

CBI Probe Must Expose the Massive Government

Land Scam in Indira Vikas Colony Near Dr. Mukherjee Nagar

The Sikh Times
Gurcharan Singh
Babbar

New Delhi 19 February , Indira Vikas Colony near Dr. Mukherjee Nagar, Delhi, has once again come under serious public scrutiny. This is not the first time that grave allegations have surfaced regarding this colony. In previous representations and reports, it has already been highlighted that valuable government land — worth hundreds and thousands of crores

of rupees — has allegedly been encroached upon and illegally sold. However, despite repeated appeals, no strict action has been taken so far. The builders' mafia and property mafia allegedly forged documents and sold government land to innocent people. These forged documents are not hidden — they are in possession of the residents themselves. Every flat owner residing in Indira Vikas Colony is reportedly holding forged papers related to the government land on



which their homes have been constructed. The criminal who forged documents and sold government land has his name, address, affidavit, and bank transactions on record. All evidence exists. Therefore, it is strongly demanded that the Delhi Government immediately hand over this entire matter to the Central Bureau of Investigation.

Without the involvement and collusion of government officials, no major criminal can sell government land by preparing forged

documents. This is not a small local irregularity — it is an organized land scam. There are serious allegations that officials from multiple departments were involved, including:

Delhi Development Authority (DDA)
Municipal Corporation of Delhi (MCD)
Delhi Fire Service
Delhi Jal Board
Electricity Department officials
Local Police authorities

It is alleged that these officials enabled land mafia and property mafia

to take possession of government land after accepting heavy bribes. Without their active participation and protection, such a massive illegal sale of government land could not have taken place.

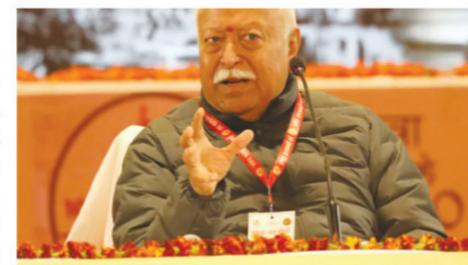
The Government already

occupations of government land in Indira Vikas Colony. All corrupt officials involved at that time must be arrested without delay. Their movable and immovable assets — whether in their own name or benami — must be immediately seized. Similarly, the builder mafia, property mafia, and land mafia who prepared forged papers and sold government land must also be arrested without delay. Their named and benami properties must be confiscated.

Continued news page 2

India Will Lead Global South One Day: Mohan Bhagwat In Lucknow

Global South refers to countries considered as developing, less developed or underdeveloped in the southern hemisphere.



Lucknow .(Agency)
India will lead the Global South one day, and then no nation or no tariffs would be able to harm us, Rashtriya Swayamsevak Sangh (RSS) chief Mohan Bhagwat said at an RSS outreach event in Lucknow on Wednesday. Global South refers to countries considered as developing, less developed or underdeveloped in the southern hemisphere.

Bhagwat's remarks assume significance, as they come amid the recent tariff controversy with the US. "India will lead the Global South. One day, tariffs won't affect us. India will stand firm and not budge before any nation," Bhagwat said at the second of the two outreach events in the state capital. "In some time, everything will be normal again," he said at Lucknow's Indira Gandhi Pratishthan, where he interacted with professionals.

Earlier in the day at another event, Bhagwat hit out at the US and China. Addressing a

Shodharthi Samvad programme at the Malaviya Auditorium of Lucknow University, the RSS chief said, "Western countries spread fundamentalism. Their thinking is to become powerful, live on their own, and abandon the rest, eliminating those who become obstacles. This is what America and China are doing today." Later, Bhagwat stressed that social harmony was the foundation of unity in society and said the RSS works for the nation above all divisions. "Hindu dharma is the true human dharma. If there is any

truly secular society in the world, it is the Hindu society," he said, adding that Hindus should identify themselves as Hindus rather than their caste, sect, or denomination. "Caste and language identities are not paramount. We must nurture the feeling that we are all Hindus," he said. He asserted that the caste system was gradually weakening, particularly among the younger generation, and that once caste ceases to hold social importance, politics centred around it would also change. "In the Sangh, nobody's caste is asked. All are Hindu brethren. To eradicate caste from society, we must first forget caste," he said. Bhagwat said children should receive religious education at home, and families must remain emotionally connected despite geographical distances. He suggested families gather at least once a year to uphold traditions and pass on values to younger generations."

When children sweat it out on field & bring home medals, there will be no need for any anti-drug campaign: CM Mann

The Sikh Times

LUDHIANA, 19th

February: At the historic Kila Raipur Rural Olympics, Punjab Chief Minister Bhagwant Singh Mann on Thursday declared sports to be the most lethal weapon against the drug menace and announced that the sports budget will be enhanced in the forthcoming state Budget, underlining a determined push to channelise the energy of Punjab's youth into constructive avenues. Stating that bullock cart races, halted during the tenure of previous governments, have now resumed after the law was amended, the Chief Minister said that when children sweat it out on the field and bring home medals, there will be no need for any anti-drug campaign. Calling the revival of the Kila Raipur Games a reflection of Punjab's rural pride and cultural strength, the Chief Minister highlighted the New Sports Policy 2023 as a step towards restoring the state's sporting glory, with stadiums to

be built in every village. He also announced that the eight-acre pond in Kila Raipur will be beautified and a modern library constructed, and said that the government is already promoting sports in a big way and added, "While the previous governments had neglected this important sector aimed at youth



government is plugging leakages left by previous regimes, saving public money and spending it directly on the people. Addressing a gathering during the Kila Raipur Sports Rural Olympics, CM Bhagwant Singh Mann said, "Sports are the most lethal weapon against the drug menace and the state government will enhance the budget for Sports in the ensuing budget for the state." He said that the

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Ajit Pawar's son seeks probe into 'possible serious lapses' in plane crash

New Delhi .(Agency)
Jay Pawar on Wednesday demanded a "fair, thorough" and transparent investigation into the plane crash that claimed the life of his father, former Maharashtra Deputy Chief Minister Ajit Pawar, in Baramati on January 28. In an Instagram story posted on February 18, Jay Pawar questioned the circumstances surrounding the incident, sought accountability and called for action against the aircraft operator. "Black boxes are not easily destroyed in a plane crash; The people of Maharashtra have the right to know the complete, transparent and undisputed truth of this heart-wrenching tragedy. VSR should be banned from flying immediately, and a thorough and fair investigation into possible serious malpractices in the maintenance of their aircraft should be conducted," he wrote. He also shared an emotional message, saying, "Miss you Dad." The crash, which occurred while the aircraft was attempting to land at Baramati airport in Pune district, killed Ajit Pawar and four others.

Meanwhile, Supriya Sule, MP from the Nationalist Congress Party (SP), expressed concern over suggestions of "foul play" and said she expects answers from the Civil Aviation Ministry. Addressing a press conference, she said questions raised by party leaders and others should be discussed in Parliament.

Ajit Pawar was Rohit Pawar's uncle. Rohit Pawar, along with several others, has concerns and uneasiness regarding this matter. Amol Mitkari has also raised questions. Shiv Sena (UBT) and the Indian National Congress have fully supported us. They have said that this issue should be discussed in Parliament and even met the Speaker in this regard. There are many questions in the minds of the people, and they deserve answers," she said.

"I only want to say that what has happened should not happen to anyone else. I expect the Civil Aviation Ministry to hold a press conference and provide answers to at least some of these questions," Sule added.

Govt plans phased withdrawal of CAPFs from Maoist-infested areas from April

New Delhi .(Agency)
After successes to meet Union Home Minister Amit Shah's March 31 deadline to eliminate Maoists, the government is working on a calibrated plan of phased withdrawal of central security forces from the left-wing-extremism-hit areas, officials said. The plan envisages a gradual redeployment of select forces, with the CRPF set to anchor a redefined security grid during the transition as ITBP and BSF forces are likely to withdraw in phases starting April last, subject to ground assessments. The officials clarified that the drawdown of forces will begin with priority districts. A detailed, area-

specific roadmap is being finalised to prevent security gaps and ensure that gains made against Maoist groups are not reversed. "The idea is stability first, withdrawal later," a senior MHA official said, underlining that troop reductions would be incremental. Security presence will continue in sensitive pockets even as overall force levels are rationalised. The move follows significant successes by security forces in dismantling Naxal networks and neutralising key operatives. According to government data, the LWE footprint has shrunk dramatically. The number of affected districts has fallen from



126 in 2018 to eight by December 2025, with only three categorised as "most affected".

Incidents of violence have also declined by 88% since their peak in 2010, while civilian and security personnel fatalities have dropped by 90%. In 2025 so far, 317 Naxals have been neutralised, 862 arrested and 1,973 surrendered.

The officials said the security recalibration coincides with a broader shift toward a development-centric strategy in the remaining affected areas. Teams are expected to begin field visits to remote villages to conduct surveys, identify infrastructure deficits and prepare a structured development plan for the next financial year.

'Cultural insensitivity': Mamata Banerjee slams PM Modi over 'Swami' prefix for Ramakrishna Paramahansa

The Bengal CM said
"Swami" was meant
for Ramakrishna
Order monks, while
the trinity remained
Thakur for
Ramakrishna, Ma
for Sarada, and
Swamiji for Swami
Vivekananda.

Kolkata .(Agency)
West Bengal Chief Minister Mamata Banerjee on Thursday criticised Prime Minister Narendra Modi for using the word 'Swami' as prefix in a social media post on Ramakrishna Paramahansa's birth anniversary, alleging that the PM displayed "cultural insensitivity to great figures" of the state. Banerjee said the Prime Minister used the prefix 'Swami' in the message while Ramakrishna Paramahansa is widely known as 'Thakur.' "Shocked again! Yet again, our Prime Minister aggressively displays his cultural insensitivity to great figures of Bengal. Today is the jannatithi of Yugavatara (God's incarnation in our age) Sri Sri Ramakrishna Paramahansa.

"While trying to hail the great saint on this occasion, our PM added an unprecedented and



improper prefix to the great saint's name, "Swami"! Banerjee posted on X. Modi on Thursday paid tributes to Sri Ramakrishna Paramahansa on his birth anniversary, and said his noble thoughts will forever remain a source of inspiration. Ramakrishna Paramahansa was born in 1836. "Humble tributes to Swami

Ramakrishna Paramahansa on his birth anniversary. The way he established spirituality and meditation as a vital life force will continue to benefit humanity in every era. His noble thoughts and messages will forever remain a source of inspiration," Modi said in a post on X in Hindi. Sri Ramakrishna Paramahansa, who served as a priest in Kolkata's Dakshineswar Kali Temple, is known for his teachings on the harmony of religions.

"As is well known, Sri Ramakrishna was widely revered as Thakur (literally, God). While his ascetic disciples constituted the Ramakrishna Math and the Ramakrishna Mission after their Master's demise, and those monks were then called "Swami" as per Indian traditions, the Master, the Acharya, himself continued to be referred to as Thakur," Banerjee said.

Front continued news

CBI Probe Must Expose the Massive Government Land Scam in Indira Vikas Colony Near Dr. Mukherjee Nagar

Since forged documents of government land are currently in possession of residents inside Indira Vikas Colony, the Central Bureau of Investigation can easily trace the criminals through these documents and reach the entire chain of corruption. This is a direct appeal to Hon'ble Chief Minister Smt. Rekha Gupta to personally take this matter into her hands. This is not just a local colony issue — it is a case of illegal sale of government land in the heart of the national capital.

Indira Vikas Colony is located very close to the Raj Niwas and also near the Delhi Legislative Assembly. Therefore, Hon'ble Lieutenant Governor Shri Vinai Kumar Saxena must not remain silent. Immediate steps should be taken to refer this case to the Central Bureau of Investigation and initiate strict legal proceedings against all those who sold government land through forged documents.

The people of Delhi are watching closely. This is a matter of public property, public trust, and accountability. When government land is sold illegally through forged papers, it shakes the very foundation of governance.

The forged documents created by those who sold government land are still available with the residents of Indira Vikas Colony. On the basis of these documents, the CBI can easily reach the criminals and ensure that not only the land mafia but also all government officials who helped them at that time are arrested. This case demands immediate, transparent, and uncompromising investigation. Silence is no longer an option.

News box

Testing push helps Haryana register 98% TB detection target**Gurgaon.(Agency)**

Driven by expanded testing and diagnostic capacity, Haryana's tuberculosis detection has improved significantly over the past year.

The state notified 98% of its annual TB target after surpassing sputum testing benchmarks, according to data reviewed at a health department meeting on Wednesday. This means the state was able to identify and formally register nearly all the TB cases it was expected to detect in 2025. The target for 2025 was 90,500 TB cases. Between Jan and Dec 2025, the state conducted 12.52 lakh sputum tests against a target of 9.75 lakh, achieving 3,848 tests per lakh population, an indicator of strengthened surveillance systems.

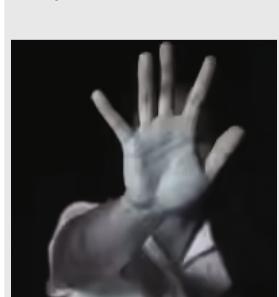
Officials clarified that the rise in case notification — 88,689 TB cases in 2025 — reflected better detection and reporting rather than an abrupt increase in disease burden. TB notifications in Haryana rose by 2,518 cases in 2025, a 2.92% increase over 2024. In 2024, the notifications rose by 8.86%, increasing from 79,160 cases in 2023 to 86,171 cases. The improved testing base reduced underreporting, particularly in high-burden and previously underserved pockets. Additional chief secretary (health) Sumita Misra said on Wednesday the TB programme is shifting from detection-centric strategies to a more holistic approach. "The focus is moving towards continuity of care, digital tracking and post-treatment rehabilitation, even as early diagnosis remains uneven across districts," she said. One of the key gains came from the private sector, where notification crossed 105% of the annual target, marking a notable improvement in reporting from private hospitals, historically a weak link in India's TB surveillance system.

Woman sexually harassed during checkup, FIR against dentist**Noida.(Agency)**

An FIR was filed against a dentist for allegedly sexually harassing a 31-year-old woman during a checkup at his clinic in New Colony. The complainant, a Bihar native who has been residing in Gurgaon for the past 12 years, stated that the incident took place on Feb 15 at Pearl Dental Clinic near Dev Samaj Public School. The doctor has been identified as Dr Dheeraj Mehta. According to the complaint, the woman had first visited the clinic on Feb 9 and was called again for a second sitting after three days. On Feb 15, when she went for a check-up, the

dentist allegedly touched her inappropriately and made unwelcome physical advances during the procedure. "I felt his intentions were wrong, and I even pressed his finger in protest," she stated in her complaint, adding that she felt unsafe during the appointment.

Speaking to TOI, the woman said her husband had accompanied her to the clinic and was present there. "He started his treatment while his compounder was also there. He started touching me inappropriately, following which I held his hand and pressed his fingers. My husband, who also accompanied me to the clinic, kept an eye on me. He saw me confronting the doctor, following which he started making videos. The compounder didn't intervene either. I started crying, following which we returned to my house," she said.

**Gurgaon.(Agency)**

Nearly 18 months after the Uttar Pradesh Lift and Escalator Act, 2024 took effect, compliance has remained slow with just 11,000 lifts of an estimated 80,000 lifts in the district registered so far.

On Tuesday, district magistrate Medha Roopam ordered lift manufacturers and AMC firms to submit, within two days, a complete inventory of all lifts they have installed across the district in societies, malls, hospitals, offices, hotels, and industrial units. The data, officials said, would be cross-checked with registration records to identify unregistered lifts and fix responsibility.

Based on the findings, the administration plans to issue notices to those found in violation. If maintenance has been taken over by RWAs, their officebearers will be directed to complete the registration process for lifts. In cases where developers or AMC firms continue to handle maintenance, accountability will lie with the agency. At 11,254 registrations,

GB Nagar has seen the highest number of lift registrations in UP. The district likely has the highest number of lifts in the state. Once we receive lists from all manufacturers and AMC companies, we will be able to assess how many lifts are operating in the district and are

registered under the Lift Act," Roopam said. Officials from the electrical safety wing said lack of compliance has persisted despite repeated reminders. Ramesh Chaudhary, assistant director with the district's electrical safety department, said companies had been asked

over the past year to submit details categorising lifts as registered or unregistered. "Despite multiple reminders, the information was not shared," he said. The DM also addressed complaints from residents over rising annual maintenance and

registration-related charges since lift registration.

Noida sets April deadline to resurface 150km roads**Gurgaon.(Agency)**

Pitted with potholes, broken edges and rough patches that have slowed traffic and raised safety concerns, Noida's road network is set for a major overhaul with Noida Authority approving a Rs 250-crore plan to resurface about 150km of road network across the city. The Authority has set an April deadline for completing the repairs.

Officials said tenders would be floated circle-wise, and work would begin once the bidding process was completed and agencies finalised. To meet the tight deadline, resurfacing would be carried out simultaneously in multiple work circles. This will be the first major road repair exercise since the Authority's traffic cell was dissolved last week, with responsibilities redistributed among work circles.

According to officials, most complaints have been received from work circles 1

to 5, covering sectors such as 11, 22, 75 and 76, where commuters have flagged deep potholes, uneven surfaces and crumbling edges. Officials said these stretches will be taken up on priority. The resurfacing process will involve milling the damaged top layer of bitumen and laying a fresh wearing course. In locations where the base layer has weakened, strengthening work will also be undertaken before resurfacing. Beyond carriageways, the project includes repairs to damaged footpaths and repainting of road dividers. At several locations, pedestrian pathways have sunk or broken, forcing people onto the road. Reconstruction will be carried out at such spots, officials said, with the broader aim of improving road safety before the onset of rains. Repair work had paused between Oct and Jan due to rising pollution levels and



restrictions imposed under the Graded Response Action Plan (GRAP) in NCR. Meanwhile, dust management during road work has come under scrutiny from the Central Pollution Control Board under the National Clean Air Programme. CPCB has directed civic bodies to enforce measures such as mechanical

sweeping, water sprinkling and covering of construction material during transport. "We are preparing estimates and issuing tenders so contractors can be engaged quickly. Engineers have been directed to repair or resurface all roads where required by the end of April," a senior official said, adding that the progress would be reviewed regularly, with payments linked to quality checks and stage-wise completion.

In Sept 2025, Noida Authority repaired several uneven surfaces and broken bitumen layers on Noida Expressway, FNG Road, DSC Road in Sector 16, and some other locations. The Authority had spent nearly Rs 10 crore on the repair works then. Rough patches have reappeared in some of these areas again.

FIR against 4 Gurgaon school officials after students miss Class 10 exam**Gurgaon.(Agency)**

A case was registered against four officials of a city school on Wednesday, a day after an incident in which 11 Class X students missed their CBSE mathematics examination.

The incident had sparked overnight protests by parents, after which a police complaint was filed. According to police officials, the case has been registered against Edcrest International School chairman Vinay Kataria, principal Riddhima Kataria, vice principal Nidhi Batra and coordinator Sonia over allegations of cheating and falsely claiming CBSE affiliation, which put students' academic futures at risk. The students had missed their examination on Tuesday after the school, located in Sector 9B, failed to provide admit cards amid an affiliation dispute. The FIR was lodged at Sector-9A police station under relevant sections of the BNS, including sections 318(4), 316(2), and 3(5), which pertain to cheating, criminal breach of trust and joint liability for acts done with common intention. A resident of New Colony had approached police, alleging that he enrolled his daughter in the school based on assurances that it was affiliated with Central Board of Secondary Education (CBSE). The complainant claimed the school management showed "fake affiliation certificates and brochures" promising a "golden future" and quality education by qualified teachers, while also assuring parents that the institution would complete all board registration formalities. Relying on these assurances, the parent said he paid substantial amounts towards tuition fees, uniforms and examination charges through bank transfers as well as cash payments. As the Class X board examinations approached, parents began seeking clarity regarding admit cards but were allegedly given evasive responses and told the documents would be issued two days before the exam.

On Feb 16, a day before the first paper, the complainant visited the school and was reportedly told the admit card would be delivered to his residence, which never happened.

5k in 10 days: MCG launches drive to fix craters on Gurgaon roads as plaints spike**Gurgaon.(Agency)**

MCG on Wednesday announced a 10-day drive to make city roads pothole-free. The civic body set a target to fill at least 5,000 potholes in the first phase. This was decided in a detailed review of road-related complaints received on Haryana's road-grievance platform — Mhari Sadak. This comes days after TOI reported that 37% of all complaints on Mhari Sadak originated from the NCR cities of Gurgaon and Faridabad. At the meeting, additional commissioner Ankita Chaudhary gave clear instructions to the officials and engineers that complaints registered on the portal should be resolved with priority, promptness and quality. "Complaints are an important basis for the administration's accountability. Therefore, time-bound and effective disposal of each complaint is mandatory," the additional commissioner said. Under the pothole-free campaign, the goal was set to improve road safety and provide better transportation facilities to the

public. The additional commissioner said that, for the target to fill hundreds of potholes in the first phase of the campaign, concerned departments were directed to mobilise necessary resources and complete the work in a time-bound manner. She told the engineers that special attention should be paid to the quality of work so that repairs remain durable for a long time and citizens do not have to face problems repeatedly. TOI reported on Feb 11 that as of Feb 7, the Mhari Sadak app and portal received 8,204 complaints across Haryana. Of these, 1,482 were from Gurgaon and 1,522 from Faridabad — together nearly 3,004 complaints, an outsized share from just two cities. Even more troubling was the resolution rate. Data showed that more than 66% of Gurgaon's complaints remain unresolved: 982 out of 1,482 were still marked "in progress," while only 430 were addressed. At the review meeting on Wednesday, Chaudhary said that not only the Mhari Sadak portal, but all road-related complaints received on the

complaint handling system (CHS) portal should also be resolved swiftly. She directed engineers to review all pending cases and dispose of them quickly on a priority basis. She said that providing better road facilities to citizens is the corporation's primary responsibility and no negligence in this regard will be tolerated. The corporation also appealed to residents that if they have information about potholes or other problems on roads, they should register complaints on the relevant portal so that timely action can be ensured. This step by MCG is significant in the direction of ensuring a better road system, safe traffic and smooth movement in the city, said MCG officials. On Tuesday, MCG also constituted a road development cell (RDC) to closely monitor infrastructure projects and ensure faster grievance redressal. For quicker redressal of complaints, the cell will track grievances received through various platforms, including the GMDA portal, the MCG mobile app and the Mhari Sadak platform.

Panel to draft rehab plan for families encroaching Ghaziabad 'park' land**Noida.(Agency)**

A high-powered committee has been formed under the chairmanship of the Ghaziabad district magistrate to formulate a rehabilitation scheme for removing encroachment on the park of Rajendra Nagar Industrial Colony. The National Green Tribunal on Tuesday granted the state govt more time for the same. There 172 illegal occupants who constructed small houses encroaching upon the park in question, some of whom had approached the High Court against the eviction proceedings and obtained relief. The tribunal's principal bench, comprising chairperson Justice Prakash Srivastava and expert member Afroz Ahmad, allowed the application for more time, fixed May 28 as the next date of hearing. The state counsel had sought more time to respond twice before, on Aug 29 and Nov 27, which was also allowed by the bench. On Nov 22, 2023, Sushil

Raghav had filed an application against the state govt, raising the grievance that the park earmarked at Rajendra Nagar Industrial Colony in Sahibabad is being encroached by the municipal corporation. He also alleged the GMC is constructing a pathway on the land earmarked for the park and is also constructing a drain and shifting the boundary of the park by reducing the park area. In due course of the hearing, it was revealed that a substantial

area of the park land was encroached by locals, and Babu Jagivan Ram Colony was built on the plot illegally. State's counsel, through an affidavit dated Aug 27, 2025, filed on behalf of the special secretary, Urban Development Department, informed that eviction notices were issued to the encroachers on the park, but it was challenged through a writ petition in the Allahabad High Court.

"The court initially directed the parties to maintain status quo by the order dated July 14, and the said order of status quo was reaffirmed by the order dated July 31," the state's counsel told the tribunal.

On Aug 29, the counsel said during a hearing that, as per Section 26A(4) of the UP Urban and Planning Development Act, 1973, alternative land or accommodation is required to be provided to the members of the weaker section who encroached upon the public land before the exam.

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Only 15% registered, companies told to submit list of lifts installed by them in 2 days**Gurgaon.(Agency)**

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over the past year to submit details categorising lifts as registered or unregistered. "Despite multiple reminders, the information was not shared," he said. The DM also addressed complaints from residents over rising annual maintenance and

Discoms set to revamp infra to meet summer power demand**Noida.(Agency)**

Power discoms in Noida and Greater Noida have begun upgrading substations ahead of summer to meet the anticipated rise in electricity demand, officials said. Peak demand is projected around 3,000 megawatt (MW) in Noida and 950 MW in Greater Noida.

In Noida, load augmentation is underway at a 33/11 kilovolt (kV) substation in Sector 11, which supplies power to nearly 4,000 homes in sectors 10 and 11. A new 10 MVA transformer will also be installed at the facility. "Currently, construction work on ramps for the transformer installation is underway. This substation currently has a 20 MVA capacity," said an official of the Noida power department, adding that the

upgrade is aimed at ensuring uninterrupted power supply during peak summer months, when high demand has earlier led to outages. In Greater Noida, the Noida Power Company Limited (NPCL) has completed load augmentation at a 33/11 kV substation in Sector Gamma 1 via a 12.5 MVA transformer.

which previously operated at a capacity of 5 MVA. The substation receives power from the Metro Depot substation. The upgrade is expected to benefit around 2,000 consumers across sectors Gamma 1 and 2, Jagat Farm Market and Rampur Jagir Market. NPCL has also enhanced the transformer capacity at the UPSIDA Site B substation, increasing it from 12.5 MW to 16 MW.

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Editor-in-Chief

Gurcharan Singh Babbar
Mob: 9654077232, 9971359517

Website: www.thesikhtimes.in

Email: sikhtimesindia@gmail.com

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NEWS BOX

Fireworks shop explosion in China kills 12 people in second such blast in days**BEIJING. (Agency)**

An explosion at a fireworks' shop in China's Hubei province on Wednesday killed 12 people, state media reported, the second such explosion as the country celebrates the Lunar New Year. Emergency responders put out the blaze at the fireworks shop in the town of Xiangyang, in central Hubei province, on Wednesday afternoon, according to the official Xinhua News Agency. Investigators are now looking into the cause of the explosion, the report said without giving further details. The victims were five children and seven adults, officials said Thursday. One was the shop owner, and the rest were customers who had come to buy fireworks for celebrations. Some were visiting family from out of town. Fireworks are a large part of the Lunar New Year celebration in China, but their use has also been the cause of multiple accidents. On Sunday, another accident at a fireworks shop in eastern Jiangsu province killed eight people and injured two. Authorities had said a resident had set off fireworks near the shop. The central government warned of the dangers in a statement Tuesday, saying that "fireworks are still the biggest risks during the Spring Festival period," according to the Ministry of Emergency Management.

Trump grasping for excuses to slap 'outrageous' tariffs on India: US Congressman**NEW YORK. (Agency)**

A senior US lawmaker has said that President Donald Trump is "grasping for excuses" to "slap outrageous tariffs" on India for purchasing Russian oil, urging him to reverse this policy immediately.

"President Trump is grasping for excuses to slap outrageous tariffs on #India," Congressman Brad Sherman said in a social media post on Wednesday. Sherman, a senior member of the House Foreign Affairs Committee, said in the post that Trump claims tariffs on India are about importing Russian oil. "Yet Hungary imports 90% of its crude from Russia with no tariffs. And China, Russia's biggest oil buyer, hasn't been hit with sanctions tied to purchasing Russian oil, though it has been hit for other reasons."

"India gets just 21% of its crude from Russia, but our ally is being singled out. The President should reverse this policy immediately," Sherman said.

Earlier this month, the US and India announced that they reached a framework for an interim agreement



on trade with Trump issuing an executive order removing the 25 per cent punitive tariffs imposed on India for its purchases of Russian oil.

The US president noted the commitment by New Delhi to stop directly or indirectly importing energy from Moscow and purchasing American energy products. Under the trade deal, Washington will charge a reduced reciprocal tariff on New Delhi, lowering it from 25 per cent to 18 per cent.

Canada Revises Express Entry Immigration Rules, Adds Military Roles**Toronto. (Agency)**

Canada introduced new immigration priority categories on Wednesday to bring in skilled workers in fields ranging from research and health care to aviation, and to include certain military recruits.

The new categories align with Prime Minister Mark Carney's goals of broadly reducing the number of new permanent residents in Canada while recruiting skilled workers and scholars and boosting defense capabilities to lessen dependence on the United States.

The government said the shift was aimed at restoring immigration to sustainable levels while finding workers for key industries. Canada's government in recent years has sought to reduce the number of immigrants to ease strains on housing and social services. Immigration Minister Lena Metlege Diab said the 2026 changes to the Express Entry system will help to attract talent that can "contribute from day one" as Canada faces labour shortages in critical sectors. The new categories include researchers, senior managers, transport-sector workers such as pilots and aircraft mechanics, and foreign medical doctors with Canadian experience. They will also include highly skilled foreign military applicants recruited by the Canadian Armed Forces, including military doctors, nurses and pilots.

"Canada's future depends on a workforce ready for a changing economy," Diab said in a statement.

Carney, seeking to reduce reliance on the United States, announced a new defense strategy on Tuesday that aims over the next decade to lift government investment in defense-related research and development by 85%, boost defense industry revenues by more than 240%, increase defense exports by 50% and create up to 125,000 quality new jobs. Like other NATO members, Canada has pledged to raise defense spending to 5% of gross domestic product by 2035.

Invitation rounds in existing Express Entry categories — including French-language candidates, health-care workers and skilled trades — will continue alongside the new targeted streams.

High-stakes showdown in Nepal's post-uprising polls**JHAPA. (Agency)**

In Nepal's eastern plains, rival political flags depicting blue bells and red suns flutter over tea farms and brick homes -- symbols of a local election campaign shaping landmark nationwide polls. Two prime ministerial candidates are going head-to-head in Jhapa-5, turning the sleepy district into a pivotal battleground in the Himalayan nation's March 5 elections -- the first since deadly anti-corruption protests in September toppled the government. The district is the stronghold of Marxist leader KP Sharma Oli -- the 73-year-old, four-time prime minister ousted by the unrest -- who is confident of a return to power from a seat he has won multiple times. "There is no need to doubt," tough-talking Oli told reporters, as official campaigning kicked off this week. "There is no need for me to think that this is challenging." He faces 35-year-old rapper-turned-politician Balendra Shah as his main rival. The former mayor of Kathmandu stepped down to run against Oli in the former leader's constituency, 275 kilometres (170 miles) southeast of the capital. "Contesting against a major figure signals that I am not taking the easy way out," Shah, who has cast himself as a

representation of youth-driven political change, told AFP.

A defeat for either prime ministerial candidate at the local level would most likely end their bid to lead the country.

Generational divide

The youth-led protests against Oli's government in September were triggered by a brief social media ban. The demonstrations began under a Gen Z movement, but fuelled by far wider anger at economic stagnation and an ageing elite seen as out of touch. Over two days in September, 77 people were killed, scores were injured, and hundreds of buildings set on fire -- including parliament, courts and a Hilton hotel. Now the reckoning has narrowed to a single constituency.

"It cannot be seen as an election just between the two leaders," said Nepali political journalist Binu Subedi, adding many have "portrayed it as a fight" between old and new. "There is a change in the mood of the voters," she added. Jhapa, on the border with India, is a mix of towns and farming settlements with 163,000 registered voters, that have become the testing ground of public trust in the country's fractured political leadership. Young men take

photos and scroll through campaign clips on their phones, convinced that change is the answer after the protests.

"Nepal is lagging behind because of corruption," said 24-year-old resident

"Oli's position on national interest is clear, so I will vote for him," said 62-year-old bus ticket seller Ganga Prasad Bhandari. "I do not know the vision of the new party." But doubts have been sown.

"I have been casting my vote for KP Sharma Oli since I became eligible," said Gita Subedi, 48, a housewife. "But my son, who lives in the US, is urging me to vote for Balendra Shah. I have not yet made a decision."

New force'

Both rivals brim with confidence. "This place has well-informed people, voters, and party workers," Oli, the leader of the Communist Party of Nepal-Unified Marxist Leninist (CPN-UML), told AFP, scoffing at doubts that he could lose.

"I can say with confidence that, wherever you stand, you will see work done by me, under my leadership and by my party and my government." Shah, standing for the Rastriya Swatantra Party (RSP), the fourth-largest party in the last parliament, commands a substantial social media following. He said that taking his campaign to Oli's door was not "an egoistic decision", but was designed to create wider impact.



Bibek Thapa. "The older party leaders were selfish and only concerned about themselves and their families. I think if the new party wins, it will bring some reforms, and I am hopeful about that."

Oli has denied he gave orders to police to open fire on protesters, and has blamed "infiltrators" or "anarchic forces" for igniting violence -- without giving further details. Older voters sit in tea shops, weighing loyalty against uncertainty.

Air Force One will be painted red, white and blue as Trump has hinted, US military says**World. (Agency)**

A red, white and blue color scheme championed by President Donald Trump will become the new look for Air Force One, the US military said Thursday.

The Air Force said a "red, white, gold and dark blue paint scheme" will be used for the updated jet that is slated to serve as Air Force One as well as other, smaller jets that routinely fly other top government officials. The military released a rendering of the new look that matches an airplane model that has been seen in the Oval Office for meetings with foreign leaders. Boeing is in the process of modifying two of its 747-800 aircraft that are slated to replace the existing fleet of two aging Boeing 747-200 aircraft that the president currently uses and that take on the Air Force One call sign when the president is aboard.

In 2018, Trump directed that those new jets would ditch the iconic Kennedy-era blue-and-white design for a white-and-navy color scheme. Instead, the top half of the plane would have been white, while the bottom, including the belly, would have been dark blue. A streak of dark red would have run from the cockpit to the tail. The coloring was almost identical to the



exterior of Trump's personal plane.

An Air Force review had suggested the darker colors would increase costs and delay delivery of the new jumbo jets, and President Joe Biden reversed the decision in March 2023. Trump told reporters last month that "we want power blue, not baby blue," referring to the current color of the aircraft. "Everything has its time and place. We'll be changing the colors," Trump added. The Air Force's statement says a third 747-8i Boeing jet will be painted in the same colors. Defense Secretary Pete Hegseth formally accepted a luxury Boeing 747 jet from Qatar last May for use as Air Force One despite questions about the ethics and legality of taking the expensive gift from a foreign nation. Air Force Secretary Troy Meink told lawmakers last June that the security modifications to the jet would cost less than \$400 million but provided no details.

world. (Agency)

French President Emmanuel Macron told a global AI summit in India on Thursday he was determined to ensure safe oversight of the fast-advancing technology. "The message I have come to convey is that what is that we are determined to continue to shape the rules of the game, and to do with our allies such as India," Macron said in New Delhi. "Europe is not blindly focused on regulation -- Europe is a space for innovation and investment, but it is a safe space." The French President also applauded India for playing a key role in democratizing Digital Public Infrastructure. "Ten years ago, a street vendor cannot open a bank account in Mumbai but today he can accept payments online. No address, no papers, no access and today the same vendor accepts payments on his phone. India has built something no other country has built, a digital identity for 1.4 billion people," Macron said. "India built something that no other country in the world has built. A digital identity for 1.4 billion people. A payment system that now processes 20 billion transactions every month. A health infrastructure that has

issued 500 million digital health IDs. Here are the results. They call it the India Stack Open Interoperable Sovereign. That is what this summit is



about. We are clearly at the beginning of a huge acceleration, and you perfectly described it during your interventions," he added.

The French President highlighted that Artificial Intelligence has a key role to play in becoming an enabler for humanity to innovate faster. "Last year when France and India co-hosted the AI Action Summit in Paris, we set a global guiding principle for technologies that would transform our societies and our economies. We say that Artificial Intelligence will be an

enabler for our humanity to innovate faster, to disrupt healthcare, energy, mobility, agriculture, and public services for the good of mankind. Both of us, we do believe in this revolution. AI has become a major field of strategic competition, and big tech got even bigger," he said.

Macron praised India's use of technology to ensure citizen good and said that the future of AI will be for those who combine technology with humanity.

"AI, GPU, chips are now directly translated in geopolitical and macroeconomic terms. Some time for the best, some time for the worst,

I have to say. One year ago, we demonstrated something else. India made a deliberate sovereign choice, SML, small language models. Task-specific, designed to run on a smartphone, India built the first government-funded AI and deployed 38,000 GPUs at the cheapest rates to every startup in the country," he said.

"I started with a story about a street vendor in Mumbai. Ten years ago, the world told India that 1.4 billion people could not be brought into the digital economy.

Man Who Lived For Free In New Yorker Hotel, Claimed To Own It, Admits To Fraud**New York. (Agency)**

A New York City man who attempted to claim ownership of the New Yorker Hotel has pleaded guilty to fraud, ending a lengthy legal saga involving an obscure tenant law that allowed the man to live rent-free for years in the storied Manhattan hotel. Mickey Barreto entered the plea on Wednesday, admitting that he had forged property records in an effort to take ownership over the hotel. That effort was, at least on paper, partially successful. In Barreto's telling, he and his boyfriend paid \$200 in 2018 to rent one of the more than 1,000 rooms in the towering, oft-photographed Art Deco hotel. Barreto then requested a lease, claiming his one-night stay entitled him to protections under a city housing law that applies to single-room occupants of buildings constructed before 1969.

When the hotel rebuffed him, he took his case to housing court. After the hotel



failed to send a lawyer to a key hearing, Barreto was awarded "possession" of the room. But Manhattan prosecutors said Barreto then went a step further, defrauding the state by uploading a fake deed to a city website that purported to transfer ownership of the entire building to himself. The

property is currently owned by the Holy Spirit Association for the Unification of World Christianity, which was founded in South Korea by a self-proclaimed messiah, the late Rev. Sun Myung Moon. The church did not respond to an emailed inquiry. Barreto then attempted to collect rent from a hotel tenant and demanded the hotel's bank transfer its accounts to him, according to prosecutors.

He was eventually evicted from the premises in 2024 and charged with multiple counts of felony fraud. He was later found unfit to stand trial and ordered to undergo psychiatric treatment. As part of the plea, Barreto was sentenced to a six-month prison sentence that he has already served, along with five years of probation, according to a spokesperson for the Manhattan district attorney.

Major US naval, air buildup sets stage for potential Iran war**WASHINGTON. (Agency)**

Iran says it temporarily closed parts of the Strait of Hormuz, the narrow mouth of the Persian Gulf. The move came as semi-official Iranian news agencies reported live fire exercises in the vital waterway, through which 20% of the world's oil passes. The move is a rare, perhaps unprecedented shutdown of the strait, a signal from Iran of the potential fallout to the world economy if the United States goes through with threats to attack it as tensions mount between the two countries. In past times of tension and conflict, Iran has at times harassed shipping through the narrows, and during the 1980s' Iran-Iraq war, both sides attacked tankers and other vessels, using naval mines to completely shut down traffic at points. But Iran has not carried out repeated threats to close the waterway altogether since the 1980s, even during last year's 12-day war when Israel targeted three Iranian nuclear sites during Israel's 12-day campaign of strikes on Iran. The United States has also

Tuesday's closure were not immediately known. Iranian media said it would be for several hours for "safety and maritime concerns." The US military's Central ComShips Washington currently has 13 warships in the Middle East: one aircraft carrier -- the USS Abraham Lincoln -- nine destroyers and three littoral combat ships, with more on the way, according to a US official. The USS Gerald R. Ford -- the world's largest aircraft carrier -- is currently in the Atlantic Ocean en route from the Caribbean to the Middle East, after being ordered there by Trump earlier this month. It is accompanied by three destroyers. It is rare for there to be two US aircraft carriers -- which carry dozens of warplanes and are crewed by thousands of sailors -- in the Middle East. The United States had two of the massive warships in the region in June last year when it targeted three Iranian nuclear sites during Israel's 12-day campaign of strikes on Iran. Aircraft

The United States has also sent a large fleet of aircraft to the Middle East, according to open-source intelligence accounts on X and flight-tracking website Flightradar24. These include F-22 Raptor stealth fighter jets, F-15 and F-16 warplanes, and the KC-135 aerial refueling aircraft that are needed to sustain their operations. On Wednesday, Flightradar24 showed multiple KC-135s flying near or in the Middle East, as well as E3 Sentry airborne warning and control aircraft and cargo planes operating in the region.

Protests, threats, talks

Trump ordered the Lincoln to the Middle

East as Iran cracked down on protests that were initially driven by economic grievances, but which turned into a mass movement against the Islamic republic. The clerical leadership that took power after the 1979 Islamic revolution responded to the demonstrations with deadly force and has held onto power, with many opponents of the system looking to outside intervention as the most likely driver of change. Trump had repeatedly warned Iran that if it killed protesters, the United States would intervene militarily, and also encouraged Iranians to take over state institutions, saying "help is on the way." He pulled back from ordering strikes last month, saying Tehran had halted more than 800 executions under pressure from Washington, but has since renewed threats against Iran. US and Iranian officials held talks in Geneva on Tuesday aimed at averting US military intervention, with Iran saying afterward that they had agreed on "guiding principles" for a deal.



NEWS BOX

Bengaluru to face garbage crisis, villagers block waste trucks

BENGALURU. (Agency)

Bengaluru will face a major garbage crisis as villagers from Bellahalli, which is a landfill site, have stopped 250 garbage compactor trucks, demanding that the promised development projects be taken up in their area. Hemanth Kumar, a resident of Kogilu Cross in the Byatarayanapura Assembly constituency, said that garbage is being dumped near their village for the last 12 years, but no development has taken place. "A huge quarry pit that spreads across Bellahalli, Kannur and Mitganahalli is being used to dump garbage. Villagers here have been made sacrificial lambs to keep Bengaluru garbage-free," he said.

The villagers said an agreement to dump waste here was done when the city was under BBMP, but even after the Greater Bengaluru Authority was formed, there have been no motorable roads, clean drinking water or development of lakes.

"Groundwater and air are heavily polluted in these villages. The villagers had agreed to allow 75 loads of waste daily, but now over 200 truckloads come here. Frustrated with the pollution and lack of development, we have stopped the trucks. There has been no communication from either the GBA or Bengaluru Solid Waste Management officials so far," said Kumar. The dumpsite spreads across Byatarayanapura and Mahadevapura Assembly constituencies.

A Narayanswamy, who is Mitganahalli Congress block president and a resident of Kannur, said borewell water in the area is badly polluted. Kannur, Gubbi and partly Bidarahalli, which fall under the Mahadevapura Assembly constituency, have been impacted. The protest will be intensified in the coming days.

Garbage will be dumped at your houses: Dy CM Shivakumar warns BJP MLAs

BENGALURU. (Agency)

Reacting to the garbage crisis in Bengaluru, Deputy Chief Minister and Bengaluru Development Minister DK Shivakumar on Wednesday said BJP MLAs' non-cooperation has led to the problem and warned that garbage would be dumped in front of their houses.

He said, "Action will be taken against those obstructing garbage disposal, whether they are MLAs or anyone else. They will be dealt with no mercy under the ESMA Act. Loads of garbage will be dumped in front of the houses of MLAs or BJP office," he threatened.

On villagers from Billahalli on the outskirts of the city blocking garbage trucks heading to the landfill near the village, he said, "MLAs are blackmailing the government for funds, while objecting to disposing of waste in their constituencies. Manjula Arvind Limbavali and Doddaballapur MLA Dheeraj Muniraju have blackmailed us. If they keep objecting to the disposal of waste in their constituencies, where do we put the garbage? We will have to send it to the homes of R Ashoka, Vijayendra or the BJP party office." He said blackmailing techniques are being used against the government to get funds for their constituencies. The Greater Bengaluru Authority (GBA) has purchased two more spots for waste disposal and tenders have been called to set up processing plants. "We will decide on this after attending to a few legalities," he added.

Cops 'manhandle' disabled protesters seeking aid hike in Chennai

CHENNAI. (Agency)

Several persons with disabilities (PWDs) were allegedly manhandled by the police during a protest demanding the state government to increase the financial assistance for PWDs, in the intervening night of Tuesday and Wednesday. The incident triggered outrage from activists and political parties.

Among those manhandled was Jhansi Rani, who has locomotor disability, and is also the general secretary of Tamil Nadu Association for the Rights of All Types of Differently Abled and Caregivers (TARATDAC), which organised the protests. She has been admitted to the Rajiv Gandhi Government General Hospital (RGHH) with injuries. She is also the wife of former CPM state general secretary K Balakrishnan.

Following talks with Social Welfare Minister Geetha Jeevan on Wednesday, TARATDAC has temporarily called off the protest after being assured that the financial assistance would be increased once the DMK returns to power after the elections. While Tamil Nadu provides Rs 1,500 to Rs 2,000 per month, Andhra Pradesh offers a minimum of Rs 6,000. TARATDAC has staged protests for six days since February 10, demanding that the financial assistance for PWDs be raised on a par with states such as Andhra Pradesh.

On Tuesday, over 2,000 persons with disabilities staged a protest on Sivananda Salai, after which the police detained them and took them to Rajarathinam Stadium. Association members said that around 7 pm, police asked protesters to board buses, claiming they would be taken to a hall near Anna Nagar for the night.

February 15 elections: Wait for BCA poll results continue as HC reserves verdict on 4 candidates of rival groups

Vadodara. (Agency)

The Baroda Cricket Association (BCA) — an affiliate of the Board of Control for Cricket in India (BCCI) — will have to wait for the results of the elections concluded on February 15 as the Gujarat High Court on Wednesday reserved the verdict in the petitioners challenging the candidature of four candidates of the two rival groups until March 5. The HC, however, granted that the present body of the BCA will continue to be a "caretaker" and not indulge in policy or other important decision making until the final verdict in the case.

The single judge bench of Justice Niral Mehta on Wednesday heard the arguments of both sides for a second consecutive day and reserved the verdict in the matter—based on a petition filed by two members of the BCA challenging the candidature of two members each of the Revival Group and the Royal-Satyamev Jayate group, citing violation of the Supreme Court directions in the case of elections of sports bodies, based on the recommendations of a committee led by Justice RM Lodha. The petition also made BCA election officer, former Gujarat State Election Commissioner Varesh Sinha a respondent, alleging that the official had

"published the final list of candidates without passing any order on objections raised against" the candidature of the four candidates regarding tenure-based disqualification.

On February 13, the HC had granted ad-interim



relief to petitioners challenging the candidature of four members of the two rival groups, directing the BCA to withhold the counting and results of the elections until the disposal of the petition. Accordingly, the elections were held on February 15, as scheduled, but the ballot boxes were sealed and safely stored until the verdict of the court. On Wednesday, noting the submissions of the cricket association that the "tenure of the existing body... could come to

an end on February 19", the court directed an interim administrative arrangement until the judgement is pronounced.

In an Interlocutory Application (IA) order, the High Court said, "The tenure of the existing body shall be treated as having come to an end on its scheduled date and shall not be deemed to have been extended by virtue of this order. However, in order to ensure that there is no administrative vacuum, the present office bearers shall continue only as a caretaker body till a newly elected body assumes the charge."

The order further restricts the existing body to make decisions pertaining to policy, finances, appointments and other important aspects of running the cricket association. The order states, "...the caretaker body shall restrict itself strictly to routine and day-to-day administration and shall not (i) take any major policy decision; (ii) incur non-routine or substantial financial expenditure; (iii) make any appointments, selection or contractual engagement of long term in nature; (iv) alter membership structure; (v) electoral college and/or the Constitution of the Association; and (vi) take any decision which may have the effect of influencing or impacting the election process."

'Wed in Gujarat' campaign: Taking cue from Rajasthan, Gujarat to promote destination weddings in state

Nashik. (Agency)

AFTER the 'Khushboo Gujarat Ki' campaign launched in May 2010 aimed at attracting tourists to the state, the state government is all set to market and promote it as a wedding destination through a campaign titled 'Wed in Gujarat'. Taking cue from neighbouring Rajasthan which has been promoting several cities such as Udaipur and Jaipur for destination weddings, 'Wed in Gujarat' was announced in the state budget for 2026-27 presented in the Legislative Assembly by Finance Minister Kanubhai Desai on Wednesday.

In his budget speech, Desai announced the year 2026 as 'Gujarat Tourism Year'.

Terming 'Wed in Gujarat' an initiative of Deputy Chief Minister Harsh Sanghavi, Kuldeep Arya, Secretary Industries and Mines Department-Tourism, Devasthan Management, Civil Aviation and Pilgrimage, said the idea is not to spend on the locations but its curation and marketing.

"The initial phase with an allocation of Rs 5 crore will involve identification, curation and marketing existing locations as wedding destinations – from coastal areas to forests to Rann desert to historical and heritage locations," Arya told.

"A unique identity of Gujarat as a wedding destination will be created through 'Wed in Gujarat' campaign showcasing the tradition, hospitality and historical grandeur of the state of Gujarat," Desai said in his budget speech.

Sources said that inspiration has also been taken from the neighbouring Rajasthan which gets the government support and has several cities like Udaipur and Jaipur for destination weddings. Further, Madhavpur Ghed near Porbandar, where the marriage of Lord Krishna and Rukmini is believed to have taken place, is also being looked at as a part of the promotional campaign. A five-day Madhavpur Fair is held annually during March and April.

2 Kurar cops land in Maharashtra ACB net while accepting bribe to 'settle' fraud case

Mumbai. (Agency)

The Maharashtra Anti Corruption Bureau (ACB) arrested a senior inspector and a sub-inspector of the Kurar police station Wednesday, while allegedly accepting a bribe of Rs 1 lakh to settle a fraud case. The arrested accused have been identified as Senior Inspector Sanjiv Tawade and Sub Inspector Govindrao Junne. According to the police, the complainant lives in Malad, and a written complaint against him was filed at the Kurar police station, alleging that he defrauded someone.

The senior inspector and the SI were allegedly demanding Rs 3 lakh in exchange for not registering an FIR against him. Earlier, the police officers had allegedly taken a bribe of Rs 2 lakh and demanded an additional Rs 1 lakh. The complainant said he did not want to pay more money, so he approached the ACB and registered a case in the first week of February. The ACB team verified the facts and arrested



the duo red-handed while taking the remaining amount of Rs 1 lakh, said a senior IPS officer in the ACB. Last week, the ACB arrested a Food and Drug Administration (FDA) clerk, Rajendra Dherange, for allegedly accepting a Rs 35,000 bribe on the second floor of Mantralaya on February 12. Apart from the trap amount, the ACB recovered another Rs 43,000

in unaccounted cash in his possession. In September last year, the ACB arrested Senior Inspector Chandrakant Sarode and Sub Inspector Rahul Waghmode of the Wadala TT police station for allegedly accepting a bribe. Sarode was caught accepting Rs 2 lakh, while Waghmode was arrested for taking Rs 30,000. The complainant in the case had a fight with a rival group in Wadala over the use of their community hall. Both sides came to the Wadala TT police station, where an FIR was registered against the complainant. Sarode allegedly demanded Rs 5 lakh, while Waghmode demanded Rs 50,000 for not naming the complainant's daughter in the FIR and for not taking action against the rival group. Not wanting to make the payment, the complainant approached ACB, which verified the complaint and found it to be genuine.

BMC imposes penalty of Rs 50 lakh on GMLR project contractor for delay in works

However, the officials maintained that following an inspection it was revealed that the appointed contractor is yet to complete a substantial portion of the pending works.

Mumbai. (Agency)

THE B R I H A N M U M B A I Municipal Corporation (BMC) has imposed a fine of Rs 50 lakh on a contractor executing the first phase of the Goregaon Mulund Link Road (GMLR) project for delaying the ongoing construction works. The BMC's ambitious Rs 14,000 crore GMLR project is set to connect Goregaon in Mumbai's western suburbs with Mulund in the eastern suburbs, through an array of bridges and tunnel passing from beneath the Sanjay Gandhi National Park (SGNP).



At present, there is no direct connectivity between these two suburban belts in Mumbai.

According to the civic officials, the first phase of the project was supposed to be finished by May this year. This phase will involve construction of a 1.2 km long

flyover that originate near the Dindoshi court and will end at Sanjay Gandhi National Park (SGNP). After getting down from the flyover, the motorists will be able to enter the twin tunnels directly. However, the officials maintained that following an

work was being carried out at a very slow pace for which a penalty of Rs 50 lakh have been imposed on the appointed contractor," said a civic official. Further, the official added that the deadline of the first phase remain unchanged and the bridge will be

opened for public by May this year. The flyover will have six vehicular lanes along with an elevated rotary or circular intersection that is being constructed on a raised platform. Further, the authorities have also said that walkways will be constructed on two sides of the bridge along with deck slabs.

The officials added that once the bridge is ready, it will provide motorists direct access between Dindoshi and SGNP. Once the tunnels are ready, vehicles will get direct access to the tunnel from the bridge.

Court stays open warrant issued against 'gangster' Kumar Pillai

Ahmedabad. (Agency)

Days after a special court ordered repatriation of alleged gangster Kumar Pillai, another court stayed the open warrant issued against him last month till February 23. The Mumbai Police informed the court on Wednesday that it is seeking clarification on where Pillai, who was extradited from Singapore in 2016, is to be repatriated.

While Pillai was directed to be sent to Hong Kong, of which he is a citizen, by the special court in Mumbai on February 13, the police have sought clarification if he should be sent to Hong Kong or Singapore.

"Learned special public prosecutor and the Sr. PI (senior police inspector) submitted that the process in respect of repatriation of the applicant is in process as per the order passed by Special Court, MCOC Act dated, 13.02.2026. However, some clarification in respect of repatriation of the applicant either to Singapore or Hong Kong has been sought from the concerned Court and requested to postpone this matter till 23.02.2026," the court noted.

Pillai's lawyer sought a stay on the open warrant issued against him till then. The court then stayed the warrant till the next date, February 23. The special court on February 13 ordered the Commissioner of Mumbai Police to take necessary steps to repatriate him to Hong Kong. Pillai had filed another plea before a sessions court seeking that an open warrant issued against him on January 19 be stayed.

Pillai had told court that since the warrant was sought in a case which was not part of the cases given to Singapore authorities for his extradition, a warrant cannot be issued against him.

The court had heard arguments on the plea by the police and Pillai. Before the order was pronounced, however, another court ordered his repatriation.

Pillai's lawyer then again submitted to the court that with the repatriation order, the warrant should be stayed or cancelled. The court will hear the Mumbai police on Monday on the clarification it has received about Pillai's repatriation status.

Back-to-school blues: Primary education enrollment rates drop in Gujarat

Ahmedabad. (Agency)

THE SOCIO Economic Review(SER) of Gujarat for the year 2025-26 revealed that primary education saw a drop in both the Gross Enrollment Ratio (GER) as well as the Net Enrollment Ratio (NER) in 2023-24 as compared to the last decade of 2014-15.

The SER, which presents a profile of key socio-economic activities and achievements in different sectors of the state economy for the year 2024-25, was released by the Gujarat government on Wednesday.

The GER which measures the total student enrollment at a specific education level and NER which measures the percentage of children in the official age group for a specific education level are key metrics, used to assess student participation and the efficiency of a school system. Lower values in GER and NER usually signal critical gaps in accessibility and educational progression. In 2014-15, the total GER was 102.40 (102.85 for boys and 101.96 for girls) while the NER was 98.29 (98.68 for boys and 97.9 for girls).

Till 2022-23 the GER remained over 100 per cent. Similarly, the NER hovered above 99 per cent. However, in 2023-24, the GER dropped to 94.44 per cent (93.25 for boys and 95.83 for girls) while the NER declined to 93.21 (91.93 for boys and 94.71 for girls).

Officials who spoke to claimed that the drop is due to the entry level age of children increasing from 5 to 6.

"Though, the 6-year minimum age for Class I admission was declared in the year 2020-21, it was implemented in Gujarat from June 2023-24. Aligning with the National Education Policy (NEP) 2020, the mandate stipulates that children are already 6 years old on or before June 1 of the academic year for which they are applying," a senior government official said.

The official added, "To assist children who fell short, the state government introduced special Balvatika (pre-primary) sections for the academic session 2023-24. All those who failed to meet the age criteria were shifted to

Balvatikas."Sources further revealed that against an average admission of 11 lakh children in Class I in Gujarat, the Class I enrollment was recorded as nearly 3 lakh in



the year 2023-24. The remaining children (around 8 lakh) were admitted to Balvatikas. "This gap will continue for another five years," the official added. In the last five years, the number of primary schools in Gujarat went down from 45,023 (2020-21) to

43,968 (2024-25) with the number of girls-only schools dropping from 1330 to 1216. The report revealed that urban areas saw more decline in the number of primary schools as compared to rural areas.

The number of Primary schools in cities saw a major decline with schools funded by local bodies declining from 31,140 in 2020-21 to 30,459 in 2024-25.

Consequently the total enrollment in primary schools declined in these five years falling from 84,65 lakh in the year 2020-21 to 77.6 lakh in 2024-25. Enrollment of female students declined from 39.80 lakh to 36.43 lakh within this time period.

Enrollment of students in secondary schools saw a drop as well. While the total number of secondary and higher secondary schools in Gujarat increased from 12,709 in 2022-21 to 13,167 in 2024-25, the total number of students dropped from 28.43 lakh to 28 lakh.

AI Summit: India should strive for intelligence that works for every citizen reliably

As leaders, military scholars, diplomats and industry representatives gather in New Delhi for the AI Summit, it should not be mistaken for a conclave of coders speaking a language only machines understand. For many of us, myself included, it can seem difficult to grasp what will be discussed and how it affects daily life. Yet AI is no longer confined to laboratories or technology parks. It's becoming an invisible assistant in governance, security, disaster response, business and even the household. The real question is not whether India can build powerful algorithms but whether digital intelligence can serve every citizen. At its simplest, AI is about experiential learning. Just as a seasoned commander reads terrain or a farmer reads the sky before rain, AI studies patterns in large volumes of data, recognises trends and anticipates what may come next. When woven into governance, it allows the State to act early.

India generates vast streams of information—on crops, rainfall, health, transport and markets. AI connects these fragments, helping detect distress, trigger timely medical response and improve emergency response time. The result is not abstract efficiency, but a smoother daily life.

This is where the ordinary citizen begins to see value. When shortages are anticipated, supply chains are adjusted before shelves empty. When disease trends are detected early, clinics prepare in time. When city services are monitored intelligently, breakdowns are prevented rather than repaired after causing inconvenience.

Intelligence becomes a shared national asset. In the security sphere, AI acts as a force multiplier. India's security challenges span land, sea, air and cyberspace. Modern surveillance systems generate more information than human teams can process quickly. Machine-learning systems help sift through that volume, identify unusual patterns and highlight potential threats. They do not replace judgement; they assist it. Information mapping on geographic information system maps—layer by layer—helps in crisis prevention and management.

For the forces, this means sharper intelligence assessments and faster decisions. Equipment can be serviced before failure because predictive systems identify stress patterns. Fire control becomes more precise through simulation and learning. Logistics can be streamlined. Yet one principle must remain clear: machines support, but humans decide. Ethical oversight and human responsibility cannot be delegated.

Beyond security, AI may have its most visible impact in disaster management. India regularly faces cyclones, floods, earthquakes and heatwaves. Early warnings already exist, but AI refines them. By combining satellite imagery, weather data, river levels and historical records, predictions become more local and more reliable. Evacuations can be planned calmly rather than in panic. Relief resources can be positioned before landfall. Structural vulnerabilities in bridges or buildings can be identified before collapse. Quiet prevention saves more lives than dramatic rescue. AI also has a role in protecting social stability. Misinformation can spread rapidly in a connected society. AI systems can detect unusual spikes in coordinated messaging, alert authorities and enable timely clarification. The objective is not censorship but preparedness. In a diverse democracy, preventing avoidable tension is itself a form of national strength. The transformation extends into everyday life. A farmer can receive advice based on soil conditions and weather forecasts. A student in a remote village can access lessons in her own language. A local health worker can use AI-supported tools to detect disease early. Small businesses can forecast demand, manage inventory and grow digitally. For women managing households or small enterprises, intelligent systems can simplify budgeting, marketing and access to government schemes. Knowledge once limited by geography becomes widely available.

Our National Anthem embodies the idea of India

Govt order giving precedence to Vande Mataram over Jana Gana Mana is unsettling

THE National Anthem's primacy is not a formality; it is the Republic's deliberate choice to assert unity without erasing diversity. The Union government's January 28 directive does not amend the anthem itself but changes its established placement in relation to the National Song, thereby unsettling a long-standing constitutional settlement. The directive requires Vande Mataram to precede the anthem at official events. It further mandates that all six verses of the song be sung at attention before Jana Gana Mana, effectively overriding the Constituent Assembly's decision to adopt only its first two verses for official use. This approach disregards Article 51A of the Constitution, which accords primacy to the National Anthem. Added later as part of the Fundamental Duties, Article 51A(a) obliges citizens "to abide by the Constitution and respect its ideals and institutions, the National Flag and the National Anthem," with no mention of the National Song. The Prevention of Insults to National Honour Act, 1971, further extended statutory protection specifically to the anthem, prescribing penalties for acts of disrespect. Together, these constitutional and legislative choices embedded the anthem within the Republic's legal framework in a way Vande Mataram was not intended to occupy.

That hierarchy was never incidental or informal; it was deliberately established in 1950, reflecting the Constituent Assembly's conscious decision to define the order of national symbols and the anthem's place in the life of the new nation. At the time of Independence, the Constituent Assembly considered three stirring compositions — Jana Gana Mana, Vande Mataram and Saare Jahan Se Achha — before narrowing the choice to the first two. Vande Mataram, originating in Bankim Chandra Chattopadhyay's 1882 novel Anandamath and set to music by Rabindranath Tagore, had been a powerful song in praise of the freedom struggle. Yet, the Assembly, mindful of the Republic's constitutional commitment to secularism and equal citizenship, recognised a fundamental tension. While the opening stanzas evoke the motherland in broadly civic terms, the later verses present Bharat Mata as a Hindu goddess — an image that many felt was difficult to reconcile with a State pledged to equal belonging for citizens of every faith. Accordingly, the Constituent Assembly made a distinction between the anthem and the song, assigning them different constitutional status. Significantly, this distinction had been made by none other than

Rabindranath Tagore himself. In doing so, the Assembly honoured Vande Mataram's emotive role in the freedom struggle while reserving primacy for the composition that most fully embodied the plural and inclusive imagination of the new Republic. This dual recognition acknowledged historical sentiment while assigning constitutional priority to the anthem deemed most compatible with the Republic's secular and federal character. On January 24, 1950, the Constituent Assembly formally adopted Jana Gana Mana as the National Anthem. Its prescribed 52-second rendition has since served as a daily reminder of India's sovereignty,

significance. The decision of the Constitution's framers was also philosophical. They chose civic nationalism over cultural majoritarianism, fully aware that national symbols can both unify and exclude. The distinction between the anthem and the song was substantive, not cosmetic. It reflected a constitutional framework premised on equal citizenship rather than majoritarian impulses or cultural homogeneity.

That constitutional choice is reflected not only in the anthem's status but also in its form. Compared with many other national anthems, India's choice remains distinctive. Numerous anthems foreground martial

struggle or revolutionary violence, but Jana Gana Mana does not. Instead, it is structured as an invocation of unity across regions and linguistic communities. That structural character made it particularly suited to a federal democracy marked by deep and enduring diversity. The anthem's roll call of regions distils the Constitution's logic of unity without erasure, embodying an India that is diverse, inclusive and indivisible.

The present administrative reordering must be assessed against this constitutional background. The government guideline effects a substantive rearrangement of constitutional symbols, underscored by the sequence that places Vande Mataram first. Yet, the Constituent Assembly singled out the National

Anthem for explicit priority. Administrative alteration of that order is, therefore, not a neutral exercise. It reopens the very concern that led the Assembly to limit the text of the National Song and fix the hierarchy of the two symbols in the first place. The compromise of 1950 was born of debate, dissent and deliberation. It reflected a clear recognition that India's strength lies in its multiplicity. To unsettle that balance through an executive order is to subordinate a foundational constitutional settlement to the proclivities of a regime and the calculus of electoral politics. When we stand for Jana Gana Mana, we do not stand for a melody alone. We stand for the constitutional idea of India that the Republic belongs equally to all who inhabit it. To diminish that idea, whether symbolically or substantively, is to constrain the expansive vision it embodies. It reopens debates that the framers of the Constitution resolved decisively in favour of pluralism.

Assam CM Sarma's speeches: SC shows restraint in a charged poll climate

Allegations of hate speech by a CM from the ruling party raise questions about equal application of the law and the perception of accountability

THE Supreme Court's refusal to entertain petitions seeking an FIR and a Special Investigation Team probe against Assam Chief Minister Himanta Biswa Sarma comes at a politically sensitive moment. Assam is moving into an election season where rhetoric sharpens, identities harden and the stakes for those in power rise considerably. The petitions alleged that a series of public remarks by the CM amounted to hate speech against a minority community. The SC declined to intervene directly, advising petitioners to approach the high court. On the face of it, the decision reflects institutional discipline. The SC has repeatedly stressed that it cannot be converted into a court of first instance for politically charged disputes, particularly when high courts are empowered to examine facts, evidence and criminal liability. But timing and context also matter. Sarma is not

only a powerful regional leader; he belongs to the BJP,



which governs at the Centre. He is a key strategist for the BJP in the North-East. In an election-bound atmosphere, allegations of hate speech by a CM from the ruling party inevitably raise questions about equal application of the law and the perception of accountability. Courts may insist on proper legal routes, but public confidence depends equally on visible impartiality in enforcement. The court's refusal does not amount to an endorsement of the speeches under challenge. Nor does it exclude legal scrutiny. It merely shifts the battleground to the high court. Our constitutional framework allows robust political speech, but it also places a higher responsibility on those in public office. Election campaigns are not a licence to stretch the limits of legality. Judicial restraint must coexist with institutional vigilance, especially when the speaker is powerful and the moment electorally charged.

From talent source to study hub

There is a troubling imbalance clouding India's pitch for a compelling higher education destination. While India has the scale and intellectual resources, global branding largely remains absent. Policy clarity is required to view international students not just as an afterthought

For decades, the story of Indian higher education has been shaped as much by what happens beyond the country's borders as by what unfolds within its classrooms. Studying abroad has come to symbolise aspiration, mobility and success, often accompanied by immense family sacrifice. From middle-class households stretching finances to pay overseas tuition to record-breaking visa numbers, sending children abroad has become a benchmark of educational achievement. However, this outward flow masks an uncomfortable reality: while India is one of the world's largest exporters of students, it remains a weak magnet for global talent.

A close look at the numbers reveals that this imbalance is not just stark but also persistent. According to the latest Niti Aayog report, for every international student who chose to study in India in 2021, around 25 Indian students went abroad. That year alone, outbound numbers climbed to 11.5 lakh, while inbound enrolments hovered at 45-50,000. In fact, student mobility data between 2016 and 2022 shows little structural change in incoming numbers, even as outbound figures steadily increased. In 2019, for instance, a relatively normal pre-pandemic year, 6.75 lakh Indian students left to study overseas, while only slightly above 47,000 international students arrived in India. It's a troubling paradox. India's place in the global education landscape clearly exposes the imbalance. For all its population size, English-language advantage and academic heritage, the country attracts under one percent of the world's internationally mobile students. Quite worryingly, this places India far behind major destinations such as the US, the UK, Australia and China. These countries fare much better, not simply because they have strong universities, but also because they have coherent strategies that actively position higher education as a global service sector.



Besides, the destinations Indian students are choosing are revealing. They are concentrated in a small group of countries, led by Canada and the US, followed by the UK, Australia and Germany. This points to a clear pattern. Students are not simply chasing academic prestige; they are responding to education systems that offer international recognition, predictable academic pathways, and post-study work and migration opportunities. India, by contrast, has struggled to present a compelling global proposition. Its internationally ranked universities remain limited in number and concentrated in elite clusters. Curriculums often do not align smoothly with international credit systems or interdisciplinary frameworks. Institutional processes can be painfully slow and even fragmented. The result is obvious. Global branding remains weak, with Indian

universities largely absent from international recruitment platforms. To make things worse, student support systems such as housing, career counselling and integration services are uneven and underdeveloped in most institutions. Above all, internationalisation has rarely been treated as a central mission—often remaining peripheral, symbolic or episodic.

The consequences of this imbalance are not merely symbolic. Every Indian student studying abroad represents a financial outflow of tuition fees, living expenses and long-term economic contributions. Host countries gain not only in revenue but also through greater campus diversity, stronger research capacity and workforce participation. International students also bring cultural and intellectual exchange that enriches academic ecosystems. India's failure to attract such

students at scale means forfeiting these benefits while reinforcing its image as a source of talent rather than a destination for learning.

Let's also not forget the deeper cost that we are forced to pay because of this lacuna. Ironically, that is something not many wish to talk about. Campuses that remain largely inward-looking risk intellectual insularity, especially at a time when knowledge production is increasingly global. Today, exposure to diverse perspectives, academic cultures and research practices is no longer optional; it's central to competitiveness. And, without international students, Indian universities will struggle to fully integrate into global academic networks. Of course, none of this is irrevocable. India has the scale, linguistic accessibility and intellectual resources to reposition itself as a higher education hub. Recent policy reforms, including those linked to the National Education Policy and opening up to foreign universities to operate in India, point in the right direction. Projections suggest that with sustained and coordinated reforms, India can attract 3-11 lakh international students by 2047. But incremental change will not be enough. Internationalisation demands strategic investment in infrastructure, regulatory clarity, curriculum innovation and global outreach. It requires treating international students not as an afterthought but as an integral part of the future of Indian higher education. In short, in an era of global talent mobility, India cannot afford to remain inward-looking. Either the country continues to excel at exporting students while remaining largely invisible on the global student map, or it commits to building universities that attract learners from around the world. How India responds will shape not only its education system but also its place in the global knowledge economy for decades to come.

Allahabad High Court seeks law to enforce ban on 'Chinese Manjha'

Lucknow.(Agency)

The Allahabad High Court's Lucknow bench has taken a tough stance against the manufacture, sale, and use of "Chinese manjha," observing that government orders alone are insufficient to curb the menace and that a proper legal framework must be enacted. A division bench comprising Justices Rajan Roy and A.K. Chaudhary issued the direction while hearing a public interest litigation (PIL) filed by advocate Motilal Yadav on Wednesday.

The court emphasised that a comprehensive statutory ban is necessary to effectively prohibit lead-coated and nylon manjhas, commonly referred to as Chinese manjha. The bench warned that if the sale and use of such dangerous thread continues unchecked, the state government could be held liable to compensate victims. The court directed the state government to file a reply affidavit for the next hearing on March 11 and made it clear that failure to take effective steps may prompt the court to consider ordering compensation.

During the hearing, petitioner Motilal Yadav informed the court that approximately ten people were injured or killed by such fishnets in February alone. In response, the state government cited government orders issued on October 9 and 10 imposing a complete ban.

The government also argued that these were synthetic manjha and were mislabelled as "Chinese Manjha," creating the impression that they were imported from China. However, the court was unconvinced. The court said, "Whenever incidents of serious injury or death from such thread occur, and they become media headlines, only then do the authorities become active. File a new affidavit and enact a law prohibiting the manufacture, sale, and use of such thread. Submit a proposal to implement the legal provisions."

HP: 30 lakh dupe in fake IPO scam

Shimla.(Agency)

The rising incidence of cyber fraud is taking a heavy toll on the hard-earned money of ex-serviceman in Himachal Pradesh. In a recent case, a victim was duped of Rs 30 lakh in a fake IPO investment scam.

State Deputy Inspector General (DIG) Rohit Malpani stated that a preliminary investigation has been initiated to unearth the scam and identify those involved.

According to SHO of Cyber Police Station in Mandi FIR is registered on February 17 against unknown persons who posed as agents of "Wealth Alliance" and the "Indian Sarv Thinking Group." The fraudsters operated through the Telegram platform, where they lured the victim into joining an investment group. They persuaded him to download a mobile application and invest money in an alleged IPO deal.

The victim transferred Rs 15 lakh and Rs 14 lakh in two instalments. However, when he attempted to withdraw the invested amount, the accused demanded an additional Rs 12 lakh as a processing fee. Realising he had been cheated, the victim approached the police and registered a complaint after failing to recover his money for nearly a month.

Annual budget of ₹5.71 crore passed for Baba Balak Nath Temple Trust Shahtalai in Bilaspur

Shahtalai (HP).(Agency)

A meeting of the Baba Balak Nath Temple Trust Shahtalai was held on Thursday under the chairmanship of Commissioner Baba Balak Nath Temple Trust Shahtalai and Deputy Commissioner Bilaspur Rahul Kumar.

The meeting unanimously approved an annual budget of ₹5.71 crore for the year 2026-27. The meeting decided to spend ₹2.85 crore for developmental works.

Additionally, a provision has been made to spend ₹0.4 lakh on various arrangements for the successful organisation of Baba Balak Nath's Chaitra fair. ₹7 lakh has been allocated for financial assistance and ₹5.5 lakh for annual repairs. A budget provision of ₹256,650,000 was made under the non-plan head.

Shahtalai is the place where Baba Balak Nath had done meditation for a long time and had met Mata Ratno, who had offered him food and lassi during his tapasya. And that is why, people first visit this place on the way to visit the cave of Baba Balak Nath at Deotsidh in the Hamirpur district located about five kilometers from Shahtalai atop the Dhauligiri hillocks of Shivalikas. During the meeting, Rahul Kumar directed the establishment of a modern command and control center modeled on the Shri Naina Devi Temple complex to further strengthen crowd management, security, and other arrangements.

Moga rally, misuse of power & audio clip: How bureaucrats-Opp spared in AAP rule

With the Opposition baying for the officers, Congress leader Sukhjinder Singh Randhawa escalated the matter to the Centre and accused the officers of sharing a political stage with the AAP leadership.

Chandigarh. (Agency)

Punjab's two topmost officers Chief Secretary KAP Sinha and Director General of Police Gaurav Yadav have landed in the Opposition's crosshairs, triggering a fresh political storm in the state as the ruling Aam Aadmi Party (AAP) Monday's maharaj on Yudh Nashe De Virudh in Moga snowballed into a controversy.

With the Opposition baying for the officers, Congress leader Sukhjinder Singh Randhawa escalated the matter to the Centre and accused the officers of sharing a political stage with the AAP leadership. Randhawa has written a letter to the Department of Personnel and Training (DOPT), Government of India.

The Moga rally was planned by the government as part of its ongoing campaign against drugs — a flagship plank of the AAP

administration. The chief guest was AAP national convener Arvind Kejriwal. Besides the speeches of Kejriwal, Chief Minister Bhagwant

the rally had party banners and political speeches.

The Opposition argued that what was presented as an official function was actually a political rally. They said the officers' roles should "not have been partisan". Randhawa, in his letter, contended that All India Services (AIS) officers are bound by conduct rules mandating political neutrality and prohibit them from associating with partisan platforms.

Meanwhile, the AAP has not defended the officers formally but has tried to portray it as a "non-issue". An AAP spokesperson, requesting anonymity, said, "Internally, it is being believed that the Opposition had no issue to raise against the AAP. They found a handle in the speech of these officers... (who) were just informing the public about the initiative."



Mann and other AAP leaders, KAP Sinha and Gaurav Yadav also addressed the masses on the government's initiative against drugs. However,

CRS authorised train operations in the newly constructed Murkongselek-Sille section of the Murkongselek-Pasighat New Rail Project

The Sikh Times

Maligaon, 19th February: The Commissioner of Railway Safety (CRS), Northeast Frontier Circle, Shri Sumeet Singh has authorised operation of trains in the Murkongselek – Sille (15.70 Km) newly laid BG line section on 12th & 13th February, 2026. After successful inspection and speed trials, the CRS has approved train operations on the route at a maximum permissible speed of 110 KMPH, paving the way for enhanced connectivity in the region. This section is a part of the ongoing 26.15 km long new rail line project between Murkongselek and Pasighat, a key infrastructure initiative aimed at further strengthening rail connectivity to Arunachal Pradesh. The 26.15 km long Murkongselek – Pasighat new railway line runs from Murkongselek in Assam to Pasighat in Arunachal Pradesh. This newly laid line will be helpful for carrying more freight and passenger traffic through this route in the near future. The project features three newly developed stations viz Sille, Labo and Pasighat along with 27 major bridges. The capital of Arunachal Pradesh was connected to the

national broad-gauge railway network with gauge map for the first time. Passenger



the commissioning of a new line from Harmuti to the Naharlagun railway station on 29th March 2014. This milestone brought the capital city of Arunachal Pradesh, Itanagar onto India's broad-

services on the Harmuti – Naharlagun route commenced on 07th April 2014, marking a major boost in regional connectivity. Further strengthening this link, the Naharlagun–New Delhi AC Express was

introduced on 22nd February 2015, providing Arunachal Pradesh with its first direct rail connection to the national capital. The Murkongselek – Pasighat New Railway Line Project will significantly enhance connectivity between Arunachal Pradesh, Assam and the rest of the country. Once completed, the new line will extend long-distance rail connectivity up to Pasighat through the Rangiya – Murkongselek route and via the Bogibeel Bridge, linking the region more efficiently with major destinations. This improved rail network will help reduce travel time and transportation costs for both passengers and goods, while ensuring a more reliable and uninterrupted supply of essential commodities. It will also enhance mobility and overall convenience for residents by providing long-distance rail access directly to local hubs such as Rangiya and Murkongselek. Moreover, better connectivity is expected to encourage the growth of small-scale industries, promote regional trade and boost economic development by supporting tourism and helping position Arunachal Pradesh as an emerging tourism hub.

When children sweat it out on field & bring home medals, there will be no need for any anti-drug campaign: CM Mann

Contd.....Front page

He added that the government has successfully organised three seasons of "Khedan Watan Punjab Diyan" in which three generations of a family are seen participating. "Due to strenuous efforts of the state government, Punjab today leads the country in sports and the captains of key Indian teams are from Punjab," he said. Reiterating the Punjab government's war against drugs, CM Bhagwant Singh Mann said, "The Punjab government has unleashed a 'Yudh Nashe De Virudh' in Punjab and sports are the biggest weapon in this fight." He added that stadiums are being constructed in every village across Punjab and said it is a matter of immense pride and satisfaction that children are bringing glory to Punjab and the nation by bagging medals at national and international events. Describing the Kila Raipur Games as a reflection of rural culture and heritage, CM Bhagwant Singh Mann said, "It is heartening that the Punjab government has revived this heritage." Calling it a historic occasion, he said the games are popular globally and noted that there had been a long-standing demand for the resumption of bullock cart races. He said, "We are witnessing historic moments. People have deep affection for their bulls and raise them like their own sons." CM Bhagwant Singh Mann said that the Punjab Government is organizing the Rural Olympics 2026 for the third consecutive year at Grewal Stadium in Kila Raipur and added that bullock cart races, the main attraction of this fair, have resumed after 13 years. Referring to legislative measures, CM Bhagwant Singh Mann said, "On July 11, 2025, the 'Prevention of Cruelty to Animals (Punjab Amendment) Act, 2025' was unanimously passed in the Punjab Vidhan Sabha, paving the way for the resumption of bullock cart races." He added that after the law was passed, a grand event was organised by heritage sports enthusiasts on July 29, 2025, at village Mehma Singh Wala in Ludhiana. "Bullock cart races reflect our rural heritage and keep us connected to our culture and traditions. This is the revival of traditional sports," he said. Underscoring cultural continuity, CM Bhagwant Singh Mann said, "Bulls are an integral part of the cultural heritage of the state and the first Sikh Guru, Sri Guru Nanak Dev Ji, spent a long time farming with bulls at Kartarpur Sahib." He added that when the law banning bull races was enforced, it dealt a major blow to heritage sports lovers and damaged the traditional sports legacy. "This sports fair is a living picture of Punjabi culture, where one can witness the vibrant spirit of Punjab through sports like wrestling, dancing, and singing," he said. Recalling the legacy associated with the event, Bhagwant

Singh Mann said that legendary hockey players like Dhyan Chand, Balbir Singh, Udhampur Singh, Prithipal Singh, Ajitpal Singh and Surjeet Singh have showcased their talent at this event. He added that top athletes from across the country including Milkha Singh, Makhan Singh, Praduman Singh, Gurbachan Singh Randhawa and Parveen Kumar have also run on this track. Tracing its origins, he said the dream of building this stadium was envisioned in 1933 under the patronage of Sardar Inder Singh, when the Grewal Education Society and Grewal Sports Association were formed. He said that the first wrestling matches were held here in 1933 and in 1942 chariot races began on this ground, which evolved into bullock cart races in 1950 after removing the canopies from the chariots. "Along with bullock cart races, athletics events also began in this stadium which inspired several generations to excel in sports," he said, adding that in 1964 girls' athletics events were started here, making it the first rural stadium to introduce girls' athletics. CM Bhagwant Singh Mann said that the games, which began in 1933, are now popularly known as the "Mini Olympics" or "Rural Olympics" and even the President of India has attended them in the past. Emphasising communal harmony and unity in villages, he

development. Addressing the demands of villagers, Bhagwant Singh Mann announced a slew of development works. He said the village circular road will be widened at a cost of ₹1.5 crore, the village cooperative society will be revived, the village pond will be developed on the Seechewal Model at a cost of ₹35 lakh, the village library will be upgraded at a cost of ₹10 lakh and ₹2 crore will be spent on construction of a six-a-side hockey astroturf. He added that the Dehlon to Pakhowal road will be renovated at a cost of ₹30 crore and work will begin soon, and that floodlights will be installed in the stadium.

PUBLIC NOTICE

Notice is hereby given to the General Public that Mr. Lalit Kumar S/o Mr. Dinesh in respect of Plot of area measuring 50 Sq. Yards, out of Khasra No. 110, situated at Green city in the Village Chirodi, Pargana and Tehsil Loni, District Loni, Ghaziabad, UP, by virtue of Regd. GPA dated 28/01/2022 and ATS and Will, executed by Mrs. Khus Nisha W/o Mr. Yusuf and said property to be sold to Mr. Lalit Kumar S/o Mr. Dinesh and same to be finance by Gruhini Housing Finance Limited, General public hereby informed that if anybody has any charge/interest/title in the said property or any kind of dispute kindly inform the undersigned in writing on the below mentioned address within 07 days of the present.

Rahul Raj, Advocate, SGRS Associates LLP, B-01, Plot no. 20, Koushambari near HDFC Bank, U.P.

E-MAIL: sgrsassociatesllp@gmail.com Ph: 0120-4968888, 813030204.

PUBLIC NOTICE

Notice is hereby given to the General Public that Mr. Awadheesh Kumar Dubey S/o Mr. Shital Prasad Dubey in respect of Second Floor, without roof/terrace rights, Built on Property No. 61, New No. A. 199, Gali No. 8, area measuring 40 Sq. Yds., out of Khasra No. 112/15, situated in the area of Village Palam, Delhi state, colony known as Madhu Vihar Part-1, New Delhi-110098, by virtue of Part-1, New Delhi-110098, by virtue of Notarized GPA dated 27.01.2025, ATS and Will, executed by Mrs. Khus Nisha W/o Mr. Yusuf and said property to be sold to Mr. Radhika Devi and same to be finance by SMFG India Home Finance Limited, General public hereby informed that if anybody has any charge/interest/title in the said property or any kind of dispute kindly inform the undersigned in writing on the below mentioned address within 07 days of the present.

Rahul Raj, Advocate, SGRS Associates LLP, B-01, Plot no. 20, Koushambari near HDFC Bank, U.P.

E-MAIL: sgrsassociatesllp@gmail.com Ph: 0120-4968888, 813030204.

PUBLIC NOTICE

It is for general information that I, Dukka Laxmi Narayan Reddy S/o Dukka Nookayya Reddy R/o J-2/104A Ground Floor, Dda Flats, Kalkaji, South Delhi, Delhi-110019 declare that name of mine, my wife and my minor daughter has been wrongly written as D. Laxmi Narayan Reddy and D. Prasanna Reddy in my minor daughter Dukka Prasanna Reddy aged 12 years in his School Records. The actual name of mine, my wife and my minor daughter are Dukka Laxmi Narayan Reddy, Dukka Dhanya Reddy and Dukka Prasanna Reddy.

PUBLIC NOTICE

It is for general information that I, Ashish S/o Ratan Kumar Jha R/o H.No-B-223, Street No-1, Pradhan Wali Gali, Johri Pur, North East, Delhi-110094 declare that name of my father and my mother has been wrongly written as Ratan Kumar and Saroj in my 10th and 12th Class Educational Documents. The actual name of my father and my mother are Ratan Kumar Jha and Saroj Jha.

PUBLIC NOTICE

It is for general information that I, SATYAKRISHNA CHOUHAN D/o BANWARILAL CHOUHAN EX. Wife of GHAN SHYAM R/o D-36, ANAND VIHAR NAGALI, New Delhi-110043 declare that I got divorce from my husband vide Court Decree No. HMA No. 192/2018 dated 25-06-2024. Further I have change the name of my minor Son VAIDURYA GAUR aged 14 years and he shall hereafter be known as VIVEK.

PUBLIC NOTICE

It is for general information that I, I. UMESH KUMAR S/o KARTAR SINGH R/o Ganga Ram Panna, Kairi, South West Delhi, Delhi - 110043 have changed the name of my minor son JAI aged 13 years and he shall hereafter be known as JAI KUMAR.

PUBLIC NOTICE

I, PREETI W/O SUNNY SHARMA R/o G-3428, GALI NO-16, PUSTAKA-5, SONIA VIHAR, KARAWAL NAGAR, DIST. NORTH EAST DELHI-110094 have changed the name of my minor daughter NAVYA alias NAYRASHMA aged 8 years and she shall hereafter be known as NAYRA SHARMA.

PUBLIC NOTICE

I, SHASHANK MOHAN GAUR S/o HARI MOHAN GAUR R/o S - 56, Kensington Park Plots - 1, Jaypee Green Wistow, Noida, PO : Mohan Singh Nagar, Dist : Gautam Buddha Nagar, Uttar Pradesh - 201304 have changed the name of my minor Son VAIDURYA GAUR aged 13 Years and he shall hereafter be known as VAIDURYA GAUR.

PUBLIC NOTICE

I hitherto known as JYOTI RANI alias JYOTI D/o CHETAN DAS W/o NARESH R/o J - 21 , Block - J , Krishna Vihar , North East Delhi , Delhi - 110086 have changed my name and shall hereafter be known as BABLU.

PUBLIC NOTICE

I hitherto known as RAJU GAHLOT S/o MADAN LAL GAHLOT R/o 200, Street - No. 2, Haiderpur, Shalimar Bagh, North West Delhi, Delhi-110088 have changed my name and shall hereafter be known as VIKRAMJEET GAHLOT.

PUBLIC NOTICE

I, SATYAKRISHNA CHOUHAN D/o BANWARILAL CHOUHAN EX. Wife of GHAN SHYAM R/o D-36, ANAND VIHAR NAGALI, New Delhi-110043 declare that I got divorce from my husband vide Court Decree No. HMA No. 192/2018 dated 25-06-2024. Further I have change the name of my minor Son VAIDURYA GAUR aged 14 years and he shall hereafter be known as VIVEK.

Brajesh Pathak hosts 101 brahmin students

Lucknow.(Agency)

Uttar Pradesh Deputy Chief Minister Brajesh Pathak is nowadays in the news for his support to Shankaracharya Avimuktешwaranand and Brahmins.

Pathak though remained silent on the entire Shankaracharya matter for a month. But 2 days back, he spoke for the first time at a media event, saying, "The braid of the sadhus should not have been pulled. Whoever is guilty should be severely punished. Pulling the braid is a grave sin."

Although Pathak did not mention Shankaracharya by name, but the Deputy CM's move is being seen as an attempt to control the damage amid the Brahmin anger. Now the Deputy CM and his wife worshipped Brahmin students at his official residence.

The couple invited 101 students to his residence on Thursday morning. Pathak along with his

Udaipur's eternal allure: Why everyone comes to the Lake City for epic weddings

Udaipur has seduced emperors, rebels, and romantics for five centuries. Now it lures celebrities like Vijay and Rashmika, craving weddings in style. What ancient tricks does the city wield on those who fall in love?

New Delhi.(Agency)
Growing up in Udaipur never felt special, except when it rained. With the onset of the monsoon, the lakes would rise suddenly from their parched beds, spilling onto the roads as if reclaiming the city. The Aravallis turned a deep, seductive green, releasing an aroma that the trees had been holding all year. In the villages beyond, streams and waterfalls emerged from nowhere. From Gogunda to Kumbhagarh, Fatehsagar to Haldighati, every spot opened its arms wide, inviting you in. Fires would be lit, baatis baked crisp in the embers, dal set to boil. Picnic time. The other seasons were a long, gruelling punishment that defines Rajasthan. The wet cold froze everything during the winters, which were best spent in quilts, or layers of warm clothes. The summers sizzled, often turning the lakes into cycling tracks. People would take boat rides to the island park near Jagmandir, eating ice cream on the ghats, barely glancing at the pavilions where Mughal prince Khurram, later Shah

Jahan, had once taken refuge from his father's wrath. But all this was part of everyday life.
CITY TRANSFORMED
Who would have known, while shivering through the January mornings on the way to school, that the city we took for granted was quietly becoming a legend. While we suffered its seasons, the world was falling in love with its charms. Yes, there were early signs. Vijay Anand shot Guide in the bazaars of Udaipur, Raj Khosla came here to capture the haunting enigma of Mera Saaya. And James Bond chased the evil of Octopussy in its bylanes, riding a bike down the steep stairs of Jagdish Mandir. But, nothing to suggest that one day Udaipur's seductive charm would snare the elite of the world. But Udaipur had always been misunderstood this way: endured by those who live it, coveted by those who only glimpse it. Even the Mughals wanted it. They just couldn't keep it.



EVERYONE COMES TO UDAIPUR

The cult classic Casablanca was initially titled Everyone Comes To Rick's. But destiny had reserved the honour for Udaipur. In true cinematic style, it all started with Raveena Tandon. In 2004, the Bollywood actress chose the Taj Lake Palace, the white marble wonder floating in the middle of Lake Pichola, to marry businessman Anil Thadani. It was not the first grand wedding Udaipur had hosted, but it was

the first to capture the imagination of a celebrity-hungry India. The photographs went everywhere. A Bollywood star, a palace on water, marigolds reflected in a lake at dusk. The world looked and could not look away.

The celebrities came slowly at first, then all at once. Bollywood royalty, industrialist heirs, cricket stars. Each wedding grander than the last, each one pushing the city's legend a little further. When the Ambanis chose Udaipur for Isha's pre-wedding celebrations in 2018, it was almost an official coronation, a declaration that this was not merely a trend but a permanent shift in the geography of global celebration.

THE LURE OF UDAIPUR
Rajasthan has always been about grand ceremonial culture. Processions, folk musicians, turbans, marigolds, horses, elephants, swords. The local wedding imagery is already cinematic. Udaipur adds centuries of gravitas to it.

Ejaculation without penetration is not rape: High Court reduces convict's sentence

New Delhi.(Agency)
"The essential condition of the offence of rape is penetration and not ejaculation." With this clear formulation, the Chhattisgarh High Court has altered a two-decade-old conviction, holding that keeping the penis above the vagina and ejaculating without proven penetration does not amount to rape under Section 375 of the Indian Penal Code, as it stood in force at the time of the occurrence. The verdict, delivered on February 16 by Justice Narendra Kumar Vyas, came in an appeal against a 2005 trial court judgment that had sentenced the accused to seven years in prison for rape.

According to the prosecution, on May 21, 2004, the survivor was alone at home when the accused arrived, forcibly took her to his house, and undressed both of them before committing sexual acts against her will. She further alleged that he tied her hands and legs, gagged her by stuffing cloth into her mouth, and locked her inside a room.

TESTIMONY UNDER SCRUTINY

At the heart of the appeal was the survivor's own testimony. During cross-examination, she said the accused kept his private part above her vagina but did not penetrate. At another stage of her evidence, she said that penetration had taken place. The High Court found this inconsistency crucial.

"When the evidence of the prosecutor is considered from the proper perspective, it is clear that the commission of actual rape has not been established as the victim's own statement creates doubt," the court observed, reported the Bar and Bench. She had said at one point that the accused penetrated, but later clarified that he "had kept his private part above her vagina for about 10 minutes" and "had not penetrated it".

MEDICAL FINDINGS EXAMINED

The bench also examined medical evidence. The doctor who conducted the examination said the hymen was not ruptured, though "a tip of one finger could be introduced into the vagina, therefore, there is a possibility of partial penetration".

Court Denies Bail To Contractors In Delhi Biker Death Case

New Delhi.(Agency)

A Delhi court has rejected the anticipatory bail pleas of two contractors in connection with the death of a 25-year-old biker who fell into a pit dug in Janakpuri, observing that custodial interrogation was required and the gravity of the offence could not be ignored. Additional Sessions Judge Harleen Kaur was hearing the pleas filed by contractors Himanshu Gupta and Kavish Gupta, against whom arrest warrants had been issued by the Delhi Police, and noted that the investigation was still at a nascent stage. The court said the possibility that the accused contractors could influence witnesses or tamper with documentary evidence could not be ruled out.

Kamal Dhyani, 25, an employee with a private bank in Rohini, died after his motorcycle plunged into the pit dug by the Delhi Jal Board (DJB) on the intervening night of February 5-6.

In the order denying relief to Himanshu Gupta, the court said, "His custodial interrogation is required by the investigating agency. The possibility of the applicant (contractor) trying to influence material witnesses or other persons associated with the case, or to tamper with the documentary or other evidence, cannot be ruled out at this stage." The court noted that the FIR was the result of the "unfortunate death of a young boy in his twenties", and the prosecution alleged that the same was a result of failure on the part of the accused contractor to undertake adequate safety measures.

"The investigation is still at a nascent stage, and the investigating agency is in the process of collecting the relevant material connected with the case. The applicant is stated to have been non-cooperative and evasive during his interrogation by the investigating agency," the court said. The court said the gravity of the offence and its societal impact cannot be ignored.

"Having regard to the gravity of the offence, no ground is made out to allow the present application. The present anticipatory bail application of the applicant stands dismissed," the court said. During the hearing, counsel for Himanshu Gupta argued that the DJB had approved the work only on October 9, 2025, by which time Gupta had already been suspended as director following the initiation of corporate insolvency proceedings against his company.

Additional Public Prosecutor Manish Sidhwat, along with the counsel for the complainant, Aastha Chaturvedi and Pooja Sharma, opposed the plea.

Bill Gates to skip AI Summit after 'careful consideration' amid Epstein files row

New Delhi.(Agency)

A day after the Gates Foundation announced that Bill Gates would deliver the keynote address at the India AI Impact Summit 2026, the organisation reversed its decision on Thursday, saying the Microsoft founder would skip the event "after careful consideration."

Bill Gates, who is in the eye of the storm over his alleged links mentioned in the Epstein files, was scheduled to deliver his keynote address today at Bharat Mandapam. "After careful consideration, and to ensure the focus remains on the AI Summit's key priorities, Mr. Gates will not be delivering his keynote address. The Gates Foundation will be represented by Ankur Vora, President of Africa and India Offices, who will speak later today at the Summit. The Gates Foundation remains fully

committed to our work in India to advance our shared health and development goals," The Gates Foundation stated. Interestingly, the latest U-turn comes just a day after the Bill & Melinda Gates Foundation dismissed speculation about his attendance, stating that the Microsoft founder "will be delivering his keynote as scheduled." The announcement comes against the backdrop of the tech billionaire facing growing scrutiny and



Posing as NIA officer, Pulwama man lured Delhi families with job offers, arrested

New Delhi.(Agency)

A suspicious car parked in the shadows behind the Red Fort led police to unravel a chilling job scam that preyed on the hopes of vulnerable families.

During routine patrolling on February 18, Delhi police team spotted a black Hyundai Santro and found two occupants inside, Mudassar, a resident of Pulwama, and a minor boy. What appeared to be a routine check quickly escalated when the man produced an identity card claiming he was linked to the National Investigation Agency.

FORGED NIA CARD RAISED SUSPICION

Both were taken to the police station, where questioning revealed a disturbing pattern. Investigators say the



accused had been targeting economically weak families, promising them jobs in Delhi in exchange for money. The minor's family had allegedly paid an advance, believing he would be placed in employment in the capital.

Police said the accused brought the boy to Delhi on February 13 and stayed in a guest house near Jama Masjid, claiming he was coordinating with contacts for job arrangements. But when pressed, he failed to produce any proof, no documents, no contacts, no offers. A joint interrogation involving the Special Cell and the Intelligence Bureau exposed the truth: the identity card was forged, and the man had allegedly been impersonating an official to gain trust and extract money. What began as a suspicious vehicle check ended with the collapse of a deceitful operation built on fake authority and false promises. A case has now been registered under Sections 319(2)/339 of the Bharatiya Nyaya Sanhita for cheating and possession of forged documents at Kotwali police station.

Aviation watchdog proposes to ban passengers for over 2 years for unruly conduct

New Delhi.(Agency)

Aviation watchdog DGCA has proposed stricter norms to deal with unruly passengers, including allowing airlines to directly impose a flying ban on such passengers for up to 30 days. "A 'No/Zero Tolerance Policy' has been adopted to ensure the safety of the aircraft/persons/property and to maintain good order & discipline on board an aircraft," the Directorate General of Civil Aviation (DGCA) said in its draft revised rules.

Among other proposals, the regulator has mentioned that an airline shall formulate and implement a Standard Operating Procedure (SOP) for the handling of unruly passengers and for reporting the incidents to the DGCA, and shall circulate the same among all concerned stakeholders.

An independent committee set up by the airline that will include a representative from another carrier, among others, will take a decision on the flying ban. "An airline may directly impose a flying ban for a disruptive passenger for a period not exceeding thirty days (30) days without referring the matter to the Independent Committee, where the passenger is found to have committed any of the following disruptive acts on board an aircraft," the regulator said.

Such an action can be taken by an airline for various violations, including smoking on board the aircraft, consumption of alcohol onboard a domestic flight and misuse of an emergency exit or unauthorised use of life-saving equipment, including life jackets.

Under the existing Civil Aviation Requirement (CAR), pending decision of the independent committee, the concerned airline may ban such unruly passenger from flying for up to 45 days. This provision also remains in the proposed revised CAR for handling unruly passengers.

Unruly passengers can face varying periods of flying ban depending on the level of offences. For Level 1, the ban can be up to three months and for Level 2, the same can be up to six months. In the case of Level 3 and 4 cases, the minimum ban can be for two years or more without a limit. While Level 1 refers to unruly behaviour such as physical gestures, verbal harassment or unruly inebriation. Level 2 refers to physically abusive behaviour, including pushing, kicking, hitting, grabbing or inappropriate touching or sexual harassment. Level 3 refers to "life-threatening behaviour (damage to aircraft operating systems, physical violence such as choking, eye-gouging, murderous assault etc)" and Level 4 refers to attempted or actual breach of the flight crew compartment, as per DGCA.

Bangladesh student leader wanted in Hindu cop's murder detained at Delhi airport

New Delhi.(Agency)

A Bangladeshi student leader, accused in the 2024 murder of a Hindu police officer in his country, was detained at Delhi airport while allegedly attempting to flee to Europe, sources said. The accused, Ahmed Raza Hasan Mehdi, was later deported to Bangladesh after alleging physical abuse by police officials during detention.

Mehdi is a student coordinator from Habiganj district in Bangladesh, where the victim, SI Santosh Chowdhury, was killed by a mob on August 5, 2024, the same day when then-Bangladeshi Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina was ousted following anti-government protests.

Mehdi was intercepted by immigration officials at the Delhi airport. According to sources, authorities detained him when he was trying to leave the country and subsequently deported him to Bangladesh. In a video shot from the airport, Mehdi

claimed he was physically abused by one of the policemen and said he will narrate his inputs and the police to Bangladeshi. "I was in police custody for 40 minutes. I was badly treated and the police wanted to put me in jail. I told them if I had done any illegal work, then I should be allowed to speak to the embassy. But they didn't cooperate. I am safe now. The police unlocked my phone and checked it. I will take action once I return home," he said.

Mehdi had earlier claimed responsibility for the killing of SI Chowdhury in 2024. He had made the claim while sitting inside a police station in Bangladesh. A video of him making the statement had gone viral on social

media. Officials acted on the inputs and stopped Mehdi at the Delhi airport before he could board his flight to Europe. After completing the necessary procedures, immigration authorities deported him to Bangladesh, sources added.

WHO WAS SI SANTOSH CHOWDHURY?

SI Santosh Chowdhury was killed at the Baniyachang Police Station on August 5, 2024, during mob violence, and his body was later hung from a tree. It was the same day Hasina fled to India. What followed was mayhem and chaos. Violence, arson and looting were reported and Hindus were attacked and killed and their places of worship were desecrated.

Saha was killed 10 months after his marriage. His son was born three months after his death. He was the only son of his parents. Earlier that day, nine people were killed in police firing in the Baniyachang area after a clash with protesters.

BBC Bangla published a report on the killing, which raised allegations that the officer had been specifically targeted. The report was later withdrawn, reported online news portal, the Bangladesh Post.



NEWS BOX

Is Varun Chakravarthy more lethal for India than Bumrah?

Srikanth reacts

New Delhi. (Agency)

Kris Srikanth agrees that Varun Chakravarthy is more lethal than Jasprit Bumrah for the Indian team right now and claimed that the spinner doesn't get celebrated enough. Varun has picked up nine wickets in four matches in the T20 World Cup 2026 at an average of 6.88 and an economy rate of 5.16. Against the Netherlands, the spinner ended with figures of three for 14 in three overs. In the 21 matches that Varun and Bumrah have played together so far, the spinner trumps the pacer when it comes to wickets taken with a scoreline of 30-22. Speaking on his YouTube channel, Srikanth said that Varun doesn't get the credit he deserves and feels that the batters are still struggling to get to



grips with him. "Look at the pitch maps — most of his deliveries are around off-stump and middle-stump. Against right-handers, the ball just angles in slightly and then turns. His googly comes in sharply. Most of his wickets are from good length or just short of good length. Not even full deliveries. Even his so-called short balls are deceptive." "People don't know what he's bowling. Is it a googly? Is it the straight one? Is it slower? Is it quicker? No one knows. Suddenly he bowls one faster. Then he changes speed again. Multiple speeds. Long run-up, relaxed action — but incredibly deceptive." "Frankly speaking, he doesn't get enough credit. Bumrah is fantastic. You won't easily find a bowler like Bumrah," said Srikanth.

While Shivam Dube was adjudged as the Player Of The Match against Netherlands, Srikanth said that Varun was also a deserving candidate. "Today, yes, Shivam Dube played a blinder and deserved Man of the Match. I'm not denying that."

Is Shivam Dube the first name on India's T20I playing XI? Irfan Pathan reacts

New Delhi. (Agency)

Irfan Pathan feels that Shivam Dube has made himself the first name on India's team sheet for T20Is after his all-round performance against the Netherlands on Wednesday, February 18. Dube came in to bat for India in a tricky spot during their final group game at the T20 World Cup 2026 and scored 66 off just 31 balls, helping India post 193 in Ahmedabad. After this, Dube picked up two wickets for 35 runs and bowled the final over as India won the match by 17 runs. The all-rounder was deservedly adjudged as the Player Of The Match for his performance as India go into the Super 8 stage unbeaten. 2026 has been a sensational year so far for Dube as he has scored 233 runs in nine matches with a strike-rate above 200. With the ball, he has six wickets at an average of 17.5. Speaking on his YouTube channel, Pathan praised Dube's balance and consistency while batting. The former all-rounder also praised the way Dube has shown his smartness with the bat and playing according to the situation.

"The way he played that 66-run knock off 31



balls — when he got the opportunity to face more deliveries, he made full use of it and smashed big sixes. His balance is outstanding. His hands go slightly away from the body, but the bat comes down beautifully from top to bottom. His bat flow is very smooth — it's a pleasure to watch — and he uses it to great effect to hit multiple sixes." "In his last 10 matches, he has two half-centuries, only two single-digit scores, and otherwise he has been consistently scoring runs. He has become that kind of player."

Bangladesh moves to repair cricket ties with India after T20 World Cup drama

Bangladesh's new Youth and Sports Minister, Aminul Haque, hinted that Dhaka was moving to repair strained cricket ties with India after a fallout over the ICC Men's T20 World Cup 2026. Haque said he held talks with India's Deputy High Commissioner and emphasised a desire to resolve differences through "friendly talks".

Kandy. (Agency)

Hours after the Bangladesh Nationalist Party (BNP) government led by Tarique Rahman took oath on Tuesday, the new state minister for youth and sports, Aminul Haque, signalled that Dhaka was moving to repair strained cricket ties with India after a fallout over the ICC Men's T20 World Cup 2026.

Bangladesh's new sports minister Haque has signalled the reset, saying he held talks with India's Deputy High Commissioner. He has emphasised a desire to resolve differences through "friendly talks", according to

reports. Haque has also criticised the election of the Bangladesh Cricket Board officials, who were in charge of affairs during the fallout, calling it "questionable". The cricket standoff began in December 2024 over Bangladesh pacer Mustafizur Rahman's release from the Indian Premier League (IPL) franchise Kolkata Knight Riders. The move was seen by Dhaka as unjust. Bangladesh, then under the Yunus regime, decided against playing its T20 World Cup matches in India. The International Cricket Council (ICC) barred Bangladesh from taking part in the T20 World Cup after it refused to travel to India citing "security concerns". The ICC ultimately replaced Bangladesh with another team, Scotland. However, it didn't impose any sporting or administrative penalties on Bangladesh and assured it of future hosting opportunities.

This development comes even as the newly appointed minister, Haque, said he wanted the cases against Awami League-loyalist cricketers Shakib Al Hasan and Mashrafe Bin Mortaza resolved so that the former captains could return to Bangladesh cricket. Both the players also served as Awami League MPs. Since the Muhammad Yunus

administration took office in August 2024, Shakib has been unable to return to Bangladesh, and Mortaza has not been seen in public. They face multiple charges, including murder, from during the time of anti-Sheikh Hasina protests in July-August



2024.

DHAKA SEEKING TO RESET CRICKET RELATIONS WITH INDIA

With a new government in power in Dhaka following the elections, former Bangladesh football captain, Aminul Haque, was sworn in as State Minister for Youth and Sports. He has outlined his plans to mend strained

cricketting ties with India.

"Immediately after taking office, I met with the Deputy High Commissioner of India and discussed resolving the issue through friendly talks. We want to maintain good relations with neighbouring countries and address problems in the sports arena through diplomatic dialogue. In cricket, necessary measures will be taken in accordance with ICC rules through discussion," Aminul Haque was quoted as saying by Dhaka-based newspaper, The Daily Star.

"I met with the Deputy High Commissioner of India at the Parliament building. I discussed this matter (T20 World Cup issue) with him.

He was very friendly, and I also spoke to him in a friendly manner. I told him that we want to resolve this issue quickly through discussions because we want to maintain friendly relations with all our neighbouring countries. From sports to all other sectors, we want to build a sincere and cordial relationship," Aminul was quoted as saying by Cricbuzz.

India's bowling troubles in T20 World Cup: Former stars flag Super 8s questions

NEW DELHI. (Agency)

India may have finished the T20 World Cup group stage unbeaten, but former India stars Virender Sehwag and Mohit Sharma believe the bowling unit still has questions to answer heading into the Super 8s.

Despite four wins in four matches, India's latest outing against the Netherlands offered a reminder that the margin for error will shrink sharply in the knockout phase. Speaking on Cricbuzz, Sehwag pointed out that India have not been truly tested yet, and that the Super 8s will be the real measure of their bowling resources. "I don't think India have been challenged yet. In the first match India struggled a bit, but since then India have been playing some consistent cricket. The real test will begin in the Super 8. Today, India did score 193, but they also conceded 176. So, India will have to look at their bowling. When we come up against a better batting side, how will this bowling unit respond, and be used?" Sehwag said on Cricbuzz. Mohit Sharma, meanwhile, highlighted India's lingering uncertainty around their bowling combination, especially at the death.

"There is still a doubt as to which

combination will India proceed with in the Super 8. If you have an all-rounder like Axar Patel at No.8, then who bowls at the death? If a team like the Netherlands can ask questions in the death, then there are bigger teams coming up. If Arshdeep is



there, you can be a little flexible in the death since he can bowl with Bumrah," Mohit Sharma said on Cricbuzz. India's win over the Netherlands was comfortable in the end, but the chase became more competitive than expected. Moving forward, with tougher opponents coming up, can they afford to continue with the same approach?

HOW HAS INDIA'S BOWLING BEEN

India's bowling has largely delivered across the group stage of the T20 World Cup, but there have been moments where the attack has looked slightly vulnerable, particularly in the closing overs. The Netherlands showed that in Ahmedabad, keeping the chase alive deep into the innings despite being 118 for 5 after 15 overs.

Although India eventually won by 17 runs, the Dutch managed 176 and exposed some looseness at the death. The Suryakumar Yadav-led side conceded 58 runs in the final five overs, including 18 in the penultimate over, raising eyebrows over their death-overs control. Earlier in the tournament too, India conceded 132 while defending 161 against the USA, showing that opponents

have been able to push them in patches.

TOUGHER TESTS IN SUPER 8S

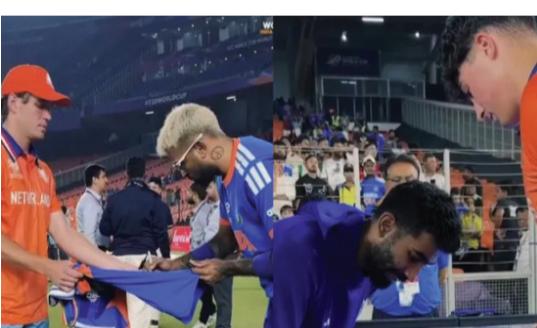
India now move into the Super 8s stage where the quality of opposition will rise sharply. Teams like South Africa, West Indies and a fighting Zimbabwe are unlikely to let India off the hook the way group-stage opponents often did.

T20 World Cup: Hardik Pandya, Bumrah share signed jerseys with Netherlands squad

New Delhi. (Agency)

India's star duo, Hardik Pandya and Jasprit Bumrah left Ahmedabad with more than just another win on Wednesday night. After India beat the Netherlands 17 runs to finish the group stage unbeaten, the duo won plenty of admiration for what they did next, gifting signed jerseys to several Dutch players. India's victory completed a clean four-out-of-four run in the group-stage phase and sealed their spot in the Super 8s. Once the match ended, Pandya and Bumrah stayed back on the field, chatting with Netherlands players and handing over jerseys in a simple gesture of respect after a hard-fought contest. Pandya had played his part in the win with an important all-round showing. He struck 30 off 21 balls to give

India a late push alongside Shivam Dube, helping them post 193 batting first.



He then chipped in with the ball as well, finishing with 1/40. The Netherlands did manage to target him late, with Pandya conceding 18 in the 19th over, but India had

enough in the bank to close the game out.

Bumrah, as he so often does, was the calm centre of India's bowling effort. He delivered a tight spell of 3 overs for 17 runs and removed Netherlands captain Scott Edwards at a key moment in the chase. The Dutch side showed fight and kept swinging deep into the innings, but India held firm to defend their total and head into the next stage with momentum.

Now, the focus shifts quickly. India begin their Super 8 campaign with a blockbuster against South Africa in Ahmedabad, a repeat of the 2024 T20 World Cup final. But before the tournament heats up again, Pandya and Bumrah's post-match moment offered a reminder that even in the biggest competitions, there's still room for warmth beyond the boundary.

decade of steady accumulation and quiet leadership. "I played Under-19 cricket for Punjab. That's where my cricketing journey started. Then I moved to Canada. It's been about 10-12 years now playing for Canada and have featured in two World Cups. I do go back to India now and then. The journey has been going well," Dhalawal told Indiatoday.in. CANADA'S WORLD CUP VOICE'

Under his captaincy, Canada won 21 T20Is. He led in 29 matches in the format and also captained the side in four ODIs. His leadership coincided with a period in which Canada were fighting to re-establish themselves consistently in global qualification pathways. He often led from the front with the bat. In the 2018 19 Regional Super50 tournament in the West Indies, he was Canada's leading run scorer with 271 runs in six matches.

Benfica, Prestianni in trouble Possible

punishments if Vinicius racism claim is true

UEFA have opened an investigation into allegations that Benfica's Gianluca Prestianni racially abused Real Madrid star Vinicius Jr in Lisbon. If proven guilty, both player and club could face heavy disciplinary sanctions.

New Delhi. (Agency)

Benfica and Gianluca Prestianni are facing the possibility of serious disciplinary action after UEFA opened an investigation into allegations of racist abuse aimed at Real Madrid winger Vinicius Jr during Tuesday's Champions League clash in Lisbon. The first

leg at the Stadium of Light was stopped for close to 10 minutes after Vinicius alerted referee Francois Letexier to an alleged discriminatory remark. UEFA's anti-racism protocol was triggered, and Real Madrid players briefly stepped away from the field before play eventually continued. For Vinicius, it was another disturbing episode in a career that has too often been marred by incidents of abuse. The Brazilian, one of football's most high-profile stars, has repeatedly been forced into confronting racism on and off the pitch. "Racists are, above all, cowards," Vinicius posted later on Instagram, as the incident reignited anger and debate across European football. Prestianni has rejected the accusation, maintaining that no racist insult was directed at Vinicius and that the situation has been misinterpreted. Benfica have also rallied behind their young forward, claiming he is being targeted through what they described as a "defamation

campaign." On Wednesday, the Portuguese club shared footage of the exchange on X and insisted the claims made by Madrid



unfolded in an already heated atmosphere in Lisbon. Benfica supporters reacted angrily to Vinicius celebrating his second-half goal with a dance near the corner flag, with bottles and other objects reportedly thrown toward the Madrid players before Real held on for a 1-0 win. With UEFA now stepping in, both the player and the club could be dealing with major repercussions if the allegations are upheld. WHAT HAPPENED IN BENFICA vs REAL MADRID?

The controversy erupted soon after Vinicius struck in the 50th minute, giving Real Madrid the advantage in the first leg of the Champions League play-off tie.

During his celebration near the corner, Vinicius was approached by Prestianni, who appeared to speak while covering his mouth with his shirt. Vinicius then went straight to referee Francois Letexier to report that he had been racially insulted, with broadcast cameras capturing him alleging the use of the word "mono" ("monkey").

Reliance to invest Rs 10 lakh crore over 7 years: Mukesh Ambani at AI summit

New Delhi.(Agency)

Billionaire Mukesh Ambani on Thursday announced Rs 10 lakh crore investment by his group as he promised to revolutionise artificial intelligence, as he did with mobile data. Speaking at India AI Impact Summit here, Ambani said the best of AI is yet to come and that AI can usher in an era of super abundance.

The world, he said, stands at a fork over AI, one path leading to scarce, expensive AI & controlled data, while the other ensures affordable and accessible AI. "Jio with Reliance will invest Rs 10 lakh cr over the next 7 years starting this year," he said. "This is not speculative investment. It is not for chasing valuation. This is patient, disciplined nation-building capital." The biggest constraint in AI is not scarcity of talent, but high cost of compute, he said. "Jio Intelligence will build India's sovereign compute infrastructure." This includes gigawatt-scale data centres. Jio connected India to the internet era, and it will now connect it with the intelligence era. "We will deliver intelligence to every citizen, every sector of the economy and every facet of the social development. Jio will do so with the same reliability, scale and extreme affordability that transformed connectivity."

GalaxEye to launch world's first OptoSAR satellite with NVIDIA Jetson Orin

CHENNAI.(Agency)

Chennai-based spacetech company GalaxEye is likely to launch its AI-powered "Mission Drishti" satellite by March-end this year, with the company exploring feasibility of setting up orbital data centre using NVIDIA Jetson Orin GPU. GalaxEye said the Drishti will feature world's first "SyncFused OptoSAR" payload, which uniquely integrates Electro-Optical (EO) and Synthetic Aperture Radar (SAR) sensors on a single satellite platform. Usually, having both EO and SAR sensors in one vehicle is difficult for a payload to carry because of contradictory operational, power, and structural requirements. Powered by the NVIDIA Jetson Orin, the Mission Drishti satellite runs advanced AI workloads directly in orbit, dramatically accelerating how Earth observation data is processed, interpreted, and delivered to customers. NVIDIA Jetson Orin is a high-powered GPU architecture which will be placed inside the satellite vehicle to store data. GalaxEye will also use Mission Drishti to explore the feasibility of Orbital Data Centres (ODC) where multiple satellites operate as interconnected compute nodes.

Insights from Drishti are expected to influence the design of future constellations, increase scalability, reliability, and operational economics.

It is also planning to use NVIDIA Nemotron open models and NVIDIA Cosmos world foundation models for development. Suyash Singh, CEO of GalaxEye, told TNIE, "We are likely to launch the satellite vehicle tentatively by May or June. We are targeting to launch the payloads within four months." Speaking about the business model and future growth, Singh said, "For us, it is demonstration of not just our sensors going into the space but also the assessing the feasibility of data centres in orbit. We started this journey five years when the satellite design was frozen. Eventually, this has become a feasibility study to think about orbital data centre constellation for GalaxEye in the future."

Buying DDA flats No need to pay separately for covered, open parking spaces; new rules immediate applicable

BENGALURU.(Agency)

In what would come as a big respite for home buyers, the Delhi Development Authority (DDA) has announced that it will remove parking charges from the total price of flats under its ongoing housing schemes. DDA said, this order is issued with the approval of the Vice Chairman, DDA for immediate implementation. In its Office Order, the DDA has announced partial modification of earlier circular dated December 2025 regarding inclusion of parking cost in the total cost of the flats. The decision will mean that buyers will save money while booking their DDA flats as they will no longer have to pay separately for covered or open parking spaces.

"Henceforth, the total cost of construction of parking shall be included in the total expenditure incurred for construction of Housing pockets for the purpose of calculating the Plinth Area Rate (PAR) of flats," DDA said. DDA said there will be no separate or additional cost on account of Car Garage/Scooter Garage/Covered or Uncovered Parking. Such rates shall be included in the total cost of the flat. Following components which were part of revised methodology circulated vide circular dated December 2025 as stated above, will not be considered while calculating total cost of flats for determining the disposal price of flats:-- Cost of construction of Car/Scooter Garage= Plinth Area of Garage x 60% of PAR adjusted for depreciation-- Cost of construction of Parking*= Plinth Area of parking x PAR of parking adjusted for depreciation-- In case separate expenditure details w.r.t parking are furnished by the Engineering Wing. Otherwise, 60% of PAR will be used for cost of construction of parking Land Cost of Car/Scooter Garage/Parking= Plinth Area of Garage/Parking x applicable PDR rates x Land Factor (i.e. of respective flat)

Investing in IPOs Your money may be funding the promoter, not the company

According to a detailed study by 1 Finance Magazine, which analysed more than 1,700 IPOs between 2015 and 2025, 63% of total IPO proceeds now come from Offer for Sale. Only 37% is fresh capital raised for business growth.

New Delhi.(Agency)

India has been one of its busiest IPO markets in recent years. New companies are listing almost every week. Many issues are subscribed 50 times, 100 times, even 200 times. Listing-day gains often make headlines. But before applying for the next IPO, investors may need to ask a basic question. Where is the money really going? According to a detailed study by 1 Finance Magazine, which analysed more than 1,700 IPOs between 2015 and 2025, 63% of total IPO proceeds now come from Offer for Sale. Only 37% is fresh capital raised for business growth. In simple terms, most IPO money today is going to existing shareholders who are

FROM GROWTH FUNDING TO EXIT FUNDING

A decade ago, IPOs were largely about raising money to expand businesses. Companies used the funds to build factories, reduce debt or enter new markets. Since 2015, a larger share of IPO money went into fresh issues.

That balance has now shifted.

The magazine explains that IPOs serve different purposes. Some are meant to fund growth. Others allow promoters and early investors to exit. "The structure takeaway is not that one issue structure is inherently superior. IPOs serve different purposes. Some primarily fund growth, others primarily facilitate exits," the magazine notes. The issue is not whether Offer for Sale is good or bad. The issue is that many retail investors may not realise that when they apply, they are often buying shares from someone who is reducing exposure, not necessarily putting money into the company. When the IPO is mostly fresh issue, the company's balance sheet improves.

When it is mostly Offer for Sale, ownership changes hands but no new capital enters the business.

LISTING GAINS LOOK STRONG



BUT THEY FADE

The data shows a clear pattern across IPO structures. Fresh-issue-heavy IPOs deliver median listing gains of around 6.7%. But within one month, median returns fall to about negative 8%. After one year, median returns decline further to around negative 13%. OFS-heavy IPOs show stronger listing gains of about 11%. Yet one-month median returns fall to around negative 4%, and one-year median returns settle near negative 10%.

The message is simple. Early excitement often does not last. The magazine clearly states that listing-day gains do not reliably translate into strong long-term performance. This means investors who focus only on the listing pop may ignore what happens after the first few weeks.

WHEN SUBSCRIPTION SIGNALS DEMAND, AND WHEN IT SIGNALS EXCESS

High subscription numbers are often seen as proof of quality. But the study shows that demand alone does not guarantee better outcomes. IPOs subscribed more than 200 times show median listing gains of around 90%. However, within one month, median returns fall to about negative 7%. One-year outcomes are mixed and not consistently strong. The magazine explains that intense oversubscription reflects strong demand and liquidity in the market. It does not automatically mean the business is stronger or better priced. In many cases, heavy demand creates very high expectations. When those expectations are not met, prices adjust.

Gold, silver prices drop sharply. Are they still a safe bet for investors

New Delhi.(Agency)

Gold and silver prices have been moving sharply up and down. For many small investors, that raises a simple question. If prices are so volatile, how can they still be considered safe?

The answer lies in what gold and silver are meant to do in a portfolio. When stock markets fall sharply or global tensions rise, investors look for assets that can hold their value. Gold and silver are called "safe haven" assets because they tend to perform better during uncertain times. They are not linked to company earnings or corporate performance like shares. They are physical assets with global demand. That makes them useful as protection when riskier investments wobble. Right now, uncertainty remains high. Global equity markets are volatile and geopolitical tensions, including the US-Iran situation, are adding pressure. In such an environment, many investors prefer to keep some portion of their money in bullion.



The latest physical prices in India show that gold and silver have corrected from recent highs but remain elevated. Twenty-four-carat gold is trading near Rs 15,400 per gram, while twenty-two-carat gold is around Rs 14,130 per gram. Silver is close to Rs 2,54,900 per kilogram in major cities. Ponnudi R, CEO of Enrich Money, says investors should not confuse short-term corrections with long-term weakness. "Gold has corrected from recent highs above 5,500 dollars, but strong support in the 4,500 to 4,700 dollar zone shows underlying demand," he says. In simple terms, this means buyers are stepping in at lower levels, preventing prices from collapsing further. On MCX, which is India's commodity exchange where futures contracts are traded, gold prices have fallen from record highs near Rs 1,80,000 but are finding buying interest between Rs 1,45,000 and Rs 1,50,000. A futures contract is simply an agreement to buy or sell gold at a future date at a fixed price.

OpenAI eyeing \$100 billion funding round, but why does it need so much money

New Delhi.(Agency)

OpenAI is close to finalising the first phase of a funding round that could bring in more than \$100 billion, according to a Bloomberg report. If completed, it would be one of the largest private funding rounds ever and could push the company's valuation beyond \$850 billion. But the key question is: why does OpenAI need such a large amount of money? According to the report, the funding is linked to three major areas — infrastructure spending, expanding artificial intelligence tools, and deeper partnerships for chips and cloud computing.

INFRASTRUCTURE SPENDING RUNS INTO TRILLIONS As per the report, ChatGPT maker prepares to spend trillions in infrastructure investment", the company is raising fresh capital. Infrastructure in AI does not mean office buildings. It refers to massive data centres, high-performance computing clusters and



networking systems needed to train and run large AI models. These facilities require specialised hardware, cooling systems, electricity and land. Training advanced AI models consumes huge computing power. Running them for millions of users daily also demands continuous server capacity. Building and maintaining this infrastructure costs billions of dollars each year, which explains the need for large funding.

BUILDING OUT AI TOOLS IS CAPITAL-INTENSIVE

The report also said the financing deal would "give the startup additional

capital to build out its artificial intelligence tools." Developing AI tools like ChatGPT involves constant research, testing and upgrades. Models need to be retrained with fresh data and improved architecture. That process requires expensive chips and computing time. In addition, product expansion means integrating AI into enterprise services, software platforms and developer tools. Hiring top engineers and researchers also adds to costs. AI talent is among the most expensive in the technology sector. All of this makes scaling AI tools a capital-heavy exercise.

EXPANDING USE OF AMAZON'S CHIPS AND CLOUD

Bloomberg further reported: "As part of its partnership with Amazon, OpenAI is expected to expand its use of Amazon's chips and cloud computing services." Cloud computing services charge companies based on usage. The more computing power required, the higher the bill.

Infosys down 18% in a month, TCS falls 14%: Should you buy now or steer clear of IT stocks

IT stocks have corrected sharply, but is this panic justified? Before you decide to sell or buy the dip, here's what the AI shift and global slowdown really mean for investors.

New Delhi.(Agency)

India's top information technology (IT) stocks have fallen sharply over the past month. Infosys' share price is down around 18% from recent highs, while TCS has dropped about 14%. For companies that many investors consider steady and reliable, this decline has raised concern. There has been a mild bounce in early trade today. Some investors are buying at lower levels. But the broader trend over the past few weeks has clearly been downward. First, global uncertainty. Many large companies in the United States and Europe are being cautious about spending money on new technology projects. When companies delay or reduce tech spending, Indian IT firms receive fewer new contracts. That affects revenue growth expectations.

Second, artificial intelligence (AI) fears. AI tools can now write code, analyse data and automate certain tasks. Investors are worried that if machines can do more of this work, companies may need fewer traditional IT services. This has created anxiety about whether the old business model will shrink.

When investors believe future growth may slow down, they reduce the price they are willing to pay for a stock. That is called a valuation reset. It does not mean the company is collapsing. It simply means the stock price adjusts to lower growth expectations. IS THIS A STRUCTURAL PROBLEM?

Dhanshree Jadhav, Analyst - Technology at Choice Institutional Equities, says this correction is not the start of a crisis. "The recent correction in large IT stocks such as Infosys and Tata Consultancy Services should be viewed as a valuation reset rather than the start of a broader downturn," she says. She explains that AI is unlikely to replace enterprise systems overnight. Enterprise systems are the

complex technology platforms that large companies use to manage operations, data, compliance and security. These systems have been built over decades and cannot simply be replaced by a chatbot. "AI remains a powerful, evolving



tool that augments work and requires high-quality data, compliance, integration and human expertise," she says. In simple terms, AI helps people work faster. But it still needs trained professionals to connect it to existing systems, ensure it follows regulations and manage risks.

HOW ARE IT COMPANIES ADAPTING?

Indian IT companies historically operated on what is known as a labour arbitrage model. That means they used a large workforce in India to deliver services at lower costs compared to Western countries.

Now, that model is evolving.

"IT services are proactively shifting from their traditional labour arbitrage model to more IP-driven revenue streams and platform-based offerings led by AI," Jadhav says. IP-driven revenue means earning money from proprietary software or technology platforms, rather than only billing hours of human work. Platform-based offerings mean providing ready-made technology solutions that clients can subscribe to.

Infosys and TCS are building AI-focused products and infrastructure partnerships to stay relevant in this shift.

"With valuations now more rational, this correction offers a compelling long-term entry point as AI monetisation accelerates and demand conditions improve," she adds.



Rasha Thadani

Calls Azaad Co-Star Aaman Devgan
Her 'Sunshine Boy' On Birthday



Rasha Thadani took to her social media on Wednesday, February 18, to wish her co-star and close friend Aaman Devgan a very happy birthday. Sharing an adorable picture of the two resting on each other's shoulders on her Instagram story, she wrote, "Happy birthday AD. Sunshine boy. Can always make me smile. Have the best one @aamandevgan."

Rasha Thadani and Aaman Devgan made their Bollywood debut together in the 2025 period drama *Azaad*, directed by Abhishek Kapoor. The film, also starring Ajay Devgn and Diana Penty, is set in 1920s India and tells the story of a young stable boy who forms a bond with a spirited horse. His journey of courage and self-discovery unfolds against the backdrop of India's fight for freedom, earning both actors praise for their performances.

Ajay Devgn Shares Nostalgic Photos to Wish Nephew Aaman Devgan

Earlier, Ajay Devgn, Aaman's uncle, also posted birthday wishes on social media. He shared a nostalgic throwback of little Aaman clinging to him and a recent picture from a grand event where both were dressed in coordinated black outfits. Ajay captioned the post with humor: "Happy birthday @aamandevgan. Aaj ke din jitna cake khaana hai khaa le, kal se waapis diet pe!" Fans loved the combination of humor and sentiment in his wishes.

As Aaman celebrates his milestone, fans and colleagues have joined the online birthday wishes, sharing photos, messages and admiration for the young actor. His family's love and support have made the day even more special. Aaman Devgan's 26th birthday marks not only a personal milestone but also a step forward in his Bollywood journey, with fans eagerly awaiting his upcoming projects in the years ahead.



Priyanka Chopra

Jonas Believes Varanasi Will Be Her 'Career-Defining' Film, Heaps Praise On SS Rajamouli

On February 18, global star Priyanka Chopra Jonas was seen attending the world premiere of her upcoming movie, *The Bluff*, also starring Karl Urban. She attended the premiere with her actor-singer husband, Nick Jonas. As always, she managed to turn heads on the red carpet in a metallic corset blouse and a brown asymmetric skirt. While making a chic appearance, PeeCee spoke about her upcoming Indian film, *Varanasi*. She heaped praises on SS Rajamouli and expressed her excitement about teaming up with him. Read on...

Priyanka Chopra is all praise for SS Rajamouli

Priyanka is all set to return to Indian movies with SS Rajamouli's upcoming film, *Varanasi*. It also stars Mahesh Babu and Prithviraj Sukumaran in key roles. According to the Associated Press, the actress shared, "The filmmaker's name is SS Rajamouli sir, and he is one of the best that we have in India. His movie is going to be really career-defining for me, I think and I am very excited about it."

Varanasi will mark her return to Indian films, as she was last seen in *The Sky is Pink* in 2019. The epic action-adventure film *Varanasi* will also mark her debut in the Telugu industry. In the film, Priyanka will essay the role of Mandakini, while Prithviraj

Sukumaran plays the antagonist Kumbha. *Varanasi* will feature music by MM Keeravani. It is produced by Sri Durga Arts and Showing Business. The film will release on April 7, 2027. The film's official title was announced in November 2025 during a grand event in Hyderabad.

SS Rajamouli also unveiled a short teaser packed with breathtaking visuals, hinting at a story that unfolds across multiple timelines and locations.



The teaser ends on a powerful note, with Mahesh appearing as the protagonist Rudhra, charging through the lanes of Varanasi on a bull. The visuals truly left the audience mesmerized. Meanwhile, Priyanka's upcoming film *The Bluff* will stream from February 25 on Amazon Prime Video. She also has Nicholas Stoller's movie, *Judgment Day*, with Zac Efron, Will Ferrell, and Regina Hall in the pipeline.

Rose, Mirror Selfie & Smiles Sum Up Hina Khan's Romantic Album With Rocky Jaiswal



Hina Khan has always been admired not only for her acting prowess but also for the quiet strength and dignity she carries through life's toughest phases. Her personal and professional journey continues to inspire millions, especially during her battle with cancer, a phase where she has openly acknowledged her biggest support system: her husband, Rocky Jaiswal. Time and again, Hina has credited Rocky for being the constant pillar behind her resilience, standing firmly by her side through every challenge.

Hina Khan Shares a Sweet Moment With Rocky Jaiswal

Recently, Hina melted hearts by sharing a glimpse of a simple yet beautiful moment from her day. The actress posted a mirror selfie with Rocky, who surprised her with a rose, making the moment instantly endearing.

She captioned the post, "Aur Phir Gulaab bhi deta hain. Pagal", perfectly capturing the playful affection between the two. In the picture, Rocky looked effortlessly stylish in a white shirt paired with sunglasses, while Hina glowed in a lemon-yellow kurta.

From Yeh Rishtaa Kya Kehlata Hai to Real-Life Romance

For those unfamiliar, Hina Khan made her television debut in 2009 with the iconic show *Yeh Rishtaa Kya Kehlata Hai*. While the show brought her immense fame, it also introduced her to the love of her life.

During the show's shoot, Hina, who played Akshara, fell in love with Rocky Jaiswal, the supervising producer. What began as a professional association slowly blossomed into a deep, lasting relationship. More than a decade later, their bond has only grown stronger, proving that time has only enriched their love.

Standing Strong Through Life's Highs and Lows

Hina and Rocky have supported each other through every phase, be it health struggles, personal setbacks or crucial career choices. Despite the challenges, they continue to find happiness in everyday moments, becoming each other's strongest source of comfort and encouragement. Over the years, the couple has often shared small glimpses of their journey, whether through heartfelt notes or candid pictures, keeping fans emotionally invested in their love story.

Naga Chaitanya On Father Nagarjuna's Legacy: 'It's Doesn't Define Me'



After 17 years of making his debut, Naga Chaitanya has opened up about the expectation he had from himself because of his father. He said he does not see his father Nagarjuna's legacy as a burden but as a source of inspiration. "I view my father's legacy as an inspiration rather than a benchmark for comparison. My journey is about carving out my own path and creating a set of stories that are uniquely mine," he shared in an interview with *Hindustan Times*.

Naga Chaitanya made his acting debut in 2009 with *Josh*, and notable films include *Ye Maaya Chesave*, *100% Love*, *Tadakha*, *Manam*, *Majili*, *Venky Mama*, *Love Story* and *Bangarraju*. He made his OTT debut with *Dhootha* in 2023, expanding his reach to digital audiences. Talking about his career, he said, "Love Story was both the most challenging and rewarding project. It pushed me emotionally and left a lasting impact on how I perceive relationships and resilience."

Naga Chaitanya's Fear of Repetition and Script Selection

Chaitanya admits that repetition is his biggest fear, which motivates him to experiment with diverse roles. "Experimenting with different roles keeps me evolving not just as an actor, but as a person," he added. He looks for scripts that balance mass appeal with meaningful storytelling, ensuring that his projects resonate with audiences while remaining artistically rich.

Naga Chaitanya's Upcoming Projects and Future Plans

Chaitanya is preparing for his 25th film, *VRushakarma*, directed by Clax (Bedurlanka fame). *Zee Studios* will present the film, produced by *Annapurna Studios*, and co-produced by *Bunny Vas Works*. Pre-production is underway, with shooting expected to start this summer. He is also keen on producing films in the near future, although direction is not on his immediate radar.

White is the new black and yes, the humble braids are here to stay! We present a round-up of the runway trends in beauty, make-up and hair that are set to take spring/summer 2018 by storm

1. Double French manicure:

How can you take a classic French manicure to the next level? It's simple, just double the impact! Seen on the spring/summer runway this year, double French manicure gives a distinctly tropical vibe. To achieve the look at home, apply a coat of glossy clear nail paint and let it dry. Next, brush a thick arc of pinkish-white paint across the top of the nail. Once it dries, draw a thinner arc of turquoise colour across the tip. Try this one for a chic spin on the traditional style!

2. Colourful & feminine hair accessories:

You can hardly imagine summer without floral motifs. From uber-impressive and attention-grabbing huge floral headpieces to cute scarves and bands that look like rabbit's ears, bohemian floral accessories blossomed on the runway forming a major trend in 2015. If you don't experiment with hairstyles often, these will tempt you into it. For a beach-friendly look, style your hair with these accessories and wear a cute cover-up. Also apt for the boho-chicgirl-in-town look.

3. Golden glittery eyes:

You'll to tally fall in love with this minimalist meets intergalactic eye make-up. Let your eyes be the centre of attention by applying loose glitter to three points of the eyes - the inner corners along with the top and bottom lash line. To add some more glam, line the upper eyelid with gold liner and dot the inner corners of the eye with gold eyeshadow. Retain a fresh-faced, natural look by keeping your skin and lips artfully bare (or consider applying a taupe or nude lipstick). Keep your brows well-groomed.

4. The Lob:

Neither too short nor too lengthy, the Lob (Long Bob) is your definite cut of choice this summer. Fresh, youthful and flattering, women of all ages and any face shape can sport it with elan. Since it's both quirky and cool, it's a great option for women tired of their long hairdo. From sexed-up waves to 70s groupie bangs, Hollywood stars are wearing the Lob in smoking-hot ways. Take inspiration from Cameron Diaz, Karlie Kloss, Alexa Chung



and Amy Adams.

5. Star tattoos:

Not willing to say 'yes' to permanent tattoos? Join the temporary tat too

bandwagon with bombshells Alessandra Ambrosia, Vanessa Hudgens, and Beyoncé who are rocking this trend. Tommy Hilfiger models wore star tattoos in green, grey, black and burgundy on their face, arms, tummy and other parts of the body for a fun and flirty look. These playful tattoos are music fest-chic. If you want to try it at home, make your job easier by creating star-shaped stencils and fill them whenever you wish to get inked.

6. Herringbone braids:

The humble plait is here to stay! The fad this year is the intricate Herringbone Braid. Play with contrasting textures by pairing wet, slicked back hair with a big deconstructed fishtail braid. Comb gel from the roots to the back of the crown and clip the hair in place. Divide it into three sections and cross them over and underneath one another. Finish by pulling the braid apart with your fingers and

spraying your favourite hair product for gloss. Braided buns and woven ponytails are other exciting options for the summer season. So, get high on plaitspiration, ladies!

7. Purple eyeshadow:

Think of this one as your new smokey-eye effect. A gorgeous blend of mauve and lavender, this flattering hue will make fair, dusky as well as pale complexions pop. To achieve the apt effect, remember to keep the colour minimal; it shouldn't look aggressive. Line the upper lashes with dark brown eyeliner. Dab some pinky-violet lipstick on the lids and brush metallic brown shadow on top. Finish with a coat of deep purple mascara. Keep the foundation light and the rest of the face bare. Don't apply make-up under the eyes.

8. Sleek ponytails with hair loops:

Hurrah for this couture ponytail! Turn the basic ponytail into something cool, and unlike anything you may have seen before with these functional plastic hair loops or links. Work a thickening mousse through the hair for volume, tuck the bottom section up under the top and mould the hair into an egg-like shape at the back of the crown. Now, make a loop through which you can pass the ring. Then, loop a thick hair extension around the second ring for a polished, modern, futuristic-looking ponytail.

9. Bold, Graphic eyeliner:

"This season try out the most outstanding cat eye look ever with bold and expressive colours like bright orange, pink and white," suggests beauty and make-up expert Akriti Kochhar. For an off-beat look, apply falsies to the top and bottom along with lots of lengthening mascara for 60s-inspired eyes. Pick a white eyeliner and wing the inner and outer corners out slightly with a few smaller strokes on each side. White is the new black! And for bright a neon effect, opt for a bright orange lipstick and use your fingers to apply it as blush.

10. The off-centre parting:

In tune with the season's trend for 'real' or 'natural beauty', wear a parting that is neither neat at one side nor precise in the centre. It will frame your face making it appear longer, thinner. Centre parting also helps define cheekbones and elongates facial features. For a flawless parting, be sure to create it while your hair is wet so that your strands dry in place.

Yoga/meditation: One of the main reasons that's seen for the recurrence of dark circles under eyes is because of stress, depression and a hectic lifestyle. No amount of home remedies will work if your mind isn't cool and calm. Yoga and meditation if practiced regularly will not only decrease your dark circles will also balance the body clock whilst calming your mind, body and soul.

Be summer ready for the love of skin

Not everything about summer is shiny and bright as scorching heat and harsh sun rays of the season can play havoc with the skin.

Skin gets battered as it tends to lose its natural tone and moisture leading to tanning, premature ageing and sun spots.

The common places where women notice skin tanning and sun burns are the back, face, sleeve lines and feet lines, especially around footwear straps. Aparna Santhanam, skin care expert at Hindustan Unilever, laid out some tips that can be easily followed to combat the damage with no fuss, read a statement. Here's what Santhanam suggests:

* **Look beyond SPF:** SPF is not the only measure of sun protection. Look for 'dual

spectrum' or 'broad spectrum' sun protection lotion to also protect your skin against UVA rays.

* **The number game:** SPF number is just one factor. Higher is not always better. An SPF of 20, if used properly, can protect your skin really well.

* **Keep tanning at bay:** Try and choose a sunscreen with an anti-tanning component to keep skin protected from immediate sunburn and tan response.

* **Give attention to body:** Women tend to use a sun protection lotion only on their face. It is important for them to understand that any exposed part of the body such as nape of the neck, arms and back and even the back of hands and feet need protection from the harsh rays of the sun.

* **Even it out:** Sunscreen is most effective when applied evenly on skin and at least 15-20 minutes before stepping out in the sun. It ensures even tone by preventing uneven tanning.

* **Breathe like a yogi:** Yoga rituals such as Shitki and Sitkari Pranayama are known to cool the body. Practising them every day is beneficial for the overall health of skin.

* **Drink it up:** It is very crucial to hydrate your body adequately throughout the day not just with water but also with foods that are known to be high in water content such as watermelon, tomatoes, carrots and cucumbers.

* **Summer essentials:** Using physical protection like umbrellas and scarves wherever and whenever you can provides the best protection for your body skin.

* **Holistic approach:** Meditation and deep breathing calm the mind, improve circulation and give a special glow to the skin. Take five minutes every day to breathe deep and rejuvenate the skin.



10 beauty Trends to rock this Summer

