow office of Star Health and Allied Insurance to seek claim support.

New Delhi.(Agency)

A social media post by a son claiming that his mother's health insurance claim was unfairly denied has now received a firm response from Star Health and Allied Insurance, with the insurer rejecting what it called an "inaccurate and incomplete portrayal" of the incident. The case, which began with a post on X, triggered strong reactions online and raised wider concerns about whether paying premium regularly guarantees support during medical emergencies. In a post, the man said he had been paying around Rs 50,000 every year as premium for his mother's

health insurance policy. When she fell ill, he went to the Lucknow office of Star Health and Allied Insurance to seek claim support. He alleged that he was made to wait for hours and that the claim was denied. He also claimed that an agent told him, "humse poochkar policy thodi li thi" (you did not take the policy after consulting us).

The post questioned why premiums are collected on time but objections arise during claim settlement. It received strong reactions from several users, some of whom shared their own concerns about health insurance claim experiences.

STAR HEALTH REJECTS ALLEGATIONS

In response to the story, Star Health issued an official statement to India Today. The company began by saying, "We recognise that health matters can be emotionally challenging." However, it went on to state, "We reject the inaccurate and incomplete portrayal of the Lucknow claim, which omits material facts." Addressing the reason for the claim decision, the insurer said, "During the

assessment, the available medical information indicated a potential pre-existing medical history relevant to the claim." It further added, "Supporting documentation was formally requested but was not furnished despite follow-up



communications." Clarifying its position on the rejection, the company said, "The decision was taken strictly in accordance with the policy terms and conditions." It concluded by stating that the decision "is fully supported by documentary evidence." By placing these points on record, the insurer has maintained that the claim was evaluated based on medical records, disclosure history and

contractual terms.

THE CORE ISSUE: PRE-EXISTING CONDITIONS

In health insurance, non-disclosure or incomplete disclosure of a pre-existing disease can become grounds for claim rejection, depending on policy wording and waiting period clauses.

Insurers assess hospital records, past prescriptions and medical history at the time of claim. If records suggest a condition existed before policy purchase and was not declared, it may lead to dispute. Such cases often become contentious because customers may believe they disclosed all relevant details, while insurers rely strictly on written documentation in the proposal form and medical evidence. The episode highlights a larger issue in India's health insurance market: paying premium regularly does not automatically guarantee claim approval. The claim stage involves scrutiny of medical records, disclosure history and policy terms. For families facing hospitalisation, rejection can feel sudden and unfair.

Changed your salary account Here's what happens to your PF withdrawals now

New Delhi.(Agency)

Changing your salary account often feels like a small administrative update. A few clicks, a new debit card, and you move on. But there's one detail many people miss — and it can quietly create problems when you least expect it.

If your new bank account isn't updated with the Employees' Provident Fund Organisation (EPFO), your PF withdrawal can hit a roadblock. And most people only realise this when they urgently need their money.

YOUR PF BANK DETAILS DON'T CHANGE ON THEIR OWN

When you switch jobs or banks, your employer may update payroll records. But your EPF account works separately. The bank details linked to your Universal Account Number (UAN) stay the same unless you change them yourself. If that linked account is closed or inactive, any PF withdrawal claim can fail. The payment may bounce back, forcing you to restart the process. This can be frustrating, especially if you are withdrawing funds after leaving a job or during an emergency.

WHAT TO CHECK BEFORE MAKING ANY UPDATE
The first step is simple. Log in to the

EPFO Member e-Sewa portal and review the bank account connected to your UAN.

While checking, make sure your Aadhaar and PAN are verified and perfectly

match your bank records. Even a small

spelling difference can cause rejection.



If there is any mismatch, correct it first. Otherwise, the system may not accept your update request.

HOW TO CHANGE YOUR BANK ACCOUNT IN EPFO

Inside the portal, go to the Manage section and select KYC. This is where your bank details appear. Add your new account number and IFSC code carefully. Most delays happen because of simple typing errors. You may need to upload a clear image of a cancelled cheque. After submission, the request

goes to your employer for approval. Many employees are unaware of this step. If approval takes time, it helps to follow up with HR or payroll instead of waiting.

This approval requirement also answers a common question people ask: you usually cannot complete a bank update without employer validation. Until HR approves it, the change remains incomplete.

WHY THIS SMALL STEP MATTERS

Incorrect bank details can lead to rejected claims. If that happens, you must correct the information and apply again, which adds stress and delays.

Updating your account when there is no urgency is far easier than scrambling to fix it when you need funds quickly. Think of it as preventive maintenance for your finances. Another point people often wonder about is whether they can link multiple accounts. EPFO allows only one active bank account under a UAN at any time. Your UAN itself remains the same throughout your career. So if your salary account changes with a new employer, you should update the details under the existing UAN to avoid delays.

Naturals plans IPO by 2028 if stake talks with Reliance fail: Executive

New Delhi.(Agency)

Indian salon chain Naturals remains in talks with Reliance over a potential stake sale, but discussions have slowed as the two sides have yet to agree on a deal structure, co-founder CK Kumaravel said in an interview.

Naturals plans to go public by 2028 if negotiations with Reliance don't bear fruit, Kumaravel told Reuters on the sidelines of a Retailers Association of India event in Mumbai. Talks, first announced in late 2022, stalled after Reliance sought a 51 per cent stake, while Naturals was prepared to sell only 49 per cent, so as to retain control for a few more years before considering a larger divestment, he said. Even if it takes time, Naturals is not in a hurry, as

"Reliance will add significant value," Kumaravel said, confirming that the



company is not in talks with other investors. Reliance did not respond to a request for comment. With about 900 outlets, Naturals is one of India's largest organised salon chains, ahead of peers such as Lakme and Geetanjali Salon, in

a market otherwise dominated by unorganised players. It reported gross merchandise value of ₹2450 crore (\$49.64 million) in fiscal 2025 and expects that figure to rise to ₹2600 crore this financial year. India's \$10.8 billion beauty salon market is expanding as younger consumers spend more on grooming, while rising incomes and higher participation of women in the workforce lift demand, according to consultancy Ken Research.

The chain plans to add 100 salons this year, including in Pune, focusing on dense clusters rather than scattered locations. A stake in Naturals would give Reliance an entry into the salon and spa services.

The recent pullback shows a change in market mood. For years, investors were willing to back long-term AI plans and future growth. Now, there is greater focus on near-term earnings and clearer signs of returns. After a period of strong gains, valuations are being tested as companies spend heavily on new AI systems and data centres.

However, not all large companies have seen losses. Taiwan Semiconductor Manufacturing Co (TSMC), Samsung Electronics and Walmart have added to their market value during the same period.

Gold drops over Rs 2,500, silver falls Rs 6,000: Are bigger price cuts on the way

The global recognition Mumbai is receiving today is best understood as validation rather than arrival. International research now ranks the city among the world's fastest-growing luxury housing markets, reflecting sustained price appreciation at the very top end.

New Delhi.(Agency)

Gold and silver prices moved lower on Tuesday, surprising investors who had been watching the recent rally in precious metals. The fall came at a time when global trading activity slowed, creating sharp swings in prices and adding to market uncertainty. On February 17, at the time of writing, gold was down by Rs 2,561 or 1.65% to Rs 152,199. Silver slipped even more sharply, falling by Rs 6,241 or 2.6% to Rs 233,650.

THIN GLOBAL TRADING WEIGHS ON BULLION
A key reason behind the drop is reduced

participation from major global markets. Chinese markets are closed from February 15 to February 23 for Lunar New Year celebrations, while United States markets were shut for the Presidents' Day holiday. With two of the world's biggest trading centres inactive, liquidity in bullion markets fell. Lower volumes often make prices more volatile, and in this case, they pushed gold and silver lower. Beyond holiday-driven trading, investors are also closely tracking interest rates, inflation and signals about global economic growth. Precious metals do not generate income, so their appeal often weakens when interest rates are high and other investments offer better returns.

EXPERTS SEE CONSOLIDATION, NOT A REVERSAL

Aksha Kamboj, Vice President, India Bullion and Jewellers Association (IBJA) and Executive Chairperson, Aspect Global Ventures, believes the recent easing is part of a normal pause. "Gold is easing slightly in the current market but is still higher than last week's

levels. The overall trend is still supportive, showing continuous safe-haven demand despite the temporary profit-booking. The current easing seems to be a part of the consolidation process rather than a reversal. Gold may remain



strong above key levels if global uncertainties continue," he said.

Kamboj added, "Silver is continuing its correction trend in the current market after a strong rally in the previous weeks. The sharp correction is due to the higher volatility of silver prices and their sensitivity to changes in industrial

sentiments. However, the prices are still higher than last week's levels, showing that the overall trend is still intact."

Ponnudi R, CEO of Enrich Money, says technical levels suggest that the broader trend is still constructive despite short-term weakness. "MCX Gold futures are trading near the Rs1,50,000-Rs1,60,000 zone, consolidating after a sharp correction from all-time highs around Rs1,80,000-Rs1,81,000. Despite short-term consolidation, the broader uptrend structure remains supportive, with prices holding above important long-term support levels." Ponnudi R added, "MCX Silver futures are trading within the Rs2,30,000-Rs2,70,000 range after a sharp correction from record highs around Rs4,20,000. While the long-term bullish structure remains intact, the steep pullback has dragged prices below major moving averages, signaling short-term bearish pressure and an ongoing corrective phase."

Jacqueline Fernandez's

Beautiful February Moments Are Filled With 'Love'

Jacqueline Fernandez gave fans a glimpse into her February so far with a heartfelt social media post. Sharing a series of photos and videos, she captioned it: "Feb 2026 so far (red heart) Faith, God, friends, family, and showing up every day."

The post shares a mix of fun, fitness and family moments. Many photos show her spending quality time with friends and family, playing with cats and dogs, and enjoying everyday joys. Videos show her practising pole dance, highlighting a high-intensity, full-body workout that builds strength, balance and focus. Other clips show her playing golf in Dubai, sipping coffee, attending concerts, and enjoying life's lighter moments.

Amid Controversy

The post comes amid a swirl of controversy. On Valentine's Day, alleged conman Sukesh Chandrasekhar, currently lodged in Delhi's Mandoli jail, claimed to have gifted Jacqueline a customised helicopter worth around ₹30 crore. In a handwritten letter, he referred to the actress as his "bottabomma" (beautiful doll) and described the helicopter as specially designed with her initials, JF, complementing other luxury assets he says he gifted her, including a yacht and a jet.

7 ways to make your Resume stand out from others

Practical ways to make your resume stand out

A resume is not the ultimate key to getting a job; several factors play significant roles in the hiring process. However, in the selection process, your resume certainly matters. Have you ever wondered how, among thousands of submissions, only a handful make the cut? What sets those standout resumes apart? Whether you're a recent graduate or an experienced professional, these seven resume tips can be game-changers in your job search. Dive in and explore how to make your resume truly shine!

Customize for each job

You can customize your resume for every application. It is of immense importance to carefully read the job description and identify key skills or experiences they're looking for. For



example, if the job focuses on digital content writing, copywriting, or storytelling, the experience for each job would be different, even when the writing part is the same for each position. This personal touch shows that you've put thought into your application and understand the role.

Keep it clean and simple

Choose a design that is professional and easy to look for. Use a clear font, consistent formatting, and keep equal white space in between. This not only makes your resume visually appealing but also helps recruiters quickly find the information they need. Look for a template design that consists of a balance, making it look good without being overly flashy.

Use relevant keywords

Big companies often use software called applicant tracking systems (ATS) to sort out resumes. To get past these filters, it is important to use words from the job description in your resume. For example, if the job mentions "data analysis," add that term if it matches your experience. This makes it more possible for human recruiters to see your resume.

Focus on achievements

Talk about what you achieved, not just what you did. For example, instead of saying, "I managed a team," you could say, "I led a team of five, and we finished a project two weeks early, saving 15% in costs." Adding numbers and clear results make your accomplishments stand out

more.

Show your people skills

Talking about your soft skills is really important, particularly for jobs that need good teamwork or communication. Share a short example, like how you solved a problem within a team or how your communication made a process better. This emphasizes how you interact with others and adds a personal touch to your resume that recruiters find useful.

Start with a powerful summary

Start your resume with a short summary that describes who you are as a professional. For example, you could say, "Experienced marketing expert with 5+ years in digital marketing." This helps employers easily understand your experience and what you can offer to the company.

Include certifications or side projects

Include any certifications or projects you've done outside your main job to show you're ambitious and work hard towards growth. For example, if you took an online course or volunteered at a nonprofit, share how these experiences improved your skills and knowledge.

How a mom turned her side hustle into a Rs 45 lakh business



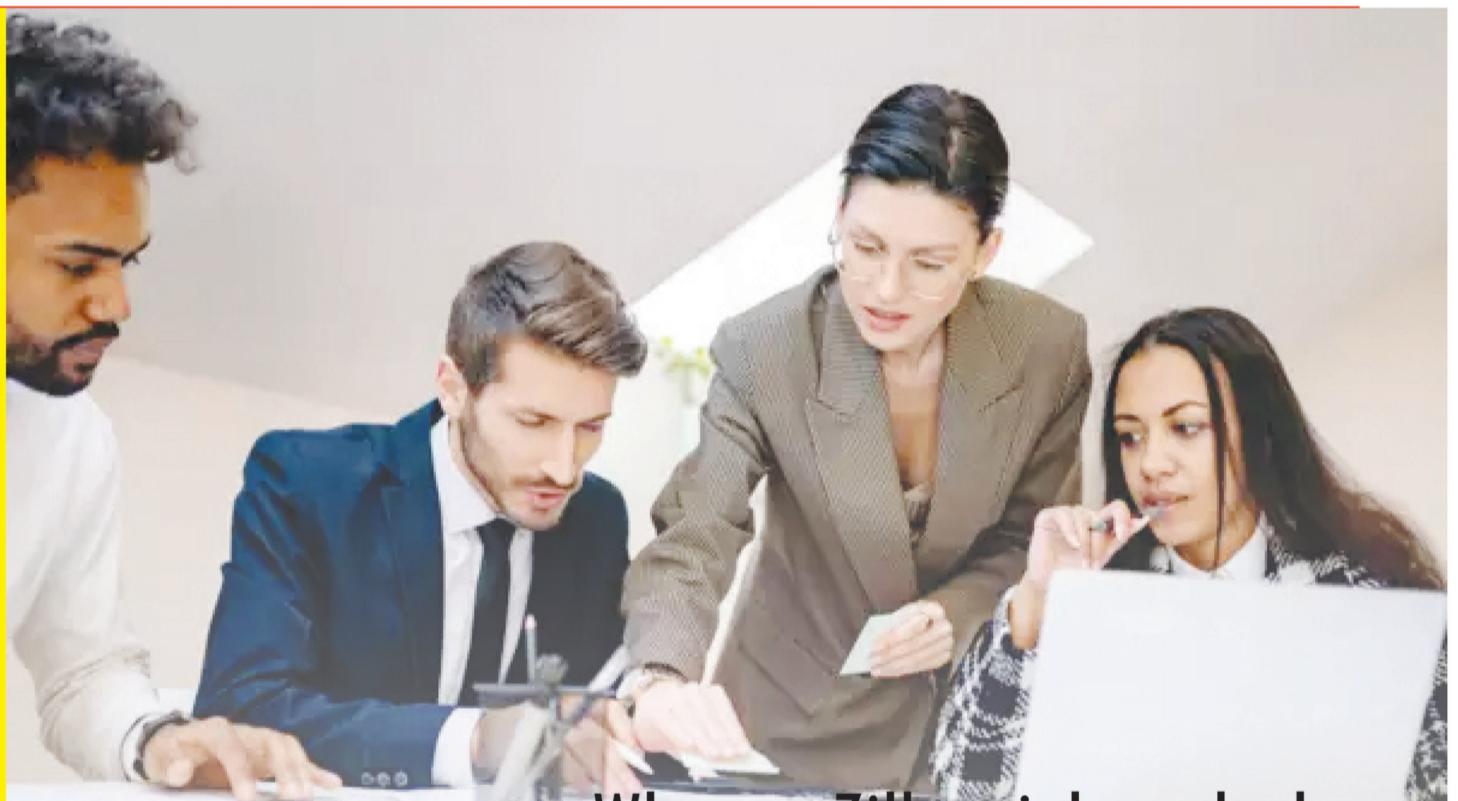
What started as a simple side hustle for Emily Odio-Sutton has transformed into a lucrative business, generating an impressive Rs 45 lakh (approximately \$54,900) monthly. This journey began in December 2022 while she was multitasking between her remote job and family responsibilities. Seeking a flexible work-life balance, Emily discovered the potential of print-on-demand services, which allowed her to create personalized products without holding inventory.

Early on, Emily's designs were fairly generic and failed to garner much attention. But all of that changed once she focused on customised candles and journals. The approach resulted in a dramatic sale that allowed her to rake in profits, making \$5,000 (approximately Rs 4.22 lakh) in profit by October 2023, nearly equal to her full-time salary as an operations manager for a children's book publishing company.

Emily explained to CNBC that, "I couldn't leave my 9-to-5 in the middle of the day for school pickups or gymnastics practices. I needed something that worked around my schedule." This flexibility and necessity encouraged her to research print-on-demand, which is a model where products are only printed once an order has been received from a customer. To really optimise her success, Emily canvassed particular niches using online platforms like Etsy. She focused on certain professions and passions in which she tailored designs. She researched ideas using tools like Google and brainstormed those using ChatGPT. "It was about finding those hyper-specific jobs or hobbies that people could relate to," she said. With her store growing in popularity, she was earning a pretty penny. She reported in some of the peak months up to \$54,900 (Rs 46.32 lakh), and profits comprised about one-third of that amount.

In addition to running a main Etsy store, Emily opened a secondary store peddling downloadable event templates and managed Pinterest accounts on behalf of other businesses. "I wanted to make sure I wasn't putting all my eggs in one basket," she said. It also stabilized her income and helped manage expenses like student loans and family vacations while keeping savings in reserve for the daughters' future.

Despite the financial success, Emily remains grounded in her approach to spending. She intertwines enjoyment with responsibility, so fun activities, such as vacations, will not control most of the expenses, like loan repayment. Emily's side hustle has provided her with much-needed flexibility. With young two daughters, she values time with family above everything else. "My goal has always been to live on my schedule," she explained. Picking up her daughter from the bus stop or attending their practices is a huge benefit to her entrepreneurial journey. Even though Emily has toned down her publishing work to only part-time, she is still not ready to throw everything into her business. "I would probably go full-time with my business if I could still be there for my daughters as much as possible," she added. Emily Odio-Sutton's story shows how a relatively simple side hustle could morph into a high-growing business with the power of innovation and strong commitment. In terms of money, Emily has accomplished a work-life balance besides living a life that is very rewarding and value-bound.



While every generation is referred with a name like Boomers, Millennials, Gen Z, Gen X, there are multiple micro generations that fall in between and they lose their special identity as they fall both ways. Zillennials are people born between 1997 and 2002 and they fall in between Millennials (1981 to 1996) and Gen Z (2000 to 2012).

Key characteristics
This group of people was born and raised alongside the development of the internet and holds values that differ from the current world scenario. Zillennials try hard to fit into both groups, as they can relate to both Millennials and Gen Z.

Zillennials were the first to experience rapid advancing technology and they lived in a society before the pre social-media and have now adapted to the social media market of Instagram and Twitter and more. They are natives of the digital world with analog roots.

Why is it hard for Zillennials to fit in workplaces?
Zillennials have a unique quality, as they fall under both radars, which is why they have a tough time fitting in with workplace groups. Referred to as cuspers, Zillennials fall in the age group where perfection meets procrastination. They often face identity crises, and Lauren Farina, the CEO of Invited Psychotherapy and Coaching, explained to Business Insider that Zillennials are high performer archetypes who seek perfectionism and exhibit pleasing qualities. She added that they face multiple pitfalls of



burnout and anxiety, as they cannot completely fit into a group and often feel guilty.

The influence
Zillennials are influenced by both Millennials and Gen Z at the workplace. While many companies are shaped by Millennials, they managed to be

flexible, work-life balance and had a collaborative work culture and now with Gen Z's progressive mindset of profession driven work with flexible work timings and preference, Zillennials fall in between and get impacted as they are anxious about their mental health and their work-life balance.

Economic stability

While Zillennials started the workforce in 2016, it was around recession and soon came the pandemic after 3 years which gave them a perception of insecurity over jobs as competition was high and the stability at work place was very wobbly. With multiple companies going bankrupt after the COVID pandemic, the job industry became very unspecific in 2022 and the frequent inflation has disturbed the working mindset of Zillennials.



Who are Zillennials and why do they find it hard to fit in Workplaces?