

Indira Vikas Colony !

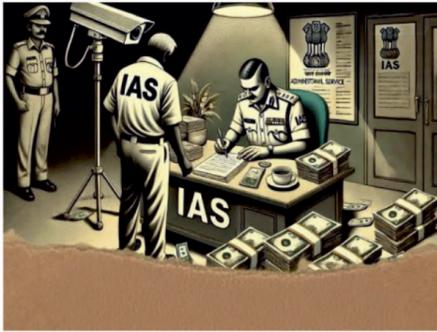
How billions worth of Govt land were allegedly looted ?

The Sikh Times Gurcharan Singh Babbar

New Delhi, 24 February Indira Vikas Colony, named after former Prime Minister Indira Gandhi, was built after illegal कब्जा on government land. Billions of rupees worth of government land was encroached upon and converted into private property. Government officials, including registrars of the Delhi Government, continued to register

forged Power of Attorney documents in the names of those who had encroached upon government land. Heavy bribes were allegedly taken while registering these documents. In the Kashmere Gate Registrar Office, hundreds of Power of Attorney documents of government land were registered. Similarly, in the Pitampura Registrar Office, hundreds of such Power of Attorney documents were registered. A registrar does not register Power of Attorney of any property without verification of previous

documents, without government allotment, and without government NOC. However, in the case of Indira Vikas Colony, Power of Attorney documents were registered without seeing previous property documents. On the other hand, when hundreds of people were constructing kothis (bungalows) on government land, the Revenue Officials of the Delhi Government allegedly remained silent after taking heavy bribes. When the builder mafia was constructing kothis on



government land, the Building Department of MCD remained silent after taking heavy bribes. When people were encroaching on government land day and night, the officials of Delhi Development

Authority remained silent after taking heavy bribes. The MLA of the Indira Vikas Colony area, the MCD Councillor of the area, and the Member of Parliament of the area also remained silent after allegedly taking heavy bribes. The local police officials also allegedly took heavy bribes from builders and property dealers and remained silent. This entire gang continued to loot government property, and together they looted government land worth crores and billions of rupees. For the

last approximately two years, I have been continuously working in national interest to save the looted property of the country. I have no personal interest in this matter. I am engaged only in the service of the nation. Honorable Prime Minister Sahab, I am very surprised why the Delhi Government is silent in this matter. Why is the Revenue Department of Delhi Government silent? Why is the Chief Secretary of Delhi silent? Why is the Revenue Minister of Delhi silent? Why is the Chief Minister of Delhi silent? Why is the Lieutenant

Governor of Delhi silent? Why is the Police Commissioner of Delhi silent? Prime Minister Sahab, all my complaint letters and the story of Indira Vikas Colony published in my newspaper have been forwarded for appropriate action to the Police Commissioner of Delhi. The Chief Minister of Delhi has also forwarded them for appropriate action. Senior Minister Sardar Manjinder Singh Sirsa has also forwarded them for appropriate action. Continued news page 2

Akali & Congress govts deliberately kept Punjab's children uneducated: CM Mann

The Sikh Times

MANSa, 24th February: Punjab Chief Minister Bhagwant Singh Mann on Tuesday said that decades of Akali and Congress rule deliberately kept Punjab's children uneducated while political families thrived, asserting that those parties were never concerned about public progress but only about securing power for their sons, daughters and relatives. Addressing a gathering in Sardulgarh after laying the foundation stone of a Government ITI that will skill 240 students every year, he said the BJP is now banking on defectors from other parties to chase electoral dreams, but Punjab has chosen a different path. Emphasising that his government is spending every single penny of the state exchequer honestly on the welfare and advancement of the people, CM Bhagwant Singh Mann declared that the AAP government, Punjab is running on a new engine of development, while the engines of the BJP, Akali Dal and Congress have become outdated and incapable of driving the state forward. Addressing the gathering, CM Bhagwant Singh Mann stated, "Akali Dal is itself a dinosaur which has usurped the state and its people. While the AAP government is



making strenuous efforts to prepare Punjabi youth for futuristic needs by making them Doctor and Engineers, Akali Dal is bent upon dragging them back to Dinosaur Era in the state." He reminded the people that Dinosaurs eat the human

beings, adding that this is favorite animal of Akalis who have usurped Punjab, Punjabis and the hard earned money of people. "People will never elect such people who had ruined the state and had usurped our generations by their atrocious moves," he said. Taking a jibe over the Akal Dal's Punjab Bachao Yatra, CM Bhagwant Singh Mann said that the real name of this gimmick of Akali Dal is 'Parivar Bachao Yatra'. "I dare the Akali leaders to explain that after looting the state for 15 years, from whom they are trying to save the state from. People had elected Akalis but they proved to be traitors and had always backstabbed the state and its people," he added. CM Bhagwant Singh Mann reminded people that when the entire farming community was fighting for their rights, the Akalis had supported the Modi government on draconian farm laws just for saving their berth in the Union Ministry. He said that Akalis had misused the panth for their vested political interests due to which they cannot be forgiven by the people. Contd.....page-3

Centre approves 5,000 PMAY-G houses for displaced families in Manipur

Guwahati (Agency)

Centre has approved the construction of 5,000 houses for the rehabilitation of the internally displaced persons (IDPs) in ethnic violence-hit Manipur under the Pradhan Mantri Awaas Yojna-Gramin (PMAY-G). The approval followed by Manipur Chief Minister Yumnam Khemchand Singh's meeting with Union Agriculture and Rural Development Minister Shivraj Singh Chouhan in New Delhi on Monday. Deputy Chief Ministers Nemcha Kipgen and Losii Dikho were also present during the meeting. The Manipur Chief Minister's Office (CMO) in a statement said Chouhan warmly received the three Manipuri leaders and assured all help in their bid to bring peace and normalcy in the state. Earlier this month, the Manipur government submitted a proposal seeking a

special project under PMAY-G for the construction of 5,000 houses for IDPs affected by the ethnic violence. Acting on the proposal, the rural development ministry also approved a special window under the Awaas+ 2024 household survey to capture details of eligible affected households. The state government has been allowed to continue the registration of eligible beneficiaries under the special PMAY-G project. However, the Union ministry directed that beneficiaries must be identified strictly in accordance with PMAY-G guidelines, and that details of eligible households must be identified and uploaded through the Awaas+ 2024 mobile application. The houses will be constructed in line with the provisions of the Framework.



It Will Be A Very Good Thing If Uniform Civil Code Is Implemented: RSS Chief

Dehradun (Agency)

RSS chief Mohan Bhagwat has advocated for the nationwide implementation of the Uniform Civil Code (UCC), modelled after the one in Uttarakhand. At a former servicemen's dialogue seminar held here to mark the RSS's 100th anniversary, Bhagwat said, "It would be a very good thing if the UCC is implemented...It would be good if it happens across the country, but I believe it should be implemented in this way (like Uttarakhand)." Uttarakhand was the first state in the country to implement the UCC on January 27 last year. The RSS chief praised the UCC, saying it is essential for unifying society. He said that after drafting a proposal in Uttarakhand, it was put up for public discussion, and then suggestions from 3 lakh people were received, which were considered and accepted. Refusing to comment on the University Grants Commission (UGC) issue, Bhagwat said the matter is currently before the Supreme Court. Addressing the event, attended by retired veterans and officers from the military and paramilitary forces, the RSS chief said that while the country is independent, the need to have defence forces will always be there to protect its independence. He said the Sangh was established without any external resources and, despite facing severe sanctions twice, it continued to progress on the strength of the society's self-confidence. Bhagwat urged former servicemen to attend Sangh camps and programmes to observe the dedicated work of volunteers and to engage in service activities according to their interests and capabilities.

Haryana recovers Rs 556 crore in IDFC bank fraud, CM promises strict action

New Delhi (Agency)

A day after a suspected multi-crore fraud involving IDFC First Bank and Haryana government accounts triggered political uproar, Chief Minister Nayab Singh Saini on Tuesday said the state has recovered the entire amount linked to the case and assured strict action against those responsible. Addressing the issue, Saini said the government has received back the principal amount of Rs 556 crore, including Rs 22 crore in interest. He added that preliminary findings indicate the involvement of three to four bank employees, while investigations are ongoing to identify all those connected to the alleged fraud.

"We will ensure that any bank official, government employee or anyone involved is not spared. No one will be allowed to cast an evil eye on government money," the Chief Minister said. FRAUD DETECTED IN GOVERNMENT ACCOUNTS The controversy surfaced after IDFC First Bank disclosed in a regulatory filing that unauthorised and fraudulent activities had been detected at its Chandigarh branch in accounts linked to Haryana government entities. Irregularities came to light when a state department initiated the closure of its account and sought transfer of funds to



another bank, during which discrepancies were noticed between recorded balances and the actual funds available. Subsequent checks revealed similar inconsistencies in multiple government-linked accounts

handled through the same branch, with the suspected fraud initially estimated at around Rs 590 crore. PROBE UNDER WAY, HIGH-LEVEL PANEL FORMED Saini said a high-level committee has now been constituted to examine the entire matter, while investigative agencies continue to probe the role of bank officials and possible external collaborators. Earlier, the chief minister had informed the Assembly that both the state Anti-Corruption Bureau and vigilance authorities were investigating the case, stressing that the government would pursue accountability irrespective of position.

Jharkhand air ambulance requested route deviation shortly before crash; 7 dead

New Delhi (Agency)

The Ranchi-to-Delhi air ambulance that crashed in Jharkhand's Chatra district shortly after takeoff, killing all seven people on board, had established contact with Kolkata at 7:34 pm on Monday, seeking an alternate route due to inclement weather before it lost communication and radar contact, the Directorate General of Civil Aviation said. "The aircraft took off from Ranchi at 19:11 IST. After establishing contact with Air Traffic controllers in Kolkata, it requested a deviation due to weather. At 19:34 IST, the aircraft lost communication and radar contact with Kolkata at approximately 100 nautical miles southeast of Varanasi," the aviation watchdog stated.

Meanwhile, the Union Civil Aviation Ministry's investigative arm, the Air Accidents Investigation Branch (AAIB), will visit flight operator RedBird Aviation's office in New Delhi today and is likely to examine safety audit reports and other key documents related to RedBird's operations and the crashed aircraft. Confirming the visit, RedBird Aviation Managing Director Akshay Kumar told that a special audit of its aircraft was conducted soon after the recent Baramati crash. "A special audit of RedBird was conducted after the Baramati crash. Both pilots were fairly experienced. Communication with Ranchi ATC indicated bad weather. We are in touch with



the AAIB. An AAIB team will visit our office today," Akshay Kumar told. 7 BODIES, 1 STRETCHER, 2 KM FORESTREK Describing how the difficult terrain hampered rescue efforts, the Second-in-Command of the Sashastra Seema Bal

(SSB) said they had to carry the bodies for nearly two kilometres as there was no road to the crash site, which was located deep inside the forest. He added that no one was alive by the time the team reached the spot, and they had only one stretcher, making the operation even more challenging. "The plane crashed in the middle of the jungle. It's difficult for a person to walk alone here. This area is part of a deep interior forest with dense bushes. Moving in and carrying out rescue operations at night was certainly challenging," he told news agency ANI. Officials in Chatra said they received information about the accident at around 10 pm, and that the difficult terrain made the rescue operation even more challenging.

Front continued news

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However, no action has been taken against those who looted government land. Therefore, Prime Minister Sahab, my very humble request to you in national interest and in the interest of the country is that you kindly take this matter into your own hands and save government land worth billions of rupees.

This process of looting government land was started during the Congress Government when the Chief Minister of Delhi was Sheila Dikshit. Prime Minister Sahab, I hope that you will issue strict orders to the Delhi Government and to Delhi Police to save the property of the nation.

I have been raising this issue repeatedly through The Sikh Times National daily newspaper and through written complaints. Despite repeated forwarding of my complaints by senior authorities, no concrete action has been taken. This is not only a case of illegal encroachment. This is a case of organized loot of government land involving multiple departments — Registrar offices, Revenue Department, MCD Building Department, DDA officials, local police, elected representatives, and property dealers.

This is a matter of national wealth, national property, and national responsibility. I once again appeal in the strongest and most respectful manner that immediate, strict, and independent investigation be ordered so that the truth comes out and the looted government land can be restored. This is a fight not for personal gain, but for the protection of the nation's property.

News box

**One arrested for obstructing
team on drive against illegal
dumping in Gurgaon**

Gurgaon.(Agency)

A tractor driver was arrested for allegedly obstructing a civic team during an anti-dumping drive under the Swachh Bharat Abhiyan and abusing a staff member in Sheela Colony last week. The FIR was registered at Sector 5 police station on Feb 21 under sections 126 (wrongful restraint), 221 (voluntarily obstructing a public servant in discharge of public functions) and 271 (negligent act likely to spread infection of disease dangerous to life) of BNS.

According to a complaint filed by 38-year-old Amit, a clerk with the Special Sanitation Force (SSF) team posted in Sector 34, the incident took place on Feb 19 when the team was conducting checks against illegal dumping in the area. Amit said the team stopped a tractor driven by Rahul, a resident of Sheela Colony, for allegedly transporting construction debris on the road without covering it with a tarpaulin.

During the inspection, the driver began arguing and used abusive language. An officer said the accused allegedly parked his tractor in front of the SSF vehicle, blocking its movement and preventing the team from carrying out its duty. Amid the confrontation, Amit got stuck in debris that fell from the tractor. The complainant further said the driver left the tractor at the spot after the altercation.

Following a written complaint, police registered a case and initiated an investigation. Police said the accused joined the investigation on Sunday and was subsequently arrested. Further investigation is underway to ascertain whether similar violations were committed earlier.

**Metro spur to Gurgaon
railway station put on hold,
GMRL told to split it from
main project**

Noida.(Agency)

The plan to build a metro spur to connect the upcoming Millennium City Centre-Cyber City corridor to Gurgaon railway station has been put on the back burner. World Bank has now asked GMRL to take up the additional line as a separate project. In Oct last year, GMRL board approved the railway station connectivity with the upcoming metro corridor. The 1.8km line was to branch out from Sector 5 and connect directly to Gurgaon railway station at an estimated cost of Rs 454 crore. The 28.5km metro corridor between Millennium City Centre and Cyber City, approved in June 2023, did not originally include a railway station link. Instead, connectivity was planned through a skywalk. In Nov 2024, however, the state govt decided to construct an additional line to improve intermodal connectivity. GMRL subsequently assigned RITES to conduct a feasibility study. A GMRL official said, "The inclusion of the railway spur will require fresh approvals, funding arrangements and statutory clearances."

Apart from financing issues, the spur line could pose operational challenges once the corridor becomes fully functional. GMRL is planning to run trains at a frequency of 2 minutes and 30 seconds in the future to cater to peak-hour demand. Adding multiple branching points may complicate operations, increase turnaround time and reduce the efficiency of the main corridor, the official added. The spur was proposed to improve last-mile connectivity and integrate the metro with the railway network. However, since it was not included in the detailed project report cleared earlier, it would now require fresh technical evaluation and approvals. Statutory compliances such as environmental and social impact assessments were also not carried out for the spur alignment as part of the original project clearances. Any new alignment would have to undergo independent studies and public consultations before work can begin.

Ex-Army officer beaten up by five in road rage

Gurgaon.(Agency)

A retired Army colonel, who was returning home after visiting his ailing father at Medanta Hospital, alleged he was thrashed, his SUV was vandalised, and he was forced to transfer Rs 30,000 via UPI after his vehicle collided with a car carrying five youths near Vatika Chowk on Faridabad Road. Police said the incident occurred on Sunday night when Col Anil Yadav (retired) — in his late 50s and a resident of Sector 60 — was driving towards Golf Course Road in his MG Gloster. His SUV hit a Hyundai i20 Sportz (registration H336AN/0323) on the left side from behind near Vatika Chowk. The cops said they were probing two possibilities — whether the retired Army officer struck the i20 while attempting to overtake, or whether the i20, which was moving on the right, suddenly swerved left, leaving the SUV driver with little time to react.

In his complaint, filed at Sector 50 police station on Monday, Yadav alleged that after the collision, he pulled over and stepped out to check the damage. But the i20's occupants allegedly dragged him by the collar, pinned him to the ground and

rained blows and punches on him. The retired Armyman told cops he was struck on the head and face with a copper water bottle that was inside his own car.

He further alleged that the youths damaged his SUV's lights and windows, and tried to force him into their vehicle. The attempt failed, he claimed, because their car would not start. Yadav said he was then made to transfer Rs 30,000 through UPI as "compensation" for the damage.

"The victim suffered injuries on the head and face. According to him, the accused hit him with a copper water bottle which was inside his SUV. One of the suspects was holding a beer bottle with which he damaged his car. The victim was not hit by any beer bottle," said Sukhbir, SHO of Sector 50 police station. Police said the five were arrested on Monday. They are (23), Vikas (21) and Nikhil (21), all from Rewari, and Sahil (22) and Ankit Kumar (22), both from Mahendergarh. "During questioning, police found that the accused had come to attend a wedding in Badshapur on Feb 21.

Pankaj, Sahil and Ankit work at a private company in Rewari, while Vikas is a second-year BA student and Nikhil is pursuing BCom second year," said police spokesperson Sandeep Turan. An FIR was registered against them under

committed to achieve the group's common goal), 191(2) (rioting), 351(2) (criminal intimidation), 281 (reckless, negligent, or dangerous driving/riding on public roads that endangers human life or safety even if no accident occurs), 125 (rash or negligent acts that endanger human life or personal safety), 324(4) (mischief), and 308(4) (extortion) of NS at Sector 50 police station. A relative of the youths insisted that Yadav was at fault, claiming he hit their i20 on the rear side in a bid to overtake from the left. Yadav was admitted to Medanta Hospital, where sources said the injuries were not critical. Though the victim suffered a head injury with external bleeding, scans ruled out skull penetration or intracranial damage.

Earlier in the day, another Armyman, Col Rohit Dev, posted on X that Yadav was returning from Medanta when he was punched and attacked with beer bottles.



sections 115(2) (voluntarily causing hurt), 190 (every member of an unlawful assembly guilty of any offence

Cadre mismatch persists in Haryana forest dept despite transfer, posting orders

Gurgaon.(Agency)

The Haryana govt's latest transfer and posting order has reshuffled Indian Forest Service (IFS) and Haryana Forest Service (HFS) officers across forest divisions, training institutes, wildlife wings, headquarters, and Haryana Forest Development Corporation (HFDC). On the ground, however, control of key forest divisions remains largely unchanged. Most frontline forest administration continues to be handled through the same arrangements that existed before the reshuffle. A large number of HFS officers remain in non-field or supervisory roles, even though their primary mandate is territorial forest management. Several officers continue in HFDC, headquarters-linked assignments, training or research posts, or against vacant and interim positions. A closer reading of the Feb 20 order by ACS forest Sudhir Rajpal shows a persistent mismatch between sanctioned cadre posts and actual postings. Several

IFS officers are placed in positions officially classified as HFS cadre posts. These include DFO (seed collection), Pinjore, GM HFDC, Kurukshetra, DCF Rewari, deputy conservator of forests (DCF) (training) at Sohna and Pinjore. The order itself annotates these posts as belonging to the state service cadre, yet IFS officers man them. As a result, all-India service officers remain concentrated in monitoring, training, and specialised roles rather than senior territorial field positions.

At the same time, the reverse arrangement continues in frontline divisions. HFS officers are posted as divisional forest officers (DFOs) in territorial divisions designated as IFS cadre posts. These include Pinjore, Yamunanagar, and Nuh. The analysis of the order flagged these as senior IFS field postings, but HFS officers continue to hold them after relieving IFS officers. The order also clarifies that DFO (HQ) is an HFS cadre post, despite being a

supervisory assignment, pointing to how cadre officers and posts are freely interchanged rather than aligned. The reshuffle plays out against a larger staffing issue flagged by the IFS Officers' Association, which TOI has reported about.

Haryana has 16 sanctioned DCF posts, the senior-most field positions meant to be held strictly by IFS officers. At present, only nine of these posts are occupied by cadre officers, with the remaining divisions run by HFS officers, despite trained IFS officers being available and awaiting posting. In a representation to the chief secretary on Feb 19, the IFS Officers' Association said the arrangement violates the IFS (Cadre) Rules, 1966, which require sanctioned IFS posts to be filled by cadre officers. Non-cadre appointments are allowed only in exceptional or temporary situations and require central govt approval if they continue beyond three months.

Large govt funds in Haryana parked outside treasury system: CAG report

Gurgaon.(Agency)

A comptroller and auditor general (CAG) report on Haryana's finances has flagged glaring violations in how govt departments handled public money. According to it, several offices continued to park funds in private bank accounts despite treasury rules requiring them to be kept in nationalised banks, preferably State Bank of India. The findings have drawn sharper scrutiny against the backdrop of a Rs 590-crore fraud that surfaced at IDFC First Bank's Chandigarh branch, where govt-linked funds were allegedly siphoned off through forged fixed deposits and manipulated account records. CAG — in its 2023-24 report that was tabled in the Assembly on Monday — reiterated that depositing govt funds in private banks is prohibited because it "bypasses treasury oversight, weakens financial control and increases exposure to fraud". It recorded instances of departments opening separate bank accounts outside the treasury framework, keeping grants and scheme money in these external accounts, and often failing to reconcile balances.

The report warned that these practices obstruct legislative oversight and create a "high risk of fraud and embezzlement". A senior govt official said the IDFC case reflected the kind of vulnerability the audit cautions against. "The recent case involving Rs 590 crore in govt funds misappropriated at IDFC First Bank became a textbook example of the very financial risks the audit warns about," he added. According to the allegations, deposits and fixed deposits linked to urban local bodies (ULBs) department, state entities and public schemes were maintained with IDFC. Police suspect that bank staff, allegedly in collusion with intermediaries, issued fake FD receipts and manipulated records, and then withdrew or diverted the funds without the govt's knowledge. The issue raised eyebrows because govt records showed large sums parked in IDFC accounts, but when departments attempted withdrawals, the balances did not match — indicating that the money may have been transferred out without

Gurugram University opens clinic for mental health counselling

Noida.(Agency)

A clinic for mental health services was launched at Gurugram University during the inauguration of 'Samanvay 2026' on Monday. The clinic, named 'Mano Sukoon Clinic', will begin services next week and will cater to university students as well as the general public

University officials said a licensed clinical psychologist will be hired from outside and will be available at the clinic along with two psychiatrists. Nominal charges will be taken to ensure that professional mental health services remain affordable and accessible to all sections of society.

The clinic has been established by the department of psychology in collaboration with the Institute of Human Behaviour and Allied Sciences (IHABS) and Gurgaon police. It will provide



counselling, psychological assessment and evidence-based treatment under one roof. Officials said the clinic will offer individual counselling sessions, therapy for stress, anxiety and depression, and guidance for families dealing with emotional or behavioural challenges. Psychological testing and referral services will also be provided where required. Outreach programmes are

planned in nearby schools and communities to raise awareness about mental well-being and reduce the stigma associated with seeking help.

Vice chancellor Dr Sanjay Kaushik said prioritising mental health is important as psychological challenges are increasing across age groups. "Universities must move beyond academics and contribute to society by connecting research with real-life needs. Mano Sukoon Clinic reflects the university's commitment to community engagement and social responsibility," he said. Through regular counselling services, workshops and awareness programmes, the clinic aims to promote emotional resilience, encourage open discussion on mental health and create a supportive environment for those seeking professional help.

4 injured after Thar crashes into e-rickshaw, driver arrested



NOIDA.(Agency)

Four people were injured after a speeding SUV rammied into an e-rickshaw in Sector 49 on Monday. The accident occurred just a few metres from a private hospital, near the Sector 49 RWA gate.

Police said that a group of people from Barola village were travelling in an e-rickshaw when a Mahindra

Thar allegedly hit their e-rickshaw from behind at high speed. Eyewitnesses claimed that the SUV was being driven rashly. The impact was so severe that the e-rickshaw was left in a mangled state, and the four occupants were thrown onto the road. One of the front wheels of the SUV also detached from the car and rolled away. Bystanders

rushed to help the injured men. They also informed the police and ambulance services.

A team from Sector 49 police station reached the spot shortly and shifted the men to a private hospital nearby.

Doctors said two of the men were in critical condition and are under close medical supervision. The driver of the

Thar has been taken into custody and is being questioned. Police have seized both the damaged vehicles and initiated further proceedings. A preliminary investigation suggests that overspeeding and negligent driving were the primary causes of the accident. Authorities are also examining whether the driver was under the influence of alcohol at the time, though this is not officially confirmed yet. The SUV also lacked a visible front number plate. Police are probing into this as well.

Several videos of the accident have surfaced on social media, showing the damaged SUV, the wrecked e-rickshaw, the broken wheel lying on the road, and bloodstains at the site.

Locals have expressed anger over frequent incidents of reckless driving in Sector 49. They claimed that repeated requests to enforce stricter speed control measures did not yield adequate results.

Police said strict action will be taken if the driver's negligence is established.

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Akali & Congress govts deliberately kept Punjab's children uneducated: CM Mann

Contd....Front page Taking a jibe over BJP he said that the saffron party is banking on the deadwood of other parties in hope of winning the elections. "This strategy of the BJP will not work in the state as their engine with worn out spare parts of other machines will not be able to run long," said CM Bhagwant Singh Mann. The Chief Minister said that the traditional political parties are envious of him because they are not able to digest that the son of a common man is governing the state effectively. "The people of Punjab have lost their faith in the traditional political parties because of their anti-people and anti-Punjab stance," he added. He reiterated that the previous rulers were more concerned about their family members rather than Punjab and Punjabis due to which they have been shown the door. However, the Chief Minister said that after assuming charge of office, he has laid special focus on the progress and prosperity of Punjab, especially this region. He pointed out that previous governments converted schools in the entire state into just Mid Day Meal Centres but now these schools have been transformed into Educational hubs. "The AAP

government is working on a mission of boosting education in the state and ensuring the access of quality education to the poor students," he asserted. The Chief Minister said that to impart quality education to the youth 118 Schools of Eminence have been set up in the state and teachers have been sent for training in Finland and Singapore, for upscaling their teaching skills. "Congress and Akalis have only a four point agenda, which is to ensure the welfare of themselves, their sons, and their brother-in-laws. As Education is the key for progress, our government has laid due emphasis on development of this sector and in the coming days a person will be called rich not by his wealth but by the education acquired by his children," said CM Bhagwant Singh Mann. The Chief Minister said that the Punjab government is judiciously utilizing every single penny of the state exchequer for the well being of the people of the state. "More than 90% households in Punjab are

getting free power, even the farmers are today getting power in the daytime which has been unprecedented. At a time when the assets of the country are being given by the Union government to their blue eyed friends at throw away prices, the Punjab government has created history by buying a private thermal plant," he asserted. The Chief Minister stated that 881 Aam Aadmi Clinics have been opened in Punjab to provide free healthcare to people adding that quality healthcare facilities are being provided to the people in the government hospitals. "At the time when the state government had assumed the charge of office, only 21% of canal water was being used in the state for irrigation purposes. However, it is a matter of great pride and satisfaction that today 68% of the canal water is

being used for irrigation purposes," he added. The Chief Minister said that as many as 6,900 km long, 18,349 water courses have been revived in Punjab to provide water at tail ends thereby immensely benefitting the farmers.

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NAME CHANGE I, Sanjivani Fakira Landge W/o Fakira Shankar Landge Resident of Village - Mandalewadi, PO - Wadgaonpeer, Teh - Ambegaon, Dist. - Pune, State - Maharashtra Pin- 410510 My Son Landge Vilas Fakira Posted at Bihar Regt Center C/o - 56 APO, Danapur, Pin-908765 Army Service book have changed my name From Landge Sanjivane Fakira To Sanjivani Fakira Landge & DOB From 12 Nov 1965 to 01 Jan 1959 for All future purposes. My Aadhar bearing No. 406187761905. Vide Affidavit Dated 24 Feb 2026 before The Notary Public at Delhi in presence of Advocate Rajkumar.

NAME CHANGE I, Ishika D/o Sh. Parvinder Rana, R/o H. No. 414, Khara Kalan, Delhi - 110082 have changed my name to Ishika Rana for all future purposes.

NAME CHANGE IAASHIYA W/O MOHAMMAD ILYAS R/O 139 GALI NO 2 OLD MUSTAFABAD DELHI-110094HAVE CHANGED MY NAME TO ASHIYA

PUBLIC NOTICE GENERAL PUBLIC IS HEREBY INFORMED THAT ORIGINAL SALE DEED DT. 09.04.1970 EXECUTED BY MR. J.C. GAULATI IN FAVOUR OF MR. CHUNNI LAL AS DOC NO-2891, ORIGINAL RELINQUISHMENT DEED DATED 22.07.1992 EXECUTED BY ALL OTHER LEGAL HEIRS OF LT. MR. CHUNNI LAL IN FAVOUR OF MR. MOHAN LAL AND MR. SOHAN LAL (DOC. NO. 1697) & ORIGINAL RELINQUISHMENT DEED DATED 11.02.1997, EXECUTED BY ALL OTHER LEGAL HEIRS OF LT. MR. SOHAN LAL IN FAVOUR OF MRS. USHA WIFE OF LT. MR. SOHAN LAL (VIDE DOC. NO. 640), ALL DEED EXECUTED FOR BUILT-UP FRESHOLD PROPERTY BEARING NO. IV/111, LAND AREA MEASURING 37 SQ.YDS. (I.E. 30.93 SQ.MTR.) AREA UNCOVERED AREA 22 SQ.MTRS. SITUATED AT IN THE AREA OF VILLAGE CHANDRAWALI @ SHAHDARA, IN THE ABADI OLD TEJAB MILL, BHOLA NATH NAGAR, ILLAQA SHAHDARA, DELHI-110032 HAVE BEEN SOLD BY THE CURRENT OWNERS MR. PARVEEN AGGARWAL S/O SH. OM PRAKASH AND MRS. USHA DEVI W/O SH. PRAVEEN AGGARWAL BOTH R/O-4/111 OLD TEJAB MILL, BHOLA NATH NAGAR, DELHI-110032. AND SAID OWNERS MR. PARVEEN AGGARWAL AND MRS. USHA DEVI HAD PURCHASED THE SAID PROPERTY VIDE SALE DEED DT. 15.10.2016 VIDE DOC NO-7305. NOW MRS. ARTI W/O SH. OM SINGH R/O T/9B RAILWAY COLONY SHAHDARA DELHI. IS GOING TO PURCHASE THE SAID PROPERTY, FROM OWNERS / SELLERS MR. PARVEEN AGGARWAL AND MRS. USHA DEVI, WHICH WILL BE MORTGAGED WITH PNB HOUSING FINANCE LIMITED AS SECURITY AGAINST HOUSING LOAN FOR PURCHASING OF SAID PROPERTY. PLEASE SUBMIT THE SAID ORIGINAL DEEDS IF FIND BY ANY PERSON. ALSO PLEASE CONTACT WITH WRITTEN OBJECTION LETTER WITH RELEVANT DOCUMENTS WITH UNDERSIGNED IF HAVING ANY OBJECTION IN RESPECT OF SAID PROPERTY/SALE DEED WITHIN 10 DAYS OF THIS PUBLICATION. ITS USE BY ANYONE IS ILLEGAL. ADITYA VERMA, ADVOCATE E-16, MANSARVAR PARK, SHAHDARA, DELHI-110032 MOBILE NO. 9999042521

Public Notice My Client Smt. Manita Devi W/o Late Dharampal Age 38 Yrs R/O H. No.-B-3, Raju Park, Gali no 3, Near Hanuman Mandir, 3rd Floor has four children namely Pankaj Kumar, Bobby, Karan and adopted Daughter Pratiyga. Being Fed up with the ill-treatment and mis-behaviour on the part of her three sons as mentioned above she has disowned them of all her Movable and Immovable Properties and sever all her relations with them. My client shall not be responsible for their any acts in future. DHIRAJ YADAV ADVOCATE CHAMBER NO. 126 LAWYER'S BLOCK SAHJ COURT NEW DELHI-110016

NAME CHANGE I, Pankaj Sharma S/O Sukaram Pal R/O C-128, C block gali no 37 Mahavir Enclave part 3 uttam nagar delhi 110059, changed my name to Pankaj, I. Karishma Shama W/O Pankaj R/O C-128, C block gali no 37 Mahavir Enclave part 3 uttam nagar delhi 110059, changed my name to Karishma Panchal.

NAME CHANGE I, Rajeev Kumar Singh S/o Narendra Narayan Singh, R/O AG-601, Antriksh Heights, Sector-84, Gurgaon-122004, Haryana, declare that my name earlier written as Swati Singh, bifurcated as Given Name: Swati, Surname: Singh; both refer to one and the same person.

NAME CHANGE I, Vijendra Kumar Katheria S/o Mool Chandra Katheria R/o B-111, Belvedere Towers, Phase-2, Sector-24, Gurgaon - 122002, Haryana have changed my name to Vijendra Katheria for all intends and purposes.

NAME CHANGE I, Inderjeet S/O Chavi Nath, 128, A-Block Mangolpuri, New Delhi, 110083 has changed my name to Inderjeet Sharma for all future purposes.

NAME CHANGE I, Mohd Afzab Ahmad, R/O H 195, 1ST FLOOR, NEAR SAHAB MASJID, BATALHOUSE, JAMIA NAGAR OKHLA, NEW DELHI 110025 DECLARE THAT I HAVE CHANGED MY MINOR SONS NAME FROM IMAN AHMAD TO SHAHMEER AHMAD FOR ALL PURPOSES.

NAME CHANGE I, Inderjeet S/O Chavi Nath, 128, A-Block Mangolpuri, New Delhi, 110083 has changed my name to Inderjeet Sharma for all future purposes.

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NAME CHANGE I, Manoj Kumar S/O SHYAM LAL R/O 2/A Ground Floor, Gali No-7, Kundan Nagar, Laxmi Nagar, PO: Laxmi Nagar, DIST: East Delhi, Delhi-110092 have changed the name of my minor son named MANOJ KUMAR aged 5 years and he shall hereafter be known as AAYANSHI KUMAR.

NAME CHANGE I, SANJEEV KUMAR JAIN S/O BHAIJAN LAL JAIN residing 16849 PLOT NO.9 FLAT NO.205 SECOND FLOOR, JOSHI ROAD, NEAR AJMAL KHAN PARK, KAROL BAGH, DELHI-110005 have changed my name to SANJEEV JAIN for all future purposes.

NAME CHANGE I, Bimlesh Devi mother of Jc-709835W, Rank-NB SUB, Name-AMIT KUMAR residing at VPO-RANCHHAR, TEHSIL-BARAUT, DIST-BAGPAT, UTTAR PRADESH-250645, have changed my name from BIMLESH DEVI to BIMLESH for all future purposes, in my son's service record my date of birth wrongly mentioned as 01/07/1968 instead of my correct date of birth as 01/01/1970 Vide Affidavit dated 24/02/2026 before Notary Public Delhi.

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NEWS BOX

Massive blackout hits Dominican Republic for the second time in three months

SANTO DOMINGO. (Agency)

The Dominican Republic was briefly hit by a country-wide blackout Monday in the second such outage in the past three months, triggering concerns about the stability of the Caribbean nation's power grid. Monday's blackout snarled traffic, disrupted public transportation and forced some businesses to close as crews scrambled to restore power. The country's main power plants abruptly stopped supplying energy before noon, causing all other plants to shut down, according to the state-owned Dominican Electricity Transmission Company. But by mid-afternoon, the system was operating at nearly 30% of its capacity, Energy Minister Joel Santos said. "Essential services such as hospitals, drinking water systems, mass transit and airports are operating with their backup systems," he said. Santos said that the failure was caused by a trip in a transmission line switch, which caused the system to go into protection mode. A massive blackout that hit the Dominican Republic last November was blamed on human error during line maintenance work.

Former ambassador Mandelson released on bail in probe into Epstein ties: Britain police

LONDON. (Agency)

Police in Britain said Peter Mandelson, the former U.K. ambassador to the United States, has been released on bail after he was arrested in an Epstein files misconduct probe. A Metropolitan Police spokesperson said in a statement: "A 72-year-old man arrested on suspicion of misconduct in public office has been released on bail pending further investigation." "He was arrested at an address in Camden on Monday, 23 February and was taken to a London police station for interview." This follows search warrants at two addresses in the Wiltshire and Camden areas. "We are not able to provide further information at this stage to prevent prejudicing the integrity of the investigation." Claims of leaked government information Police are investigating Mandelson over claims he passed sensitive government information to Epstein a decade and a half ago. He does not face allegations of sexual misconduct. His arrest came four days after Andrew Mountbatten-Windsor, the former Prince Andrew, was arrested in a separate case on suspicion of a similar offense related to his friendship with Epstein. Andrew was released after 11 hours in custody while the police investigation continues. Mandelson served in senior government roles under previous Labour governments and was U.K. ambassador to Washington until Prime Minister Keir Starmer fired him in September after emails were published showing that he maintained a friendship with Epstein after the financier's 2008 conviction for sex offenses involving a minor.

The files released in January contained more explosive revelations about Mandelson's ties to Epstein, whom he once called "my best pal." Messages suggest that Mandelson passed on sensitive — and potentially market-moving — government information to Epstein in 2009, when Mandelson was a senior minister in the British government. That includes an internal government report discussing ways the U.K. could raise money after the 2008 global financial crisis, including by selling off government assets. Mandelson also appears to have told Epstein he would lobby other members of the government to reduce a tax on bankers' bonuses.

Volunteers scour the desert for Nancy Guthrie despite authorities urging them to stop

Amsterdam. (Agency)

The disappearance of "Today" show host Savannah Guthrie's mother three weeks ago has inspired a small number of volunteers to launch their own searches in the dense desert near her home in hopes of cracking the case. The Pima County Sheriff's Department said while it appreciates the concern for Nancy Guthrie, it asked people inquiring about volunteering to give investigators space to do their jobs.

"We all want to find Nancy, but this work is best left to professionals," the agency said in a statement over the weekend.

Nancy Guthrie's disappearance

Nancy Guthrie, 84, was last seen at her home just outside Tucson on Jan. 31 and was reported missing the following day. Authorities believe she was kidnapped, abducted or otherwise taken against her will. Drops of her blood were found on the front porch, but authorities haven't publicly revealed much evidence. Despite the sheriff's request for people not to search on their own, volunteers have continued to look. A small group reported finding a black backpack on Sunday, but it wasn't the same brand as one identified in video surveillance that the FBI released of a masked man at Guthrie's home the night she disappeared. A sheriff's spokesperson told Tucson television station KOLD that the bag and its contents didn't appear to be viable leads. The Associated Press reached out to the sheriff's department for comment on Monday.

Volunteers begin to search

Two women from the group Madres Buscadoras de Sonora, or "Searching Mothers of Sonora," who were carrying digging tools Sunday outside of Guthrie's home, said they, too, would join the search. They posted fliers on Guthrie's mailbox with her picture and their contact information. Lupita Tello, who joined the group after her son disappeared in Mexico in 2020, said Monday she and two other volunteers will continue to post fliers on bus stops and utility poles near Nancy Guthrie's home. Members of the group plan to do the same in Nogales, Mexico.

The criminal ascent of 'El Mencho' as Mexico's most powerful drug lord

MEXICO CITY. (Agency)

Like many drug lords, Nemesio Oseguera Cervantes kept a low profile until he was killed by the Mexican army Sunday in the western state of Jalisco. Despite building one of Mexico's most powerful criminal organizations over two decades, the only known photographs of the known as "El Mencho" come from his earlier arrests on robbery and drug charges in California in the 1980s and early 1990s. The Mexican army killed Oseguera Cervantes Sunday in Tapalpa, Jalisco state, as special forces attempted to capture him. From Michoacan to California Oseguera Cervantes, 59, was originally from the farming community of El Naranjo, in the neighboring state of Michoacan. He was born Rubén Oseguera Cervantes, but for unknown reasons later added Nemesio, the origin of his nickname "El Mencho," said Carlos Flores, a researcher with the Center for Research and Higher Education in Social Anthropology. When he was young, Oseguera Cervantes migrated to the United States and settled in California. There he

married into the "Cuinis" gang led by his new brother-in-law, Abigael González Valencia, also known as "El Cuini."

Return to Mexico

After serving three years in prison for heroin trafficking, Oseguera Cervantes was deported to Mexico. Back in Michoacan, he began working more closely with "Los Cuinis," which were tied to drug lord Armando Valencia Cornelio, alias "El Maradona," leader of the now defunct Milenio cartel. That's when in the 1990s, Oseguera Cervantes "was in contact with a significant organization" that trafficked cocaine with Colombians and had ties to traffickers in Sinaloa state, Flores said. He began working as a gunman for Valencia Cornelio. As conflict grew with other groups in Michoacan, Valencia Cornelio and González Valencia moved their operations to Jalisco and strengthened their relationship with Sinaloa drug traffickers. The rise of "El Mencho" After Valencia Cornelio's arrest in 2003, González Valencia's crew and Oseguera Cervantes began to work for Ignacio

"Nacho" Coronel, a finance operator for the Sinaloa Cartel and associate of Joaquín "El Chapo" Guzmán, the former cartel leader now serving a life sentence in a U.S. prison. Oscar Nava Valencia took control of



the Milenio cartel and they became the enforcers for the Sinaloa Cartel against the hyperviolent In an example of how taking out cartel leaders can generate more gangs, Nava Valencia's capture in 2009 and the Mexican military's killing of Coronel a year later, deepened divisions within the organization. A faction led by Oseguera Cervantes joined with Erik Valencia Salazar, alias "El 85," to form the Jalisco

New Generation Cartel around 2009.

Jalisco cartel's explosive growth In less than two decades, Oseguera Cervantes consolidated a powerful criminal organization with thousands of members, that according to the U.S. Drug Enforcement Administration, has a presence in 21 of Mexico's 32 states. Mexican authorities say the cartel operates in 36 countries. Flores attributed that rapid growth to various factors, including the security policies of former President Enrique Peña Nieto that weakened the Sinaloa Cartel, including the final capture of Guzmán and his extradition to the U.S. That opened more space for the Jalisco cartel to expand. The cartel's growth alarmed the United States. In May 2016, it added Oseguera Cervantes to its most wanted list. Two years later, the U.S. State Department offered a \$10 million reward for information leading to his arrest. In 2024, they raised it to \$15 million. Last year, U.S. President Donald Trump designated the Jalisco New Generation Cartel and five other Mexican cartels as foreign terrorist organizations.

Cuba has survived 66 years of US-led embargoes. Will Trump's blockade break it now

KATHMANDU. (Agency)

After toppling Venezuela's leader earlier this year, the Trump administration has turned its sights on Cuba. The near-total blockade of the island is now posing the greatest challenge to the government since the Cuban missile crisis in 1962. Cuba is quickly running out of oil, creating a dire political and economic crisis for the island's 11 million residents. US President Donald Trump's embargo has prevented any oil tankers from reaching the island for months. A ship carrying Russian fuel is now reportedly on the way to the island to attempt to break the blockade, but the US has seized other ships that have previously tried. The Trump administration has also threatened tariffs on any nation that tries to send Cuba fuel, putting Latin American leaders in an uncomfortable position. Mexican President Claudia Sheinbaum has called out the embargo as "very unfair", but she's been careful not to antagonise Trump by putting an

emphasis on the Cuban "people", not the government. This is not the first time the US has isolated Cuba, or coerced Latin American leaders to take part. Cuba has been under a US embargo for the past 66 years, which has stunted its economy and caused widespread human suffering. The island has always found a way to get by, but can it survive this new round of American pressure? Animosity grows in the 1950s. The Cuban Revolution caught the United States by surprise in 1959. During the Cold War, the US had supported dictatorships in Latin America, such as Cuba's Fulgencio Batista, with political, financial and military support, creating widespread anti-US activism across the region.

After coming to power, revolutionary leader Fidel Castro instituted modest reforms to land tenure and infrastructure to support the impoverished people. Then-US President Dwight Eisenhower opposed these moves because of their impact on US commercial interests on

the island. This opposition turned into a US embargo of Cuban sugar imports in 1960. In response, Castro looked to the Soviets as an export alternative. Eisenhower retaliated by refusing to ship oil to Cuba, leading Castro to sign an oil deal with the Soviets and eventually nationalise American and British refineries. In 1961, Castro declared his adherence to "Marxism-Leninism". Castro and Cuba were hugely popular throughout Latin America. When the Cuban military defeated the CIA-trained force of exiled Cuban fighters at the Bay of Pigs in 1961, Castro was lauded for standing up to the US, though few knew of the military and intelligence support coming from the Soviets. And when President John F. Kennedy began the campaign to remove Cuba from the Organisation of American States (OAS) in 1961, most Latin American democracies moved to block it. To bring those leaders to his side, Kennedy used a carrot-and-stick approach.

Ousted South Korean President Yoon appeals life sentence for martial law decree

SEOUL. (Agency)

South Korea's jailed former president, Yoon Suk Yeol, has appealed his life sentence for rebellion over his brief imposition of martial law in December 2024, his lawyers said Tuesday. The conservative leader, who faces multiple trials over his power grab, expressed defiance following his conviction at the Seoul Central District Court last week. He called the decision illogical, said his actions were "solely for the sake of the nation and our people," and accused the judge of being biased against him.

In a text message, Yoon's lawyers said they aimed to address the supposed "errors in fact-finding and misinterpretations of the law" contained in last Thursday's ruling. The case will now be sent to a specialized panel at a Seoul High Court established under a law passed in December to handle cases involving rebellion, treason and foreign



subversion. "We will never be silent about what we view as an excessive indictment by a special prosecutor, the contradictory judgment rendered by the lower court based on that premise, and its political circumstances," Yoon's legal team said. Yoon's martial law decree, announced late at night on Dec. 3, 2024, lasted about six hours until a quorum of lawmakers broke through a blockade of heavily armed soldiers and police at the National Assembly. They then voted to overturn it, forcing his Cabinet to lift the measure. Yoon was suspended from

office on Dec. 14, 2024, after being impeached by the liberal-led legislature and was formally removed by the Constitutional Court in April 2025. He was re-arrested in July and now faces eight criminal trials over the martial law debacle and other allegations, with the rebellion charge carrying the heaviest punishment. Though brief, Yoon's martial law decree triggered the country's most severe political crisis in decades, paralyzing politics and high-level diplomacy and rattling financial markets. The turmoil eased only after his liberal rival Lee Jae Myung won an early presidential election last June. Yoon has claimed that his martial law decree was a legal and necessary act of governance against liberals controlling the legislature, portraying them as "anti-state" forces paralyzing state affairs by impeaching high-level officials, cutting his budgets and obstructing his agenda.

Mexico deploys 10,000 troops to end violence over drug lord's death

GUADALAJARA. (Agency)

Mexico has deployed 10,000 troops to quell clashes sparked by the killing of the country's most-wanted drug lord that claimed dozens of lives, officials said Monday. Nemesio "El Mencho" Oseguera, leader of the Jalisco New Generation Cartel (CJNG), was wounded Sunday in a shootout with soldiers in the town of Tapalpa, in Jalisco state, and died while being flown to Mexico City, the army said. News of his death triggered spasms of violence, with cartel members blocking roads in 20 states and torching vehicles and businesses. During the raid on Oseguera and subsequent clashes, at least 27 members of security forces, 46 suspected criminals and one civilian were killed, authorities reported. A prison break in Jalisco saw at least 23 people escape when their jail was attacked in a hail of gunfire by "criminal groups," according to the state security secretary. Oseguera had a \$15 million US bounty on his head. Fearful residents went into hiding and tourists took

shelter in their hotels as cartel members went on the rampage over the weekend. Even as calm largely returned, many businesses remained closed Monday.

The government sent an additional 2,500 troops to Jalisco -- one of the host cities in this year's FIFA World Cup -- bringing to 10,000 the troop deployment since Sunday.

In Aguaytán, the birthplace of "El Mencho" in Michoacan state, residents reported blockades early Monday. Photos shared on local social media accounts showed a column of black smoke floating above the mountain village. In Jalisco's state capital Guadalajara, schools remained closed and most public transportation was suspended.

Large lines formed outside the few small stores that remained open, particularly tortilla shops, as anxious residents sought to stock up on supplies. Pharmacies were closed and nearly "everything is closed," Juan Soler, a retiree from Guadalajara, told AFP. "I couldn't sleep," Maria de Jesus

Gonzalez said. "Now I'm a little more calm, but a little afraid, still." Resort town rocked The weekend violence also gripped the resort city of Puerto Vallarta, popular with US



tourists. Travel warnings from Britain, Canada and the United States were issued in the fallout, with Australia urging citizens to "exercise a degree of caution." Dozens of US and Canadian flights were cancelled. Oseguera, 59, was considered the last of the drug lords who acted in the brutal mold of the now-imprisoned Joaquín "El Chapo" Guzmán and Ismael "El Mayo" Zambada,

of the rival Sinaloa cartel. He was a founding member of CJNG, which was formed in 2009 and has grown into one of Mexico's most violent crime organizations. With his son Ruben "El Menchito" Oseguera Gonzalez, 35, convicted by a federal jury in Washington in September, experts have warned the "absence of a direct succession" could lead to a power vacuum. "That opens the door to violent realignments within the organization," David Mora, an expert at the Crisis Group analysis center, told AFP. Girlfriend tracked to kingpin's location Mexico said the operation to seize Oseguera was helped by "complementary information" from US authorities. White House Press Secretary Karoline Leavitt confirmed that Washington "provided intelligence support." President Claudia Sheinbaum was adamant that no US forces took part in the capture raid. Key to locating Oseguera was one of his girlfriends, Mexican Defense Secretary Ricardo Trevilla said.

One of the biggest stars in the universe might be getting ready to explode

World. (Agency)

One of the largest known stars in the universe underwent a dramatic transformation in 2014, new research shows, and may be preparing to explode. A study led by Gonzalo Muñoz-Sánchez at the National Observatory of Athens, published in Nature Astronomy today, argues that the enormous star WOH G64 has transitioned from a red supergiant to a rare yellow hypergiant — in what may be evidence of impending supernova.

The evidence suggests we may be witnessing, in real time, a massive star shedding its outer layers, shrinking as it heats up, and moving closer to the end of its short life.

A very special star WOH G64 was first discovered in the 1970s as a star of interest in the Large Magellanic Cloud, a dwarf galaxy orbiting the Milky Way. It turned out the star was not only extremely luminous, but also one of the biggest ever discovered: more than 1,500 times the radius of the Sun. In 2024, WOH G64 was the first star beyond our galaxy ever photographed in detail, thanks to the Very Large Telescope Interferometer. The image showed a clear dusty cocoon around the central giant star, which confirmed it was losing mass as it aged.

From supergiant to hypergiant, big is big WOH G64 is a young star in the grand scheme of the cosmos, with an estimated age of less than 5 million years old. Unlike our Sun (currently about 4.6 billion years old), WOH G64 is destined to live fast and die young.

WOH G64 was born big, forming from a huge cloud of gas and dust collapsing until the pressure made it ignite. Like our Sun, it would have burned hydrogen in its core by nuclear fusion.

Later it would have expanded and burned helium, becoming what is called a red supergiant.

Not all supergiants become hypergiants. It's been theorised that hypergiants form when very large stars quickly burn and evolve from burning hydrogen to burning helium. During this transition, these stars start to shed their outer layers, while their cores begin to shrink inwards. Once a star becomes a hypergiant, it is destined for a quick death in the fiery explosion of a supernova.

What has caused this change seen in WOH G64? So what happened to WOH G64 in 2014? The new study proposes that a large part of the original supergiant's surface was ejected away from the star.

This may have been due to interactions with a companion star, which the authors have confirmed exists by looking at the spectrum of light from WOH G64. Another theory: the star is getting ready to explode. We know stars this big will inevitably go kaboom, but exactly when it will happen can be hard to determine in advance.

One possible scenario is that the transition we're seeing is due to a pre-supernova "superwind" phase. This is theorised to occur due to strong internal pulsations as the fuel in the core is spent quickly.

NEWS BOX

Class 12 paper leak: Nagpur police form five-member SIT, four arrested

Nagpur . (Agency)
THE SADAR police station has constituted a five-member Special Investigation Team (SIT) to probe the alleged leak of Class 12 Physics and Chemistry question papers through a WhatsApp group, officials said on Monday.
Preliminary investigations indicate that the leaked Chemistry paper surfaced from a WhatsApp group that included a student of SFS College, Nagpur. Police are now working to trace the origin of the leak and determine the extent of its circulation.
“We have formed an SIT to ensure there is a dedicated team focused exclusively on investigating this leak,” said police inspector Amol Deshmukh of Sadar police station. The SIT has been tasked with identifying the source of the question papers, examining whether any board officials were involved, tracking how widely the papers were shared, and verifying if they were circulated in other districts of Maharashtra. Investigators are also probing the possibility of a larger racket behind the leak.

On Monday, police arrested two more persons in connection with the Chemistry paper leak, taking the total number of arrests to four. Among those held earlier were private tuition teacher Nishikant Moon and a Class 12 student. The student, who is currently appearing for his examinations, was later released. The two arrested on Monday have been identified as Mustafa Khan, director of Excellent Academy in Mominpura, and Junaid Mohammad Abdul Javed.

According to police, the student initially detained had allegedly shared the question paper and answer sheet with friends via a WhatsApp group named ‘Tech One’.

After 19 years in jail, HC grants bail to 2006 Aurangabad arms haul case convict

Mumbai. (Agency)
More than 19 years after his arrest, the Bombay High Court on Monday granted bail to Faisal Ataur Rahman Shaikh, who was serving a life sentence in the 2006 Aurangabad arms haul case.
Shaikh had remained behind bars despite being acquitted last year in the 2006 Mumbai train blasts case, after the High Court set aside the 2015 special court verdict that had awarded him and four others the death penalty and sentenced seven others to life imprisonment. He could not be released as he had not secured relief in the Aurangabad arms haul case.

A division bench of Justices Bharati H Dangre and Manjusha A Deshpande allowed Shaikh’s plea seeking bail pending the hearing and final disposal of his appeal against conviction in the arms haul case. The detailed order is awaited. In July 2016, a special court had convicted 12 men in the Aurangabad arms seizure case, sentencing seven, including 26/11 attacks plotter Sayed Zabiuddin Ansari alias Abu Jundal, to life imprisonment till death.

The court had observed that the prosecution established that the arms were procured from Pakistan with the help of Lashkar-e-Toiba operatives and that the larger conspiracy was to eliminate then Gujarat Chief Minister Narendra Modi and Vishwa Hindu Parishad leader Praveen Togadia.

On May 8, 2006, the Maharashtra Anti-Terrorism Squad pursued vehicles on the Chandwad Manmad highway near Aurangabad and arrested three terror suspects. Jundal allegedly escaped from the car he was driving and was later arrested in 2012 after being deported from Saudi Arabia.

Former aide to Pankaja Munde granted bail in wife’s abetment to suicide case

Mumbai. (Agency)
Anant Garje, the former personal assistant of Maharashtra minister Pankaja Munde, who was arrested in November last year on charges of abetting his wife’s suicide, was granted bail by a sessions court on Monday. The court granted Garje bail with conditions, including that he will not directly or indirectly make any inducement, threat or promise to any person acquainted with the facts of the case, to dissuade them from disclosing the facts to the court. The court also set other conditions including attending court proceedings unless exemption is granted from the court.

The detailed order granting him bail is yet to be made available. Garje had told court that he has cooperated with the investigating agency, after surrendering before them, and his further custody is not required. The father of her 28-year-old wife Gauri Palve, had filed a complaint against Garje and two of his family members, after her death on November 22, 2025, alleging “continuous physical and mental harassment” by Anant over petty household issues.

While the two relatives were granted anticipatory bail earlier, Garje had sought bail on grounds including that there is no mention of any instigation in the FIR, or any provocation which could have led Palve to die by suicide. “Not a single medical report, complaint or witness statement connects the applicant with any physical assault or cruelty...The FIR is a result of an afterthought and emotional distress after the tragic accident.

Extortion case: Gujarat social media influencer gets bail, Kirti Patel faces arrest in 2 other cases, say police

It began with Kirti Patel allegedly taking a dip in the Mrugi Kund (holy pond) at the Bhavnath temple in Junagadh, on the occasion of Mahashivratri (February 15), in the midst of the Hindu priests including sadhus, sadhvis and naga bavas who had come from various places, were taking a dip in the waters.

Ahmedabad.(Agency)
SOCIAL MEDIA influencer Kirti Patel was on Monday granted bail in a case of alleged extortion of another influencer in Gujarat’s Junagadh district. This comes after she was arrested by Junagadh Police from a hotel in Udaipur, Rajasthan. A local court granted her bail after a one-day remand in police custody. The other influencer is under treatment at a hospital and is likely to be discharged soon, police said.

However, police told The Indian Express that she is likely to be arrested again in one of two other cases, one pertaining to the obstruction of a public servant in the discharge of duty and the other in which she is booked for hurting religious sentiments.

Three FIRs were filed against Patel within a span of six days. Patel is described as a YouTuber and the entire sequence of controversies that

broke out after her alleged “holy dip” in the Mrugi Kund (holy pond) of the Bhavnath Mahadev Temple in Junagadh, which has led to the three cases, has been debated on social



media, especially among Patel’s 1.3 million followers on Instagram. The latest case, arrest Patel was on Monday granted bail in the third FIR against her, this one filed at Junagadh Taluka

police station on February 21, on the basis of a complaint by Abjal Kara Sida, a labourer and an Instagram influencer in Junagadh with more than 27,000 followers.

He posted a reel on Instagram that purportedly showed him drinking a white-coloured liquid (suspected to be phenyl) near railway tracks. Soon after, a woman is seen running up to him and trying to stop him and saying that he was near Udyognagar police station. This is in Rajkot district’s Jetpur.

The FIR stated that Sida had taken the step following threats from the accused persons after he had opposed Kirti Patel making allegations against Hindu sadhus. Sida is under treatment at a hospital and is likely to be discharged soon, police sources said.

Patel was, with Divya Savlani, Jashpalsinh (Divya’s friend), Hanu Rana Chavda, and Viram Chotha Mevada, were booked for extortion, criminal intimidation and uttering obscenities.

19-year-old alleges gang rape at Karnataka villa; accused claims extortion attempt

BENGALURU. (Agency)
A 19-year-old first-year degree student filed a gang rape complaint against two men, including her social media friend, at Amruthahalli police station. The woman claimed in her complaint that she was sexually assaulted at a posh villa in Jakkur in the early hours of February 15, and filed the complaint on February 22.

Meanwhile, a day before the woman filed the complaint, one of the suspects against whom she has made the gangrape allegations filed a complaint at the Malleswaram police station, accusing her and others of extortion.

The victim, native of Tamil Nadu, studies at a private college in the CBD area, is reportedly staying at a paying guest accommodation in Shantinagar. Her complaint mentions a 21-year-old man from West Bengal, who is her social media friend, and a 34-year-old man from Malleswaram, who hails from Sakleshpur and runs the villa on lease. She claims to have gone to the villa following an invitation from her social media friend. The woman accused the

duo of sexually assaulting her after administering her a pink tablet. She stated that she was confined in a room for a few hours and later dropped off at Rajajinagar. She also



accused the two of threatening her with dire consequences if she told anybody about the incident.

She further claimed that she filed the complaint nearly a week after the incident as she was scared. She also told the police that she got

herself treated at a private hospital on February 17. Her complaint states that she informed her brother, who studies abroad, about the incident and on his insistence, filed the police complaint.

A case of gang rape under Section 70(1) and other sections of BNS has been registered by the Amruthahalli police. “We are investigating the facts of the case. We will proceed accordingly. The FIR registered at the Malleswaram police station is also linked to this case,” said an officer. On February 21, a day before the woman filed the complaint against him and his friend, the 34-year-old man from Malleswaram, who also runs a pre-owned car business, filed a case against her and a few others. He alleged that the woman had come for a Valentine’s Day party and behaved very friendly and intimate with him. He stated that he advised her to behave properly. When he was leaving for home around 4 am on February 15, she requested him for a drop and he dropped her at Rajajinagar.

Karnataka government yet to implement SC internal quota: BJP leaders in letter to Governor

BENGALURU. (Agency)
A delegation of BJP leaders, led by former DCM Govind Karajol, submitted a memorandum to Governor Thaawarchand Gehlot, stating that the Congress government is yet to implement the Supreme Court order on internal reservation for Scheduled Castes, though the verdict was passed over 18 months ago. They alleged that the state government has the necessary statistics in reports filed by the Justice Sadashiva Commission and Madhuswamy Committee.

But still, the Congress government adopted “delaying tactics” and constituted the Justice Nagamohan Das Commission. The commission worked for six months and prepared a report at a cost of Rs 110 crore, recommending 1% reservation for category I, 6% for category - II, 5% for category- III and 4% for category - IV and 1% for sub-



castes who refused to identify with the original caste such as AK, AD and AA. But the government did not accept the report and came out with its own formula of 6:6:5 because of political pressure, the BJP leaders alleged.

“On what basis was this formula worked out? Neither the CM, nor the social welfare minister explained it. Though the government introduced a Bill in the Assembly, there was no scope for a detailed discussion. The Bill was tabled in the evening and on the basis of a numerical majority, it was passed hurriedly,” they

alleged. The government also failed to call an all-party meeting and did not consult community leaders, social leaders or legal experts before enforcing the law.

“The two commissions -- Justice Sadashiva and Justice Nagamohan Das Commissions -- as well as the Madhuswamy committee had provided 1% reservation to nomadic tribes and small sub-castes among SCS.

But the state government has gone against the directions of the Supreme Court in implementing the Internal Reservation and has become a butt of ridicule,” it stated. The State Government has not provided solution to the problems faced by AK, AD and AA sub-castes. “For the last two years, recruitment has completely stopped. Around 2.85 lakh posts are vacant in the state government. It has to take steps to fill up these vacancies and protect the interests of youth.

Karnataka HC Bench sets aside single-judge order on MBBS paper evaluation

There is no statutory provision for further reevaluation of the answer scripts or for referring the matter to a third evaluator, the Bench observed.

BENGALURU.(Agency)
A Division Bench of the Karnataka High Court set aside directions issued by a single judge that the answer scripts of writ petitioners, first-year MBBS students, be sent to an additional evaluator or third evaluator for fresh assessment by the Rajiv Gandhi University of Health Sciences (RGUHS).

The division bench of Chief Justice Vibhu Bakhru and Justice CM Poonacha passed the order on February 19, while allowing the appeal filed by RGUHS against the single-judge order dated July 30, 2025, in a batch of petitions filed by students pursuing first-year MBBS at RGUHS. The division bench stated that directions issued by the single judge were essentially two-fold. First, the single judge had directed that providing key or model answers for descriptive questions be reconsidered by the Syndicate and Academic Council of the university. Second, the answer scripts of the petitioners be sent to an additional evaluator for fresh

assessment. Insofar as the first direction is concerned, the university has no grievance. The Syndicate and Academic Council have already considered the issue of providing key answers or model answers regarding the subjective examination, the Bench said.

The Bench further stated that the only remaining question to be examined is whether the single judge’s direction to forward the answer scripts of the petitioners for additional evaluation or fresh assessment is sustainable.

The manner in which the answer scripts are to be evaluated is covered by an “Ordinance/Notification Governing Central Assessment Programme (CAP)” for theory paper assessment of all Undergraduate Health Science Courses of the University.

There is no statutory provision for further reevaluation of the answer scripts or for referring the matter to a third evaluator, the Bench observed.

Lucknow teen kills father, chops up his body — over ‘competitive exam pressure’

Police said the 19-year-old accused hid the torso in a drum at the house, and neighbours alerted them over the foul smell

Ahmedabad.(Agency)
Pressured to prepare for competitive examinations, a 19-year-old youth allegedly killed his father, dismembered the body and disposed of the parts at different locations to destroy evidence. He then went to the police station to report his father missing.

Lucknow Police arrested the accused, Akshat, on Monday. “We have arrested Akshat Pratap Singh, who has admitted to the crime. During preliminary questioning, he told us that he allegedly shot his father, Manvendra Singh, dead following a dispute, claiming that the latter had been pressuring him to



prepare for competitive examinations,” said Deputy Commissioner of Police



(Lucknow) Vikrant Vir. Police said the case came to light after local residents alerted the

police about a foul smell emanating from the house. On reaching the spot, police searched the house and found a blue drum in the room — the businessman’s body, with the hands and legs missing, was inside it.

Police also recovered the weapon used in the crime and said the accused will be questioned in detail to establish the facts of the case. Manvendra, a resident of Ashiana, ran a pathology centre. His wife had passed away a few years ago, and he was living with Akshat and his younger daughter. Assistant Superintendent of Police, Abhay Pratap Mall, said the firearm used in the shooting was

licensed. According to the police, Akshat lodged a missing person’s report at Ashiana police station on February 20, claiming that his father had not returned home. While the police were engaged in efforts to trace him, they received information about a foul smell emanating from the house.

During preliminary questioning, police said the accused allegedly admitted to shooting his father dead in the early hours of February 20. In an attempt to conceal the crime, he reportedly brought the body down from the third floor to the ground floor and kept it in a room. He later dismembered the body and disposed of the parts.

GIFT City hosts UK Mayoral delegation to push India-UK tie-ups in financial services, innovation

Ahmedabad. (Agency)
GIFT CITY (Gujarat International Finance Tec-City) Gandhinagar on Monday hosted a high-level mayoral delegation from the West Midlands Combined Authority, United Kingdom, led by Richard Parker, Mayor of the West Midlands, marking a significant step towards strengthening India-UK collaboration in financial services, innovation and institutional partnerships.

The delegation included representatives from the West Midlands Growth Company, leading universities such as the University of Warwick, University of Birmingham, Birmingham City University, Aston University and Coventry University — which has established an international branch campus in GIFT City — along with industry leaders from mobility, advanced manufacturing, energy, artificial intelligence and financial services, as well as members of the Birmingham Chamber of Commerce and trade bodies. The visit was facilitated in collaboration with India Global Forum, a statement said.

Discussions focused on deepening bilateral engagement in international financial services, enabling institutional partnerships, and exploring collaboration across digital finance, artificial intelligence, sustainable finance and academic research. The interaction also highlighted opportunities for universities and innovation institutions from the West Midlands to expand their presence and partnerships within GIFT City’s ecosystem.

Speaking about the visit, Sanjay Kaul, Managing Director and Group CEO, GIFT City, said, “This engagement with the West Midlands mayoral delegation reflects the growing depth of India-UK cooperation across financial services, innovation and education.

FAITHLINE | The Chindian tale

Chinese New Year was last week on February 17, the dawning of the Year of the Fire Horse. Back after 60 years, it's described as 'a symbol of forward movement, independence and endurance'. We Indians love all happy festivals, besides desi ones, so, in honour of the Chinese-origin people in India, here's wishing everyone Happy Chinese New Year. The Chinese community in India, found mostly in Kolkata and Mumbai, is a small and shrinking minority with around 3,000-4,000 in Kolkata and 400 families in Mumbai. Kolkata has the most visible community, with historic Chinatowns in Tangra and Toretta Bazaar. Mumbai's community is smaller in areas like Mazgaon.

The first Chinese settler, Yang Tai Chow, also known as Tong Achew, arrived in 1778 from Guangdong, establishing a sugar mill near Kolkata with Warren Hastings's permission. The population surged in the early 20th century, as many fled conflict in China. But sadly, the 1962 war with China led to the internment of thousands in Deoli, Rajasthan causing mass migration to Canada, Australia and Hong Kong.

The community is tight-knit, with many having married locals and being fluent in Indian bhashas. They maintain cultural traditions, such as celebrating the Chinese New Year at their temples, including the temple in Mumbai dedicated to Kwan Kung, a popular Chinese folk deity. The grave of Tong Achew is in Achipur by the Hooghly in the 24 Parganas. Achipur is named after him. His grave is visited by many Chinese during their New Year. After establishing tea gardens in Assam, the British authorities encouraged the migration of Chinese labourers and artisans from Kolkata in 1838, who overcame the language barrier and started intermingling. Many Chinese married local women and established a new community in Assam. They worked hard and soon began to prosper. Several 'China patti,' or small Chinatowns, sprang up in different parts of Assam. The China patti of Makum in Tinsukia district was the biggest and is still known for its unique Sino-Indian community. Across India, the Chinese grew famous as excellent dentists, hairdressers, shoemakers and restaurateurs. We talk so much about the Portuguese contribution of new vegetables from South America to India like potatoes, tomatoes and green chillies. The culinary contributions of Muslim cultures are well-known and we are completely used to the British influence on our eating habits be it tea, sliced bread, salted butter, sandwiches, cakes or bakes, and trends that took off widely after liberalisation like Italian pizza and pasta, or American inventions like burgers and hot dogs. But it's the Chinese in India who created an entire Sino-Indian cuisine that many call 'Chindian' and Delhi-NCR calls 'Chinjabi'. Nelson Wang is arguably the most famous pioneer of Chindian cuisine, and as anyone who's visited China knows, it's in a savoury league of its own, and quite different from actual Chinese food. Wang was born in Kolkata in 1950, the son of a Chinese immigrant. But his father passed away when he was very young and he was sent to an uncle in Mumbai, where he made his way up the restaurant ladder, finally opening his own. He is credited with inventing Chindian favourites like Chicken Manchurian, Cauliflower Manchurian and Veg Manchurian, none of which has anything to do with faraway Manchuria but a lot to do with pakoras dunked in gravy, with Chinese flavouring instead of Indian masalas. He is also held to have introduced Chindian staples like chicken corn soup, hot and sour soup, chicken lollipops and date pancakes with ice cream, besides spring rolls, noodles and fried rice.

India's AI ambition faces structural limits

India AI Impact Summit's most consequential silence concerned labour

A MOMENT at the India AI Impact Summit revealed more than the declaration itself. A university pavilion presented what it described as an indigenous robotic system. Within hours, it was identified as a commercially available Chinese robot dog. The exhibit was withdrawn. An apology followed. The episode was minor. The signal was not. India's sovereignty narrative in AI still rests on a global stack it does not control. The circulated Delhi Declaration affirms that AI's benefits should be shared by humanity. It is a sound principle. It is also voluntary. The text "takes note" and "recognises". It creates no binding obligation. In economics and diplomacy, commitments without enforcement shape tone, not incentives. This was the fourth in a sequence of global AI summits. Delhi was the first summit to be hosted by a Global South country. That mattered symbolically. But influence in AI will not be determined by sequence. It will be determined by control. Most AI coordination today operates through soft law — standards, benchmarks, procurement rules and reputational pressure. The issue is not whether Delhi produced a treaty. It is whether it created tools that can shape behaviour. The Declaration established platforms and frameworks. None requires reporting. None mandates verification. No institution is clearly tasked with implementation. The summit revealed a deeper divide. The UN argued for coordinated oversight and warned that without shared access to compute, developing economies risk exclusion. It is estimated that roughly \$3 billion could provide meaningful compute access for developing countries. The US delegation rejected global governance. European representatives spoke of strengthening regulatory guardrails. China — central to AI capability and chip supply chains — was not structurally embedded in the governance frame emerging from Delhi. India described itself as a bridge between advanced economies and the Global South. A bridge, however, requires stability on both sides.

The sharpest contradiction emerged on India's own stage. Leading AI firms acknowledged the risks of concentration and called for international coordination. The companies shaping the frontier were urging

oversight. Their home government was declining it. That divergence — between corporate calls for coordination and sovereign resistance — captures the gap between convening and governing. Bringing actors together does not align their incentives. The structural imbalance lies in the AI stack. The economy rests on three layers: compute, models and applications. India is strong at the application layer. UPI, Aadhaar and multilingual platforms such as Bhashini operate at a national scale. They are credible templates. At the model layer, domestic firms have begun launching language models suited to Indian contexts. Compute remains the constraint. India's expansion of its

developing economies do not yet command. For advanced economies, the message is different. The firms driving AI's frontier are urging coordination. Governments remain divided. If major powers do not converge on governance architecture, fragmentation will follow. Developing economies will absorb the costs. India's parallel decision to join a US-led AI supply-chain initiative underscores the balancing act. Alignment may strengthen access. It also reduces room for neutrality. The test will be what India secures in return — influence over standards, access to compute or flexibility within export control regimes.



The summit's most consequential silence concerned labour.

Its theme was "Welfare for all, Happiness of all." India's technology services workforce — roughly 5.8 million people — had no structured presence in the summit's power forums. The IMF estimates that about 40% of jobs globally could be affected by AI. Entry-level coding, testing and administrative work — the base of India's IT pyramid — is precisely where generative tools are reshaping demand. Labour appeared in commitments as a represented interest.

Prime Minister Modi's MANAV framework, moral systems, accountable governance, national sovereignty, accessible AI and valid oversight sets out the right ambition. The next phase will determine whether those principles translate into operational tools: audit capacity, supply-chain strategy, compute diffusion and

legal clarity. That is not a criticism. It is the natural progression from declaration to implementation. Delhi demonstrated convening power. It showcased strength at the application layer and ambition at the model layer. It placed India at the centre of the discussion. What it did not demonstrate is structural leverage over the variables that determine who governs AI: compute access, standards and binding rules. A host sets the seating plan. A bridge connects systems. A passenger uses what others design. India is not merely a passenger. Whether it becomes a rule-shaper, rather than the world's most effective convener, is the question the next summit will sharpen.

GPU pool is serious policy. Frontier clusters elsewhere operate at a much larger, dedicated scale. Compute is not merely hardware. It encompasses supply chains, export controls, energy capacity, cloud access and pricing power. Application strength built on externally controlled compute remains a form of dependence. Two clear messages follow.

For the Global South, the Declaration is a beginning, not a solution. Inclusion will depend less on the language of communiqués and more on who controls access to compute, sets evaluation standards and defines procurement rules. India's digital public infrastructure is replicable. But replication requires resources most

Waste burden: New rules must be strictly enforced

The Supreme Court has flagged "uneven compliance" with the decade-old SWM Rules across the country

GETTING the basics right is a prerequisite for achieving the grand goal of Viksit Bharat. Among the civic challenges, solid waste management (SWM) continues to stick out like a sore thumb. Both urban and rural areas are plagued by overflowing landfills, improper waste segregation and inefficient disposal. The Supreme Court has flagged "uneven compliance" with the decade-old SWM Rules across the country, weeks before the new norms come into force. The SC has observed that the treatment of solid waste is not just an environmental issue — it also concerns public health and the economy. The ever-increasing garbage burden is adversely affecting ease of living, laying bare gaps in the implementation of flagship schemes like AMRUT (Atal Mission for Rejuvenation and Urban Transformation) and the Smart Cities Mission. The Court has put the onus on local bodies and elected representatives (councillors/corporators) to encourage a sense of



responsibility among residents. Public awareness must go hand in hand with deterrence. It's clear that there is no room for leniency. The imposition of fines at the initial stage, followed by criminal prosecution when repeat offenders are involved, can potentially demonstrate a zero-

tolerance approach. Cracking the whip on negligent officials can send a strong message against dereliction of duty.

There is a dire need for close coordination between the authorities and resident welfare associations. India's rise as a global economic powerhouse is expected to boost consumption and, consequently, increase waste generation. The Union government's new scheme to overhaul urban infrastructure with an investment of Rs 1 lakh crore is a step in the right direction. However, India's cities will struggle to meet the demands of a growing population unless policy-makers prioritise solid waste management. A waste-free India is just a chimera, but every sincere effort made today can prove to be worthwhile in the long run.

Cognition: the 7th domain of manoeuvre

The Meghna river testament argues that India's constitutional design is a strategic asset for cognitive resilience

THE vocabulary of conflict has outgrown its skin. For centuries, power was measured by the furrow of the plough and the wake of the warship. Strategy mapped land, sea, air, the silent depths, the vacuum of space and the flickering nerves of the cyber grid. Today, a seventh domain has quietly occupied the strategic centre. It is the most intimate and the most expansive: cognition.

This shift is no longer theoretical. From Eastern Europe to West Asia and across our own contested frontiers, the battlespace has already widened. Influence operations now precede, accompany and outlast kinetic action. The centre of gravity is migrating from platforms to perception, from firepower alone to the cohesion societies can sustain under stress. Across modern theatres, outcomes are increasingly shaped by narrative velocity, informational shock and societal resilience. Perception now compresses OODA (Observe, Orient, Decide, Act) loops, escalation thresholds and political decision cycles in ways classical doctrine did not fully anticipate. In mathematics, the zero, an Indian civilisational contribution, is the silent pivot that makes scale possible. In the architecture of a nation, societal coherence performs the same foundational role. Without that zero, the arithmetic of power becomes unstable.

Without it, even the most advanced kinetic integers — missiles, satellites and carrier groups — lose traction. When societal trust fractures, military capability grinds. When the two are fused, national power moves with far greater fluency. Cognition has therefore emerged as the

binding domain of modern conflict. At one layer lies the cohesion of the people; at the other operate the six traditional media of warfare. Each can function independently, but their true potency lies in integration. In the seventh domain, coherence is the adhesive that holds the whole.



The doctrine of the river: From attrition to envelopment India witnessed an early demonstration of this dynamic in 1971. The Meghna crossing, the audacious river manoeuvre that opened the road to Dhaka after the Pakistani Army demolished the bridge over the river, did more than reposition forces. It reshaped the adversary's perception of inevitability. By bridging water obstacles through air mobility and

placing armour where logic denied movement, the campaign imposed cognitive shock. The adversary did not run out of ammunition; it ran out of will. Cognition accelerated surrender. In the age of artificial intelligence, the Meghna principle regains sharp relevance. In the seventh domain, the aim is cognitive envelopment: preserving systemic equilibrium faster than an adversary can fracture it. This advantage is never improvised in crisis; it is forged in the inter-war years through sustained, imaginative training. India's structural masterpiece: Distributed resilience Most modern powers resemble fortresses — centralised, imposing and often brittle. India has evolved differently. It functions as a living network. The Preamble serves as the constitutional source code. Pluralism operates as a high-bandwidth shock absorber. "Unity in Diversity" functions not as rhetoric but as distributed defence. Electoral churn, linguistic plurality and federal complexity have repeatedly stress-tested the Republic. That accumulated experience now constitutes strategic depth. A nation of 1.4 billion distinct voices, anchored in democratic consent, becomes an unusually powerful absorber of informational shock. Power that is not socially anchored is strategically fragile. Every conflict after 1962 bears witness to this resilience.

The AI moment and digital scaffolding Artificial intelligence is compressing the interval between perception and reaction. In such an environment, credibility itself becomes a form of combat power. The drone is a vector; cognition is the medium. India's Digital Public Infrastructure offers an early template for architecting trust at population scale.

Properly governed, such platforms ensure that the distance between perception and verifiable reality does not widen dangerously.

The Ukraine stress test The Ukraine-Russia conflict provides a sobering stress test of the seventh domain. Years into the war, battlefield performance alone has not determined strategic endurance. Narrative coherence, economic stamina and political legitimacy continue to shape the trajectory.

What is increasingly visible is the centrality of societal cohesion under prolonged strain. States that retain internal trust sustain purpose longer; those that fragment accumulate strategic drag. From its founding moment, India embedded legitimacy in "We the People" and operationalised its civic compact at national scale. In the seventh domain, endurance flows not merely from firepower but from the cohesion that stands behind it.

The long war reality Modern conflict has shifted from a kinetic event to a prolonged systemic contest. In extended campaigns, the side that masters the learning loop dictates tempo, but endurance flows to the state that preserves its moral and institutional bedrock. Victory is no longer a single breakthrough. It is the sustained maintenance of decision advantage across time and distance. Narrative fatigue, decision overload and institutional drift now rival battlefield losses.

Doctrine itself is being forced into continuous adaptation. Rigid manuals struggle against conflicts that evolve in real time. The modern battlespace rewards organisations that can learn continuously, decentralise intelligently and adjust without losing coherence. Here again, the deeper advantage lies in the societal and constitutional anchors that sustain clarity under strain.

UP: Six killed, over 45 injured as double-decker bus overturns on Purvanchal Expressway in Lucknow

Lucknow.(Agency)

At least six people, including a woman and three children, were killed and over 45 others injured after a double-decker bus overturned on the Purvanchal Expressway in Lucknow today evening.

However, officials have so far confirmed five deaths. The accident occurred in the Gosainganj police station area near the expressway toll plaza when the bus, travelling from Ludhiana in Punjab to Motihari in Bihar, reportedly went out of control and overturned at the 11.2-kilometre mark. Around 80 to 85 passengers were on board at the time of the incident.

According to Deputy Commissioner of Police Nipun Agarwal, the deceased include one man, one woman, and three children.

Three of the victims have been identified as Prabhat Kumar, Anshu (5), and Anjali (10), while efforts are underway to identify the remaining victims.

At least 28 injured passengers, including seven children, 12 men, and nine women, were referred to the Apex Trauma Centre of Sanjay Gandhi Postgraduate Institute of Medical Sciences (SGPGI). Others were admitted to the trauma centre at King George's Medical University (KGMU). Authorities said the injured are currently in stable condition. Eyewitnesses alleged that the driver had consumed alcohol at a roadside eatery about half an hour before the accident, while some passengers claimed the driver may have fallen asleep. The driver and cleaner reportedly fled the scene after the crash.

A disturbing video from the scene showed the bus being lifted upright by a crane, after which bodies fell from the shattered windows onto the road.

In wake of fresh eviction drive Assn. galvanising growers

Shimla.(Agency)

The CPI (M) led Himachal Apple Growers Association is trying to launch a movement in wake of the recent decision by the Centre to remove free trade barriers on the fruits, agriculture and dairy products. At the same time, the Congress government is targeting a few apple growers slapping eviction notice against them. The first conference of the Himachal Apple Growers Association, Kotkhai Block, was successfully held on Monday in Khaneti. Representatives from various villages in the Kotkhai region attended the conference, along with State Committee member Sanjay Chauhan, Raman Tharta from the Rohru unit, and Jai Singh Jaita and Sanjay Kumar from the Jubbal unit. The conference discussed issues related to land evictions in detail and deliberated on future strategies. Speakers emphasized the need for an organized and phased movement to protect the rights of apple growers. This movement will continue until the government formulates a policy to allocate land, as per the Supreme Court order.

Additionally, the Central Government's Free Trade Agreement (FTA) with New Zealand and the European Union, the ongoing trade deal with the United States, the threats to apple farming, the Electricity Amendment Bill 2025, smart meters, and MNREGA were also discussed. A decision was made to intensify the movement against these anti-farmer policies of the government. On this occasion, a 23-member block-level committee was unanimously formed. Jitendra Ratnaik (Rinku) was elected as President, Prakash Dhirta and Rishi Lal as Vice Presidents, Chand Ram as Joint Secretary, Rakesh Mehta as Secretary, Rajesh Dharma as Treasurer, and Nishant Ronta as Co-Secretary.

GIS-based Master Plan for Agartala to be published soon

Agartala.(Agency)

The Tripura government has announced to publish a final GIS-based Master Plan for Agartala towards the planned, sustainable, and resilient urban development, which has a horizon year set for 2045 soon.

In a notification, the government recognised that Agartala serves as the administrative, economic, and cultural center of Tripura, and has experienced rapid spatial expansion, increased population density, and heightened pressure on urban services.

It pointed out that the lack of an updated statutory Master Plan has resulted in unregulated land use changes, traffic congestion, infrastructure strain, and environmental degradation, especially in sensitive and peripheral regions.

To tackle these issues, the government underscored the necessity for a comprehensive GIS-based Master Plan for 2045, which aims to regulate land use, direct infrastructure development, enhance climate and disaster resilience, and ensure coordinated decision-making among all implementing agencies.

Tripura Urban Planning & Development Authority (TUDA), had previously designated the Agartala Planning Area in accordance with the Tripura Urban Planning and Development Act, 2018. The area that has been notified encompasses 238.57 square kilometres, which includes the Agartala Municipal Corporation and 49 adjacent Gram Panchayats.

Punjab nods anti-gangster policy with cash reward, extends OTS validity; Budget session from March 6

The state Cabinet also approved the extension of OTS scheme validity from December 31, 2025 to August 30, 2026.

Chandigarh.(Agency)

Punjab Cabinet Monday gave its nod to the policy with a framework where citizens can earn rewards of up to Rs 2 lakh for sharing vital information leading to the arrest of gangsters in the state. In cases involving high-value targets or major breakthroughs, cash prizes of up to Rs 10 lakh may be granted to both police personnel and individuals who provide intelligence.

Finance Minister Harpal Cheema said the policy is to encourage informants to come forward with credible information about gangsters and wanted criminals. "This signals the government's firm resolve to dismantle criminal networks operating across the state."

Senior superintendents of police can sanction rewards of up to Rs 1 lakh. Commissioners of police and range IGS/DIGs are authorised to approve up to Rs 1.5 lakh. Heads of wings holding the rank of SDGP/ADGP can clear rewards of up to Rs 2 lakh. Any reward exceeding that amount will require the approval of the Director General of Police



(DGP), Cheema said.

The state Cabinet also approved the extension of OTS scheme validity from December 31, 2025 to August 30, 2026. These would apply to plots allotted to departments/PSUs and allottees who had submitted appeals for plot restoration under the policy dated May 7, 2025.

The Cabinet also approved payment of compensation to farmers who lost their crops to the floods last year and were cultivating government lands. Their crop damage was

assessed during the special girdawari of 2025. However, they were not granted compensation because their girdawari were changed in favour of the government. This will be implemented as a one-time measure on humanitarian grounds and will not confer proprietary rights in any manner.

The Cabinet also approved the creation of two additional posts of vice-chairpersons in the Economic Policy and Planning Board. The number of vice-chairpersons in the board will increase from the existing three to five, enabling sector-specific focus, improved monitoring of schemes and faster decision-making.

Punjab Cabinet also approved the summoning of the 12th Budget session of the 16th Punjab Vidhan Sabha from March 6 to March 16. The Governor's address will take place on March 6, and the finance minister will present the Budget for 2026-27 on March 8. The Bhagwant Mann government is also likely to announce Rs 1,000 per month to every woman in the Budget.

As Punjab targets Rs 12800 cr revenue from excise, IMFL, IFL to go dearer

Chandigarh.(Agency)

Indian Made Foreign Liquor (IMFL) and Imported Foreign Liquor (IFL) will go dearer in Punjab from next fiscal, as the government has unveiled new Punjab Excise Policy for 2026-27 fiscal, targeting an increase of Rs 1780 crore in the revenue from excise.

In the new excise policy for the next fiscal, cleared by the Cabinet on Monday, the government will also allow manufacturing units to make single malt whiskies in the 2026-27 fiscal. Malt is a premium liquor, which is single grain (barley) based while whiskies have more than one grain.

The government has targeted a revenue of Rs 12,800 crore for the 2026-27 fiscal, compared to Rs 11,020 crore the last fiscal. The Finance Department had then

increased the excise collections target to Rs 11,200 crore.

Finance Minister Harpal Singh Cheema said that there is a target revenue increase of Rs 1780 crore



and till date have clocked a revenue of Rs over Rs 11,200 crore.

Sources in the government said while every IMFL bottle will go more expensive by Rs 10-20, IFL will see an increase of Rs 20 to 30 per bottle depending on brands. While the

price of Punjab Medium Liquor (PML) or countrymade liquor and Beer will remain the same, the quota of PML has been increased by 3 per cent at 8.79 crore proof litres. Last year, it was 8.53 crore proof litres. Cheema said to combat the sale of illicit alcohol, the government will introduce 40-degree P M L s u b - v e n d s specifically in areas identified as high-crime zones under the Excise Act.

"The quota for PML is to be fixed as Punjab has a number of distilleries manufacturing this liquor. Some brands sell at as low as Rs 60 per bottle. If we make the quota for PML unlimited, there will be no check on dumping of this liquor in the market," said a source in the government.

This year, the government has kept the license fee for beer shops low.

Last year, it was decreased from Rs 2 lakh per shop to Rs 25,000 per shop. "This year, there is a marginal increase. It would be Rs 30,000 per shop."

"The increase in target revenue comes from stricter penalties. The penalty for late fee has been enhanced from Rs 1 lakh to Rs 5 lakh. When we are going in for auto approval of new liquor shops and renewal, why should we tolerate delay in payment of fees," said the functionary.

To help beer shops, label approval will be offered on an auto mode. "This is our initiative under the ease of doing business. Beer is sensitive vis-a-vis season. Its sales peak during April, May and June. With auto label approval, it will be easier for the shops to sell it in April only. Earlier, it used to take time in label approval, printing and pasting. Now, it will be expedited," he said.

Six of garment trader's family, including five children, killed in devastating house fire in Meerut

Meerut.(Agency)

A devastating fire claimed the lives of six members of a garment trader's family, including five children, in Meerut on Monday evening.

The tragic incident occurred in Gali No. 1 near Surahi Wali Masjid in Kidwai Nagar under the Lisadi Gate police station limits. According to police, the fire broke out in a two-storey house while the trader, Iqbal alias Asim, had gone to offer prayers at a nearby mosque along with his brother Farukh. At the time of the incident, seven family members — two women and five children — were inside the house. The victims have been identified as Iqbal's wife Rukhsar (30) and their twin six-month-old daughters, Nabia and Inayat. Farukh's children, Mahvish (12) and Hamad (4), and another child, Addas (3), also lost their lives in the blaze. Iqbal's mother, Ameer Bano (55), and a neighbor sustained serious burn injuries and are currently undergoing treatment.

According to eyewitnesses, children were playing while the women were cooking when the fire suddenly broke out. Residents noticed thick smoke billowing from the house and immediately alerted the police and fire department. Due to the narrow lanes in the locality, fire tenders faced difficulty

accessing the site. Firefighters had to reach the house through a neighboring rooftop and used ladders from an adjacent building to rescue those trapped inside.

Family members remained trapped in the flames for nearly 30 minutes. The fire brigade battled the blaze for around two hours before bringing it under control. All victims were rushed to a local hospital, where Rukhsar and the five children were declared dead on arrival.

City Superintendent of Police Ayush Vikram Singh said preliminary investigations suggest a short circuit may have caused the fire. However, local residents suspect that a gas leak could have triggered the blaze. Officials confirmed that a large quantity of garments was stored inside the house, which may have intensified the fire.

Senior district officials, including the District Magistrate, Senior Superintendent of Police, and other police officers, visited the hospital following the incident. Local MLA Gulam Mohammed and other political representatives also met the grieving family. Chief Fire Officer Surendra Singh stated that the fire has been extinguished and the exact cause is under investigation. The bodies have been sent for post-mortem examination, and the injured are receiving medical treatment.

Labourer dies after falling into open manhole on vacant DDA land

New Delhi: Days after a biker lost his life after he fell into an open pit in Janakpuri, another fatal accident linked to civic negligence has been reported from Rohini, raising concerns over uncovered manholes and public safety. A 32-year-old labourer died after allegedly falling into an open manhole on a vacant Delhi Development Authority (DDA) land in Sector 32, Rohini, the police said on Tuesday. The police said they received a PCR call around 2:36 pm at the Begumpur police station regarding a person suspected to have fallen into a manhole. A police team reached the spot to verify the information. The caller, Amir Hussain, a resident of Uchati village in Darbhanga district of Bihar, told the police that his friend - Birju Kumar Rai (32), a labourer from Ward No. 14, Sadipur, Badnaha in Samastipur district of Bihar - had been missing since last evening. Amir told the police that Birju was last seen with another friend, Budhan Das, alias Suraj (33), a resident of Bhopati village in Madhubani district, Bihar. The duo reportedly consumed alcohol on Sunday night. While they were returning to their nearby jhuggi around 7:30 pm, Birju allegedly lost control and fell into an open manhole. Budhan reportedly did not raise an alarm or inform anyone about the fall as he was intoxicated. He informed Amir Hussain about the incident only after regaining consciousness the following afternoon. After receiving information, the police alerted the DDA, fire brigade and other agencies concerned. The police launched a rescue operation with the assistance of the fire brigade and recovered the victim's body from the manhole. The body has been sent to a hospital for post-mortem examination. Police officials said further investigation was underway into the incident.

Nephews chase uncle, ram his car before shooting him dead over land dispute in UP's Shahjahanpur

Shahjahanpur (UP): A 52-year-old man was allegedly shot dead by one of his nephews after the latter repeatedly rammed his car, sending it off the road, police said on Sunday. SP Rajesh Dwivedi said the victim, identified as Veeresh (52), was on his way to a Shiv temple on Sunday afternoon when the incident took place under Garhiya Rangeen police station limits. According to the officer, five nephews were in hot pursuit of Veeresh, following him in three cars. When the victim's vehicle crossed Garhiya Rangeen, a car driven by one of the nephews allegedly rammed his car multiple times, causing it to veer off the road and plunge into a roadside ditch. Subsequently, a scuffle ensued between the uncle and the nephews, during which Veeresh was shot dead, Dwivedi said. Preliminary inquiry suggests an ongoing land dispute between the uncle and nephews may have led to the killing, he added.

ELECTRICAL WORK

E-Tender Notice No.: Sr. DEEL/MG45 of 2025-26 Dated: 20-02-2026. E-Tenders are invited by the undersigned for the following works: Tender No. EL/LM/25-28/42. Name of work: At New Guwahati: Electrical work in connection with augmentation of existing facilities for conversion into inspection bays for Electric Locomotives at New Guwahati Loco Shed. Tender Value: ₹2,00,42,533.83/- . Earnest Money: ₹2,50,200/- . Date & time of closing of tender: 11:30 hrs. on 20-03-2026 & opening on 11:30 hrs. on 20-03-2026. The complete information with the tender document of above e-tender will be available up to 11:00 hrs. on 20-03-2026 on website www.ireps.gov.in Sr. DEE/G&Chg/Lumding NORTHEAST FRONTIER RAILWAY Serving Customers With A Smile

Land to be provided to landless on priority: Himachal Minister Yadvinder Goma

Dharamshala.(Agency)

Himachal Pradesh Ayush, Youth Services & Sports and Law Minister Yadvinder Goma on Monday directed officials to expedite the process of providing land to eligible landless families for house construction on a priority basis.

Chairing the meeting of the District Planning, Development and 20-Point Programme Review Committee at the auditorium of the Himachal Pradesh Board of School Education in Dharamshala, the minister reviewed the department-wise physical and financial achievements under the New 20-Point Programme-2006 up to the third quarter of 2025-26 (ending December 31, 2025).

Goma instructed officials to ensure that all pending applications of eligible landless families are disposed of by May so that no deserving family is deprived of housing benefits.

He informed that 478 landless families in Kangra district have already been provided land by the government for housing purposes.

During the review, detailed discussions were also held on employment generation under MGNREGA,

issuance of job cards and timely payment of wages. The minister directed officers to provide employment as per demand.

He also stressed on strengthening Self-Help Groups (SHGs), ensuring timely credit facilities and providing effective platforms for marketing their products.

Emphasising the need for the timely implementation of welfare schemes, Goma said the benefits must reach the last eligible beneficiary within stipulated timelines.

He directed departments to submit Utilisation Certificates (UC/CC) promptly and regularly monitor the progress of schemes.

Referring to the state government's anti-drug drive, the minister said the "Chitta Soochna Inaam Yojana" has been launched to turn the anti-chitta campaign into a mass movement. Informants providing credible information about the drug 'chitta' are being rewarded. He added that while strict enforcement is being ensured, the government is also strengthening counselling, treatment and rehabilitation mechanisms for drug-affected individuals.

ELECTRICAL WORKS

Tender Notice No. DYCEE-PS-MLG-HQ-62-25-26; Date: 20-02-2026. E-tender are invited by the undersigned for the following work. Tender No. DYCEE-PS-MLG-HQ-62-25-26; Name of Work: Electrical Works Estimate in connection with installation of Solar Powered AI-Based Wagon Door & Seal Checking Points at 17 locations in NFR. Advertised Value: ₹27,15,685/-; Earnest Money: ₹54,300/- . E-tenders will be closed at 15:00 hrs. on 16-03-2026. The complete information with the tender document of above e-tender will be available in www.ireps.gov.in Dy.CEE/PS/Mailgaon/HQ NORTHEAST FRONTIER RAILWAY Serving Customers with a smile

PROVISION OF CCTV COVERAGE

E-Tender Notice No.: KIR-N-2025-K-75 Dated: 20-02-2026. E-Tenders are invited by the undersigned for the following works: Name of work: Provision of CCTV Coverage at yard covering mainline points and crossing of A&B category (Jogbani, Araria court, Forbesganj, Dalkhola). Tender Value: ₹1,05,87,872/- . Earnest Money: ₹2,02,900/- . Date & time of closing of tender: 15:00 hrs. on 16-03-2026 & opening on 15:30 hrs. on 16-03-2026. The complete information with the tender document of above e-tender will be available up to 15:00 hrs. on 16-03-2026 on website www.ireps.gov.in DRM (S&T)/Kathar NORTHEAST FRONTIER RAILWAY Serving Customers With A Smile

Bengal SIR: Supreme Court allows Jharkhand, Odisha judicial officers for verification

The Supreme Court has permitted the deployment of additional judicial officers, including from Jharkhand and Odisha, to fast-track the ongoing Special Intensive Revision exercise in West Bengal.

New Delhi.(Agency)
The Supreme Court on Tuesday allowed the Election Commission to publish West Bengal's final electoral roll on February 28 despite the large-scale voter verification process remaining incomplete. It also permitted the deployment of additional judicial officers, including from Jharkhand and Odisha, to fast-track the ongoing Special Intensive Revision (SIR) exercise. Taking note of the "enormity" of the revision process involving nearly 80 lakh claims and objections related to "logical discrepancies" and unmatched votes, the bench of Chief Justice

Surya Kant and Justices Joymalya Bagchi and Vipul M Pancholi said the statutory deadline for publication of the final roll should not stall verification. It invoked Article 142 powers to rule that voters added later through supplementary rolls would be deemed part of the February 28 final list. Acting on a report from the Chief Justice of the Calcutta High Court, the court noted that even with about 220 serving and retired additional district-level judicial officers engaged, disposal of the caseload could take over 80 days if each officer handled 200-250 cases daily.



To accelerate the process, the bench permitted the High Court to deploy civil judges with more than three years' experience and, if required, requisition serving or retired judicial officers of similar rank from neighbouring Jharkhand and Odisha.

The Election Commission will bear travel, accommodation and related expenses for any officers brought in from other states. Accepting the poll body's submission that the SIR could continue until the last date of elections, the court directed that supplementary electoral rolls be issued on a continuous basis as soon as pending verification is completed. It clarified that names included in such lists after February 28 would legally be treated as part of the final roll published on that date. The court also addressed concerns over document handling in the massive exercise, stating that

Aadhaar cards, Madhyamik (Class 10) admit cards and passing certificates would be valid proof if submitted physically or uploaded within the notified window. It placed the onus on Electoral Registration Officers and District Election Officers to demonstrate that documents were received, even if not digitised due to portal crashes or heavy volume. The order aims to ensure that the voter roll revision proceeds "on a war footing" without disrupting the electoral calendar, while expanding judicial capacity to clear the unprecedented backlog of claims and objections in West Bengal's SIR process.

Pawan Hans chopper crash lands in Andaman Sea after snag, all 7 on board rescued



New Delhi.(Agency)
A Pawan Hans helicopter crash-landed in the Andaman and Nicobar Islands on Tuesday after a mid-air snag, with all seven people on board rescued safely and no injuries reported. According to a Pawan Hans spokesperson, the helicopter had taken off from Port Blair around 9.30 am carrying two crew members and five passengers when it experienced a "short landing incident" near Mayabunder, news agency ANI reported. Emergency response teams reached the site promptly and evacuated all occupants safely. The incident comes just a day after a fatal air ambulance crash in Jharkhand that killed all seven people on board. Authorities confirmed that the Beechcraft C90 aircraft, operated by Redbird Airways Pvt Ltd, went down in Chatra district on Monday night while flying a medical evacuation mission from Ranchi to Delhi.

Anyone can be framed: Congress MP's shocker after Lashkar operatives' arrest

Congress MP Imran Masood questioned the credibility of terror investigations, claiming that "anyone can be framed." He said people have previously spent 20 to 30 years in jail before being acquitted, and asked what action was taken against those responsible for allegedly wrongful imprisonment.

New Delhi.(Agency)
Congress MP Imran Masood reacted to the arrest of eight suspected operatives linked to Lashkar-e-Taiba in an alleged terror conspiracy targeting Hindu temples in the national capital. Speaking to news agency ANI, after the accused were remanded to seven-day police custody, Masood questioned the credibility of terror investigations, claiming that "anyone can be framed." He said people have previously spent 20 to 30 years in jail before being acquitted, and asked what action was taken against those responsible for allegedly wrongful imprisonment.



"They can frame anyone as terrorists and the person comes out after 20 years. Regarding such things, you can neither say these are wrong nor say these are 100% right. They can do anything to divert attention," he said to the news agency ANI. He added that accountability should extend to officials who "fraudulently frame others." The remarks came after the Delhi Police claimed to have foiled a major terror conspiracy allegedly orchestrated by a Bangladesh-based handler linked to Pakistan's Inter-Services Intelligence and the top leadership of LeT. Investigators said the module had conducted detailed reconnaissance of several temples in Delhi, with videos recovered from the accused's mobile phones. Police sources described the operation as a significant breakthrough, alleging that the suspects were part of a cross-border network operating under instructions from handlers based outside India.

CAG to audit discoms and Pradhan Mantri Surya Ghar Muft Bijli Yojana

Launched by PM Modi on February 13, 2024, the PM Surya Ghar: Muft Bijli Yojana aims to provide "free electricity to households by facilitating the installation of rooftop solar panels".

New Delhi.(Agency)
The Comptroller and Auditor General of India (CAG) has initiated a horizontal performance audit of the operational and financial performance of discoms, as well as a performance audit of the Pradhan Mantri Surya Ghar Muft Bijli Yojana. Launched by Prime Minister Narendra Modi on February 13, 2024, the PM Surya Ghar: Muft Bijli Yojana aims to provide "free electricity to households by facilitating the installation of rooftop solar panels". Addressing the conference, K Sanjay Murthy, CAG, said the conference is aimed at generating innovative ideas by discussing best practices and drawing on collective valuable experience to enrich one of the most important sectors of our economy, ie, power. "At

the end of the conference, we would present our audit plan and align our audit focus in line with the deliberations of this conference", he said. Murthy said that the vision of enhancing



per capita electricity consumption from 1,460 kWh at present to 2,000 kWh by 2030 and 4,000 kWh by 2047 and providing reliable 24x7 quality power through a financially viable and environmentally sustainable power sector would require all the

constituents of the sector, be it Policy making, Generation, Transmission and Distribution to work together to achieve this Vision. In his address, Santosh Kumar Sarangi, Secretary, Ministry of New and Renewable Energy, said that renewable energy in the last decade or so has played a very pivotal role in India's energy transition journey. Organised by the CAG office, the conference was attended by the secretaries of the power sector from the Centre and states, Chairperson, Central Electricity Regulatory Commission (CERC), Chairperson, Central Electricity Authority (CEA), along with CMDs of NTPC, NHPC, SECI, PFC, Grid-India and PGCIL, and CMDs/ MDs of selected Power Generation, Transmission and Distribution, State PSUs and Vasudha Foundation, a non-profit think tank working to advance clear energy and climate solutions in India.

How India rolled out high-speed rail, metro using common tracks

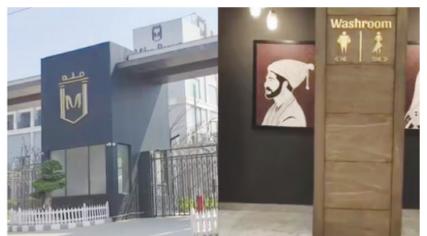
New Delhi.(Agency)
When Prime Minister Narendra Modi visited Meerut in Uttar Pradesh on Sunday, February 22, the headlines focussed on the launch of the full 82-km Delhi-Meerut Namoo Bharat Regional Rapid Transit System (RRTS) corridor. What many reports did not highlight was that he also inaugurated the Meerut Metro services, billed as India's fastest urban rail system (metro railway). PM Modi formally flagged off both systems during the same visit. He inaugurated the Namoo Bharat RRTS first and the Meerut Metro later. It was like hitting two targets with one launch because both share the same rail line in Meerut. Both the services, which use



common rail tracks, but operate different coaches. The RRTS connects cities at high speed, in this case Delhi and Meerut, while the Metro handles intra-city travel within Meerut. Technically, the RRTS rail track within Meerut is the same track used by the Meerut Metro. However, while the

RRTS has four stations along the Meerut stretch, the Meerut Metro serves 13 stations on that same stretch. That's how, with one launch, the government activated two rail networks, which is a twin boost to regional and urban mobility in the National Capital Region (NCR). With this, Meerut becomes the first in India to have RRTS and Metro share the same tracks. **WHAT IS NAMOO BHARAT RRTS AND WHY IT MATTERS?** Namoo Bharat is India's first RRTS. It links Sarai Kale Khan in New Delhi to Modipuram in northern Meerut. The corridor spans 82 km. It has been built by the National Capital Region Transport Corporation (NCRTC).

Video of Shivaji's image outside toilet sparks row; BJP MLA's brother denies link



New Delhi.(Agency)
A viral video allegedly showing portraits of Chhatrapati Shivaji Maharaj and Maharani Padmini being used as gender signboards outside washrooms at a private banquet hall in Haryana's Faridabad has triggered a major controversy. The clip, which surfaced on social media and quickly went viral, shows a man claiming off-camera that the visuals were recorded at Milan Banquet Hall in Sikri village. The footage drew sharp backlash online, with several users demanding action against the establishment's management, alleging disrespect to Chhatrapati Shivaji Maharaj — the 17th-century Maratha ruler widely revered as a symbol of valour. Some social media accounts also claimed that the banquet hall was linked to a legislator from Haryana's ruling Bharatiya Janata Party (BJP). Amid the growing row, Tiparchand — owner of the banquet hall and brother of a BJP MLA — denied that the premises seen in the viral video belonged to him. Speaking to India Today, he alleged that misleading claims were being circulated to defame him. He claimed that individuals upset over the demolition of illegal banquet halls in the area had dragged his name into the controversy.

Tiparchand said photographs shared by him showed that the interior layout, paintwork and decor visible in the viral footage did not match his banquet hall. He added that he was considering legal action against those responsible for circulating the video. **CONGRESS LEADER SLAMS BJP OVER VIDEO** The video was also shared on social media by several political leaders, including Congress MP Varsha Gaikwad. While she did not level allegations against any specific individual, she did attack the BJP over what she called "repeated insults to Chhatrapati Shivaji Maharaj's legacy". Calling the visuals "absolutely unacceptable" in a post on X, she urged the Haryana government to ensure immediate removal of the images and questioned why such incidents continued to occur under BJP-ruled governments.

Youth Congress chief arrested for masterminding shirtless AI Summit protest: Cops

Sources said the Youth Congress chief, Uday Bhanu Chib, was arrested after being grilled for nearly 20 hours. He faces charges of criminal conspiracy, voluntarily causing harm to a public servant, obstructing a public servant on duty, and wilful disobedience.

New Delhi.(Agency)
Delhi Police on Tuesday arrested Indian Youth Congress national president Uday Bhanu Chib in the early hours today, marking the eighth arrest in connection with the shirtless protest and slogans raised against Prime Minister Narendra Modi in the recently concluded AI Impact Summit. Sources said the Youth Congress chief was arrested after being grilled for nearly 20 hours, with police alleging that he was not cooperating with the investigation. He has been booked on charges of criminal conspiracy, voluntarily causing harm to a public servant, obstructing a public servant on duty, and wilful disobedience. According to Congress MP Sasikanth Senthil, Uday Bhanu was picked up by the Delhi Police at around 4:30 am. According to sources, evidence has been found suggesting that Uday Bhanu was involved

in the planning. There is a need for prolonged questioning of Uday Bhanu, and for that, he needs to be taken into custody for interrogation, police sources told. Sources also said they are not viewing it as a routine protest, but are probing an angle of deliberately maligning India's image in front of global dignitaries at the AI Impact Summit. The AI Summit protest case has been transferred to the Delhi Police Crime Branch. Further investigation in the matter will be carried out by the Crime Branch's Inter-State Cell (ISC). The seven arrested accused are linked to the Youth Congress, and Uday Bhanu will be confronted with all of them, sources further revealed. Only after confronting Uday Bhanu with the arrested accused, will it become clear

how, when, and where the planning took place, sources added. According to the arrest memo, anti-national slogans were raised and attempts were made to incite a riot. It stated that the Youth Congress chief, along with other co-conspirators, obstructed and assaulted police officials on duty. "Further, during interrogation, you have not cooperated and have also not disclosed the names of the co-accused who



fled the spot," the memo read. **UDAY BHANU'S LAWYER SAYS HE WASN'T PRESENT AT PROTEST** The Delhi Police produced the Youth Congress chief before Patiala House Court at 10 am and secured a four-day police remand. Describing him as the "mastermind," the police told the court that individuals from across the country were involved and that he needs to be taken to multiple locations for investigation. The police further said that designated representatives from other countries were present during the AI Summit, and protesters from various states assembled and demonstrated. On the other hand, Bhanu's lawyer argued that he is the national president of the Indian Youth Congress and was neither present at the protest site nor issuing any instructions related to the protest.

NEW

With lessons from Rohit Sharma, Angkrish Raghuvanshi embraces the long road to India cap

New Delhi. (Agency)

When you scroll through Angkrish Raghuvanshi's Instagram profile, this is the quote that greets you, the first of just 23 posts on the young batter's account. In an era where social media presence often mirrors personal brand-building, Raghuvanshi has chosen restraint over noise. His display picture, frozen in time with the Under-19 World Cup trophy held proudly in his hands, has remained unchanged for years, a quiet but powerful reminder of where it all began. When this interview began, Angkrish's attention was immediately drawn to the Manchester United backdrop in the room. His face lit up, and before cricket entered the conversation, football did. He spoke animatedly about his favourite club, insisting the good days were back and that "Carrick Ball" was in full flow. It was a glimpse into the 21-year-old beyond the cricketer — a young man whose world revolves around Manchester United,



Kolkata Knight Riders, Mumbai cricket, and above all, an enduring love for the game itself. "On my Instagram, it's just showing everyone what my life actually is. It's cricket and a bit of Manchester United, and I'm being as real as I can be," said Angkrish. That authenticity defines Raghuvanshi's journey. His emergence into the national spotlight came during the 2022 Under-19 World Cup, where he finished as India's highest run-getter with 278 runs in six matches. Performances of that calibre often accelerate careers, opening doors to domestic prominence and franchise opportunities. The IPL followed. Raghuvanshi made his debut for Kolkata Knight Riders in 2024, scoring 163 runs in 10 matches in a season that ended with the franchise lifting the title. The following year, he demonstrated greater assurance and responsibility, compiling 300 runs in 12 matches. Even in a campaign that fell short of expectations for KKR, Raghuvanshi's development stood out as one of the positives.

Suryakumar at No.3: Irfan Pathan urges batting shake-up for IND vs ZIM

New Delhi. (Agency)

Former all-rounder Irfan Pathan has suggested that India should have Suryakumar Yadav come in to bat at No.3 during their do-or-die clash against Zimbabwe in Chennai. India have their backs against the wall following the loss to South Africa in their opening Super 8 clash in Ahmedabad. Their semi-final chances took another hit when West Indies thrashed Zimbabwe on Monday, February 23. This means that the Zimbabwe game is one where the defending champions cannot afford a slip-up with the batting issues being exposed so far in the tournament. Abhishek Sharma's form has been under the scanner, while Tilak Varma has struggled to make an impact at No.3. Tilak has 107 runs from five matches with a strike-rate of 118.88. India's top three are all left-handers at the moment and shake-up has been suggested.



Pathan, however, feels the issue can be sorted with Suryakumar being put in at No.3 and Tilak coming in after him. "Maybe Surya should bat at number 3. To actually take away those three left-handers coming one after the other and just change that monotony," said Pathan to the broadcasters. Suryakumar has batted at No.3 for India in T20Is, scoring 864 runs in 32 matches with an average of 32 and a strike-rate of 158.53. He has scored a hundred and six fifties during this time.

BRING AXAR IN, A CHANCE FOR KULDEEP?

Pathan said that India should bring back Axar Patel into the team given his ability with bat and ball, which went missing during the loss against the Proteas. While the former all-rounder suggested that there will be a temptation to try out Kuldeep Yadav and bring back Sanju Samson into the team, he doesn't want too many changes from the hosts during the Zimbabwe tie.

ENG vs PAK, Super 8 preview: Pakistan out to break England curse in tricky clash

← **T20 World Cup, ENG vs PAK: England will look to seal their semi-final berth when they face Pakistan on Tuesday in Pallekele International Cricket Stadium. Pakistan, who have never beaten England in the tournament's history, face a tough challenge heading into the contest.**

LONDON. (Agency)

Pakistan are set to lock horns with England in a tricky Super 8 clash at the T20 World Cup on Tuesday. Salman Agha's men did not get the ideal start, with their opening game against New Zealand washed out by rain. From here on, they can ill afford a slip-up, as a defeat would leave them in a precarious position ahead of their final group match against Sri Lanka. The Super 8 Group 2 match between England and Pakistan will be played at Pallekele International Cricket Stadium. The match will get underway at 7 pm IST. JioHotstar and Star Sports will provide livestreaming and TV coverage of the match. England, meanwhile, have endured a few nervy moments but remain firmly in contention. They scraped into the Super 8s

after close calls against Italy and Nepal, before putting on a strong show with a convincing 51-run win over Sri Lanka. For England, this fixture offers an opportunity to seal a semi-final spot with a game to spare.

PAKISTAN LOOK TO DEFY HISTORY
Going into the next game, Pakistan don't have history in their favour, having lost all their three games against England in T20 World Cup history. But given England's vulnerabilities, Pakistan will fancy their chances. In the pre-match press conference, Sahibzada Farhan said that Pakistan are not fussed about past records and would want to give England a tough time.

"Yes, definitely. As you mentioned, the rain was not in our control. And while we didn't get a win, the morale in our camp is very high. The boys are confident. You know this is T20 cricket — the format is unpredictable. Like you saw in the match last night, results can change quickly. Our confidence remains strong, and our batsmen have performed well here. We believe we can give them a tough fight," Farhan said.

ENGLAND LOOK FOR THE PERFECT GAME
For England, performances have

been short of their best, but their current form has still been enough to carry them this far. Against Sri Lanka, their batting struggled, managing only 146. Apart from Phil Salt, who scored 62, none of the other batters were able to make a significant contribution.



It was largely due to the efforts of their spinners and early breakthroughs from Jofra Archer that England were able to secure the win. However, they are aware that there is room for improvement, with Liam Dawson admitting in the pre-match press conference that the side needs to play better cricket going forward. "Of course, we know we can play

much better than we have so far. But in tournament cricket, the most important thing is getting the win, no matter how it looks. Today, we probably didn't bat as well as we would have liked. However, the fight we showed with the ball and in the field proves that this team is in a very good place," Dawson said. England are not placing special emphasis on mystery spinner Usman Tariq, who has been Pakistan's standout bowler in the tournament with eight wickets at an economy rate of 5.82. However, Liam Dawson said England are focusing on Pakistan as a complete unit rather than concentrating on one individual player.

"It's not all about Tariq," Dawson said. "They're a very good team with some dangerous players and Tariq's obviously a very good bowler. But we're not going to just look at him. We'll look at the whole team and see how we can nullify them." Pakistan have played four completed matches so far and delivered convincing performances only against the United States and Namibia, while struggling against India and the Netherlands.

World champions India Women resume ODI duties in Alyssa Healy's farewell festival

New Delhi. (Agency)

The ODI series against Australia promises to be a memorable chapter for India Women. For the first time, India will step onto the field carrying the tag of world champions - a title that brings heightened expectations and greater scrutiny. When Harmanpreet Kaur's women take the field for the series opener on February 24 at The Gabba in Brisbane, the spotlight will shine brighter than ever. Confidence is already flowing through the squad after scripting history by clinching their first T20I series win in Australia in a decade. India currently hold a 4-2 lead in the ongoing multi-format series following their triumph in the T20Is, and they will be keen to carry that momentum into the 50-over format.

Australia, meanwhile, find themselves in unfamiliar territory. The hosts suffered their first home series defeat since 2017 - a rare blemish in what has otherwise been a dominant era. The Sophie Molineux era has not begun as planned, and the Australians will be desperate to respond strongly in front of their home crowd. Adding further emotion to the contest, Alyssa Healy is set to begin the final leg of her Australia career ahead of her impending retirement, giving the series an added layer of significance.

GOLDEN CHANCE FOR NEWCOMERS
Amid the familiarity of a World Cup-winning core, the Indian squad also carries a touch

of fresh intrigue. Two members of the touring party - Vaishnavi Sharma and Kashvee Gautam - were not part of India's triumphant World Cup campaign, and each arrives with a story of her own.

For Vaishnavi, the series could mark a significant personal milestone. Having



already featured in T20Is and represented Mumbai Indians in the WPL, she is yet to make her ODI debut for India. The upcoming matches present an opportunity for her to break into the 50-over format and further cement her place in the national setup. Gautam's journey, meanwhile, has been one of resilience. After being ruled out midway through the tri-series in Sri Lanka last month, her return adds depth and balance to the squad. The series in Australia offers her a chance not only to regain rhythm but also to reassert her place in an

increasingly competitive lineup. Uma Chetry stands at a slightly different crossroads. She made her ODI debut during the World Cup clash against Bangladesh but did not get an opportunity to bat, leaving her credentials in the 50-over format largely unexplored. Although she has featured in seven T20Is for India, she is yet to consistently find her best form at the highest level.

CAN PRATIKA STEP UP?

One of the players to watch in the series will be Pratika Rawal, who is returning to competitive cricket after nearly four months on the sidelines due to injury. The 25-year-old opening batter, one of India's most prolific performers during the World Cup, has been included in the ODI squad after recovering from an ankle injury.

The setback forced her out of the knockout phase of the tournament, and she was subsequently replaced in the squad. As a result, she missed out on receiving a winner's medal despite her significant contributions earlier in the competition.

The injury also ruled her out of the Women's Premier League season with UP Warriorz, where she had been picked in the accelerated round at her base price. The extended layoff required careful rehabilitation, and fans closely tracked her recovery, with recent updates confirming her return to full fitness.

T20 World Cup: West Indies add to India's woes with thumping win over Zimbabwe

New Delhi. (Agency)

West Indies' rampaging victory against Zimbabwe has further compounded India's troubles in their ICC Men's T20 World Cup 2026 campaign, pushing them into a corner. West Indies crushed Zimbabwe by 107 runs in their Super 8 fixture on Monday, 23 February, at the Wankhede Stadium after posting the second highest total in T20 World Cup history. Set a daunting target of 255, Zimbabwe were bundled out for 147 in 17.4 overs. The emphatic victory has left India in a precarious position, as they now need commanding wins in their remaining two matches after suffering a 76-run defeat to South Africa in their opening Super 8 game. Zimbabwe began with intent in pursuit of what appeared an improbable chase, as Tadiwanashe Marumani (14 off 8) made a brisk start. However, he was caught



at deep point off Matthew Forde in the second over. Zimbabwe's troubles deepened when Akeal Hosein (3/28) produced a touch of spin wizardry to dismiss Brian Bennett (5 off 5) for the first time in the tournament. Three balls later, Ryan Burl (0 off 3) was caught at deep square leg, leaving Zimbabwe in serious

trouble. Gudakesh Motie's dream spell in the blink of an eye, the Chevrans collapsed from 20 without loss to 20 for 3 in the space of five deliveries. With Hosein extracting sharp turn from the surface, Gudakesh Motie (4/28) joined the party and delivered his career-best spell, running through the Zimbabwe batting order. He first outfoxed Dion Myers (28 off 15), who was squared up by the sharp turn and lost his stumps.

T20 World Cup: ZIM vs WI Highlights
Motie consistently hit the ideal length on the pitch and continued to trouble the batters, turning the ball sharply away from the right-handers and repeatedly beating the outside edge. He later shattered Sikandar Raza's (27 off 20) stumps and made Tashinga Musekiwa's day even worse by dismissing him for a golden duck.



in the opening over yet again. Abhishek finally opened his account in the tournament against South Africa, but the respite was short-lived. Looking desperate to get bat on ball, the southpaw was dismissed for 15 off 12 deliveries after being deceived by a slower ball from Marco Jansen. It has been a tournament to forget for the world's No. 1-ranked T20I batter, who has been unable to find any rhythm so far.

TIME TO BRING SANJU BACK?

With India now facing a must-win scenario following dominant victories by West Indies and South Africa, the team management has hinted at bringing Sanju Samson back into the playing XI to arrest the cycle of poor starts.

PAK vs ENG: Will rain washout yet another Super 8s game for Pakistan in Pallekele

← **PAK vs ENG, T20 World Cup 2026 Super 8s: Pakistan's second Super 8s game against England in Pallekele looks set to avoid the rain that washed out their opener, with forecasts showing just a 2 per cent chance of showers on Tuesday.**

New Delhi. (Agency)

Pakistan will be desperate to get back on the field when they face England in their second T20 World Cup 2026 Super 8s game at the Pallekele International Cricket Stadium on Tuesday, February 24, after their opening match at the same venue was washed out.

With only three games per side in the Super 8s and a semifinal spot on the line, there is little margin for error. The washout against New

Zealand has already dealt Pakistan a significant blow, making Tuesday's encounter against England all the more critical. One point from a washed-out game is far from ideal when qualification hangs in the balance. The positive news is that the weather forecast looks far more promising this time around.

According to Accuweather, rain is unlikely, with just a 2 per cent chance of precipitation, which will be music to the ears of cricket fans hoping for an uninterrupted contest. Temperatures are expected to hover around 27 degrees Celsius before dipping to 25 degrees in the evening, offering ideal playing conditions. Pakistan, led by Salman Ali Agha, will fancy their chances in Sri Lankan conditions. Having played all their matches on the island so far, they have acclimatised well to the surfaces and environment. Their potent spin-heavy attack has been instrumental in

their progress to this stage and could prove decisive once again against an England side that has historically struggled against quality spin bowling in subcontinental conditions. **PAK vs ENG: PAKISTAN'S**



ROUTE TO THE SEMIS

With their opening Super 8 clash against New Zealand washed out, Pakistan have already

lost control of their destiny. In a three-match phase where every point counts, the margin for error is razor-thin. Victory over England on Tuesday would simplify matters considerably. Pakistan would move to three points, and a subsequent win against Sri Lanka in their final game would guarantee a semifinal berth at five points, regardless of other results. It would put qualification firmly back in their own hands. A loss, however, would leave Pakistan on one point and reliant on England beating New Zealand in the final group game to keep their hopes alive. Even then, net run rate could become a deciding factor in a tight three-way tussle.

Another washout would be equally problematic. Pakistan would finish on two points and still need favourable results elsewhere, with qualification potentially coming down to net run rate if multiple teams end on four points.

Global jitters hit Dalal Street as Indian markets open sharply lower

New Delhi.(Agency)

Indian equity markets opened Tuesday, February 24, on a distinctly weak footing as global risk aversion spilled over into domestic trading. Benchmarks slipped sharply at the opening bell, reflecting investor unease over renewed uncertainty around US trade policy and a broader pullback in global equities. The early sell-off was broad-based, with declines visible across heavyweight stocks as well as the wider market. Heavy selling pressure dominated early trade. The Nifty 50 began the session around 25,640, down about 70-75 points, while the BSE Sensex opened near 83,050, slipping roughly 230-240 points from its previous close. The weak start reflected lingering global uncertainty and a cautious risk-off mood at the opening bell.

The negative tone was set by overnight losses on Wall Street, where concerns over fresh tariff measures and their potential impact on global growth weighed heavily on sentiment. Asian markets largely followed suit, offering little support to Indian equities. Against this backdrop, traders moved quickly to cut exposure, particularly in sectors seen as vulnerable to external shocks, reinforcing the risk-off mood at the start of the session.

"Escalating US-Iran geopolitical tensions have heightened concerns over potential oil supply disruptions, while the rollout of Trump's 10-15% global tariffs from today has injected fresh uncertainty into export-oriented sectors, despite recent calibrations in the US-India trade understanding," said R Ponmudi, a senior market analyst and CEO at broking and wealth tech firm Enrich Money. Information technology stocks bore the brunt of the selling pressure, extending recent underperformance as worries over slowing global demand and structural challenges continued to cloud the outlook for the sector. Export-oriented stocks more broadly were also under pressure, reflecting fears that prolonged trade uncertainty could weigh on earnings visibility. Cyclical sectors such as autos and metals joined the decline, adding to the drag on headline indices.

Rupee falls 7 paise to 90.96 against the US dollar in early trade

MUMBAI.(Agency)

The rupee fell by 7 paise to 90.96 against the US dollar in early trade on Tuesday, weighed down by a rise in global crude oil prices and a stronger greenback.

A poor start to the domestic equity markets further pressured the local unit, but FII inflows provided support, preventing a sharp fall, forex traders said.

At the interbank foreign exchange, the rupee opened at 90.91 against the US dollar and slipped further to 90.96, down 7 paise from its previous close.

The rupee gained 5 paise to settle at 90.89 against the US dollar on Monday. "The Reserve Bank might be intervening to keep the rupee away from 91.00 levels, but the buying will itself allow it to go beyond 91.00 levels," Anil Kumar Bhansali, Head of Treasury and Executive Director, Finrex Treasury Advisors LLP, said. Meanwhile, the dollar index, which gauges the greenback's strength against a basket of six currencies, was trading 0.11 per cent higher at 97.81.

"The dollar index was higher amid a repositioning. It faces headwinds from (US President Donald) Trump's 15 per cent global tariffs announcement after the unfavourable Supreme Court ruling," Bhansali said. Brent crude, the global oil benchmark, rose sharply by 0.85 per cent to USD 72.10 per barrel. On the domestic equity market front, the Sensex tumbled 525.29 points to 82,769.37 in early trade, while the Nifty went down 145.85 points to 25,567.15. On Monday, foreign institutional investors purchased equities worth Rs 3,483.70 crore, according to exchange data.

Despite drop in 2025, Russian oil exports exceed pre-war volumes: report

New Delhi.(Agency)

While Russian oil exports dropped last year, Russia is still exporting higher volumes than before its invasion of Ukraine in 2022, researchers said Tuesday, calling for stricter sanctions enforcement.

The volume of Russian crude oil exports remained six percent above pre-invasion levels in the fourth year of the war, despite Western sanctions aimed at curbing Russia's "shadow fleet," according to a report by Finnish think tank Centre for Research on Energy and Clean Air (CREA). Russia's shadow fleet consists of ageing tankers, with often opaque ownership, used to circumvent sanctions imposed by the European Union, the United States and the G7 group of nations. However, oil revenues, which are fuelling Moscow's war chest, have dropped below pre-invasion levels, as Russia has been forced to adopt price discounts, the report said. "We've seen a significant drop in Russian fossil fuel export earnings as a result of new measures and greater enforcement," Isaac Levi, a CREA analyst and co-author of the report, told AFP. But he added that "there are still significant loopholes and areas that have been unaddressed by sanctioning countries", allowing volumes to remain high. Loopholes include the false flagging of ships but also the issue of re-exportation of refined fuels made from Russian crude oil to sanctioning countries. "We propose a ban of imports from any refinery or storage terminal that has received a shipment of Russian oil in the previous six months," Levi said. Crude to China, India and Turkey/Russian revenues from crude oil exports -- one of Russia's main exports -- decreased by 18 percent to 85.5 billion euros in the 12 months leading up to February 24, compared to the year before, according to the report. Meanwhile volumes fell by six percent to 215 million tonnes, for the same period, according to the report.

Banks can't afford to mis-sell, it is an offence: Finance Minister Nirmala Sitharaman

Finance Minister Nirmala Sitharaman said banks cannot treat mis-selling as routine business and called it an offence. Her remarks come as the Reserve Bank of India is preparing to issue guidance aimed at curbing mis-selling practices by banks.

New Delhi.(Agency)

Mis-selling has remained a recurring concern in India's financial sector. Addressing the issue in strong words, Finance Minister Nirmala Sitharaman said banks cannot treat mis-selling as routine business and called it an offence.

"Mis-sell is an offence, if you ask me," she said at a press conference that was also attended by RBI Governor Sanjay Malhotra. She added, "The message should go to the banks that you cannot afford to mis-sell." Her remarks come as the Reserve Bank of India is preparing to

issue guidance aimed at curbing mis-selling practices by banks.

A YEAR OF REPORTING ON INSURANCE MIS-SELLING Over the past year, Indiatoday.in has reported extensively on insurance mis-selling, examining why it happens and how customers are affected. Our coverage has highlighted how buying insurance is often made easy, sometimes with minimal explanation, while claims can turn into a long and stressful process. We also reported on how incentive structures within banks and financial institutions can push employees to prioritise sales targets over customer suitability.

For nearly a year, Indiatoday.in has tracked cases across cities where customers said they were sold insurance products that did not match their needs, income profile or long-term financial goals. In several instances, policy features were not fully explained at the time of purchase. Some policyholders later said they realised exclusions and conditions only at the time of claim. Our reports also examined how

internal incentive structures may contribute to the problem. Bank employees and relationship managers are



often given targets for selling third-party financial products, including insurance. Higher commissions and performance-linked incentives can create pressure to close sales quickly. Industry experts have pointed out that when compensation is linked heavily to product sales, there is a risk that suitability checks take a back seat. This gap between sales and service has been a recurring theme in customer complaints. The Finance Minister's

comments now bring policy-level attention to concerns that have been repeatedly flagged in our coverage. FOCUS ON CORE BANKING

The Minister said banks should concentrate on their core role of deposit mobilisation and lending instead of spending excessive time on selling third-party products. "I have been speaking consistently. Banks should concentrate on their core business," she said. "My pet peeve has always been that you do your core banking business.

You're spending more time on selling insurance, where it is not required, perhaps." She clarified that she is not against banks diversifying into other areas. However, she indicated that the balance may have shifted too far. She also acknowledged that mis-selling fell into a grey area between regulators. According to her, the insurance regulator may have felt that since banks were distributing the product, it was not entirely within its direct control.

Using Groww, Zerodha or other trading platforms Here's why DP charges matter

Many investors focus on brokerage fees but often miss another cost, i.e., DP charges. Whether you trade on Groww, Zerodha, or similar platforms, knowing these fees can help you avoid surprises.

New gency)

Many investors carefully compare brokerage fees before choosing a stockbroker. But there is another cost that often goes unnoticed, i.e., the Depository Participant (DP) charge. Zerodha founder and CEO Nithin Kamath has explained how these charges work and why investors should pay attention to them, especially when selling shares.

WHAT IS A DP CHARGE AND WHY IS IT APPLIED?

When an investor sells shares, the securities are removed from their demat account and transferred to the clearing corporation, so the trade can



settle. This process is handled by the broker's Depository Participant, and a fee is charged for it. Explaining this, Kamath wrote on X, "When you sell stocks, your shares are debited from your demat account and delivered to the clearing corporation for settlement. This debit is what attracts a DP charge." He added that this fee is separate from brokerage and is linked specifically to the delivery of shares

from the demat account. HOW MUCH INVESTORS TYPICALLY PAY

Kamath said Zerodha charges Rs 13.5 plus GST per transaction, which includes a Rs 3.5 fee paid to the depository. While this may seem small, the structure of DP charges varies across brokers.

He warned that some brokers charge a percentage of the total sell value rather than a flat fee. "Most brokers charge a flat DP fee. But some charge a percentage of the sell value. A 0.04% DP charge means Rs 400 on a Rs 10 lakh sale. Low brokerage plus high DP charges doesn't make sense," he said. This means investors focusing only on low brokerage could end up paying more overall if DP charges are higher.

FREQUENCY OF CHARGES CAN MAKE A BIG DIFFERENCE

Another factor investors should watch is how often DP charges are applied. Some brokers charge the fee every time a sell order is executed, even if it is the same stock on the same day.

Paramount raises offer for Warner Bros Discovery amid Netflix threat: Report

New Delhi.(Agency)

The fight to take control of Warner Bros Discovery has intensified after Paramount Skydance increased its takeover bid, reported news agency Reuters. The revised offer is aimed at challenging Netflix, which is currently Warner Bros' preferred buyer.

The fresh bid marks another twist in what has become one of the biggest deal battles in the global media industry. Warner Bros Discovery owns some of Hollywood's most recognised titles, including the Harry Potter and Game of Thrones franchises. The outcome of this contest could reshape the streaming market. Paramount's updated proposal improves on its earlier offer of \$108.4 billion, or \$30 per share, for the entire company. As per the report, the new bid seeks to address concerns raised by

Warner Bros about how certain Paramount's financing arrangements are. Netflix remains Warner Bros' chosen bidder. It had offered \$27.75 per share in cash, valuing the studios and streaming assets at about \$82.7 billion. Under the deal terms, Netflix has the right to match Paramount's latest offer.

Netflix is seen as having strong cash reserves and could increase its bid. Paramount's proposal is backed by Oracle billionaire Larry Ellison, father of Paramount Skydance's David Ellison. Earlier, Warner Bros rejected an improved proposal from Paramount. That version included covering Netflix's \$2.8 billion termination fee and adding a 25-cent per share quarterly "ticking fee" from next year. The ticking fee was meant to compensate shareholders for any delay in

completing the transaction. Warner Bros said the February 10 offer from Paramount did not qualify as a superior proposal. The board then asked Paramount to submit its "best and final offer" within seven days, setting a deadline of February 23. Analysts at Moffett Nathanson had previously said that a bid of around \$34 per share from Paramount could bring the bidding war to an end and avoid further debate over the value of Discovery Global.

SPINOFF AT THE CENTRE OF DISPUTE

A key difference between the two offers is Warner Bros' plan to spin off its cable television assets into a separate company called Discovery Global. These assets include CNN and HGTV. Warner Bros has estimated that the spinoff could be worth between \$1.

Sensex, Nifty tank in early trade as IT stocks bleed; Infosys down 3%

New Delhi.(Agency)

Benchmark stock market indices opened lower on Tuesday, after having seen healthy gains in the previous session as IT stocks tanked, tracking the selloff in Wall Street overnight.

The S&P BSE Sensex was down by 722.19 points to 82,572.47, while the NSE Nifty50 plummeted 203.60 points to 25,509.40 as of 10:04 am.

Dr. VK Vijayakumar, Chief Investment Strategist, Geojit Investments Limited, said that the trend of weakness in tech stocks stemming from the potential AI impact continues. The weakness in the ADRs of Indian IT companies indicates that this segment will remain under pressure. The EU freezing the deal with US in the light of the tariff changes following the US Supreme Court verdict and Trump's warnings to countries backing away from deals indicate that the tariff drama has more in store for economies and markets," he added. At the opening bell, IT stocks came under sharp selling pressure in early trade. Among the



gainers, Power Grid Corporation of India Ltd led with a rise of 0.51%.

It was followed by Asian Paints Ltd, which gained 0.37%. Axis Bank Ltd moved up 0.36%, while State Bank of India Ltd added 0.21%. Kotak Mahindra Bank Ltd also opened slightly higher, rising 0.09%.

HCL Technologies Ltd saw the sharpest fall, dropping 4.02%. Infosys Ltd declined 3.51%, Bharti Airtel Ltd and Tata Consultancy Services Ltd both fell 3.17%, and Eternal Ltd was down 3.15%, reflecting the heavy sell-off in IT stocks at the start of trade. Vijayakumar said that a positive trend in the market that will have significant bearing on the markets is the change in the FII strategy in India. "FIIs have been buyers in ten out of the last seventeen trading sessions indicating their renewed interest in India. The improving corporate earnings in India is the principal reason for this change in FII stance. Given the robust macros of the Indian economy and improving corporate earnings, this FII buying trend can continue," he added.

FedEx seeks refund, sues US over Trump's emergency tariff order

New Delhi.(Agency)

FedEx has filed a lawsuit against the United States government seeking a refund of tariffs imposed under President Donald Trump's emergency powers, reported news agency Reuters. FedEx said on Monday that it has filed a lawsuit in the US Court of International Trade seeking a refund of tariffs imposed under Trump's emergency powers. The case follows a recent ruling by the US Supreme Court, which found that the tariffs were unlawful. The lawsuit is seen as one of the most high-profile attempts so far to reclaim funds after the Supreme Court last week ruled 6-3 that Trump went beyond his authority. The court said he wrongly used the International Emergency Economic Powers Act, or IEEPA, to impose tariffs on imported goods. IEEPA is a law mainly used for sanctions. According to economists at the Penn-Wharton Budget Model, more than \$175 billion in tariff collections could now be open to refunds following the court's decision, as per the report. In its court filing, FedEx said, as quoted in the report, "Plaintiffs seek for themselves a

full refund from Defendants of all IEEPA duties Plaintiffs have paid to the United States." The company was referring to the tariffs imposed under the emergency order. FedEx and its logistics arm acted as the importer of record for goods that were subject to these IEEPA tariffs. As importer of record, a company is legally responsible for ensuring goods comply with customs laws and for paying any duties. The Memphis-based company did not disclose how much money it is seeking to recover.

FedEx has named U.S. Customs and Border Protection, its commissioner Rodney Scott, and the United States of America as defendants in the lawsuit. Customs and Border Protection and the White House did not immediately respond to requests for comment, according to Reuters.

The law firm Crowell & Moring, based in Washington, D.C., is representing FedEx in the case. The firm referred Reuters to FedEx for comment, but the company did not immediately respond.

Crowell & Moring is also representing other companies in similar IEEPA tariff

refund cases. These include discount retailer Costco, cosmetics company Revlon and eyewear group EssilorLuxottica.

Trade lawyers expect a wave of lawsuits from companies seeking to recover



billions of dollars in tariffs. However, the process for refunds has not yet been fully set out. Although the Supreme Court ruled that the tariffs were illegal, the lower court must now decide how the refund process will work. This has added uncertainty for businesses that want their money back. Ron Ciotti, a partner at law firm Hinckley Allen in Boston, said importers, distributors and suppliers are likely to be in the strongest position to claim refunds.

He represents construction contractors and developers across the United States.

Their advantage, he said, is that they usually have customs paperwork or invoices that clearly show the tariff costs for specific goods. "If there was a tariff escalation in your contract or a price adjustment clause based on tariffs, and that's why the price went up, if you had a contract that stated that, then you might be able to get a refund," Ciotti told Reuters. He also commented on public discussion around whether consumers could get refunds. "I've heard some (people) saying this is such a win for the consumer, because they should get refunds back on certain products that would have been under tariffs," Ciotti told Reuters.

"I don't see how they can," he added. He explained that many businesses and consumers paid higher prices for goods without written proof showing how much of the increase was due to tariffs. Without clear documentation, it may be difficult to claim refunds. Separately, California Governor Gavin Newsom called for tariff refund cheques for Americans after the Supreme Court struck down the measures.

Triptii Dimri

Celebrates Birthday With Rumoured BF Sam Merchant, Shares Glimpses From Fun-Filled Bash

Bollywood actress Triptii Dimri is celebrating her birthday today, and wishes for the actress have been pouring in on social media. Her rumoured boyfriend Sam Merchant shared their unseen photo and wished her on this special occasion. Meanwhile, Triptii also rang in her birthday with Sam and their friends, including Larissa Bonesi, Rahul Jhangiani and others.

Triptii Dimri's Birthday Celebration

Triptii Dimri and Sam Merchant took to their Instagram stories to share several photos and video clips from her birthday bash. First, Sam shared a lovely selfie with the actress, and wrote, "Happy birthday." The rumoured couple rocked coordinated black outfits. Meanwhile, other pictures and videos show Triptii having a blast



at her birthday bash. She was seen cutting several cakes on her birthday, surrounded by her loved ones. In one photo, she is seen holding balloons and striking a pose against the beautiful birthday decor. Check out some glimpses below!

Triptii Dimri And Sam Merchant's Dating Rumours

Triptii and Sam Merchant have been rumoured to be dating for a few years. As per reports, the Bhool Bhulaiyaa 3 actress began dating Sam after her rumoured breakup with Karnesh Ssharma, Anushka Sharma's brother, in December 2022. While neither Sam, nor Triptii has acknowledged or confirmed the dating rumours, their frequent joint appearances add fuel to the speculations. Meanwhile, Triptii's Spirit co-star Prabhas also shared a lovely birthday wish for her. "Happy birthday Triptii. Wishing you the very best always," he wrote.

Triptii Dimri's Work Front

Triptii Dimri was recently seen in Vishal Bhardwaj's film O'Romeo, in which she starred opposite Shahid Kapoor. The film was released in theatres on February 13. Backed by Sajid Nadiadwala, the film also features Nana Patekar, Avinash Tiwary, and Farida Jalal. Up next, Triptii will be seen in Sandeep Reddy Vanga's upcoming film 'Spirit' with Prabhas. The film is slated for a 2027 release and has already generated significant buzz. Earlier this year, the makers unveiled the first poster, which instantly caught the internet's attention. The striking visual featured Triptii in a simple saree, lighting a cigarette for a bruised and battered Prabhas.



Tanya Mittal

Praises 'Fabulously Awesome' Shalini Passi At Her Debut Book Launch

Philanthropist, art connoisseur and reality television personality Shalini Passi has officially added "author" to her list of achievements with the launch of her debut book, The Art of Being Fabulous. The book launch marked a significant milestone in her journey, bringing together voices from the worlds of politics, entertainment and culture. Among the notable guests was Tanya Mittal, who rose to prominence after appearing on Bigg Boss 19. Tanya shared a video from the event on social media, capturing moments of her hugging Shalini Passi and engaging in conversations with fellow attendees.

Alongside the video, Tanya penned a heartfelt message that read, "Shalini Di, I've always admired your vibe, your grace, your magnetic energy. Somehow, we're both a little too unapologetically ourselves for anyone who can't handle strong, self-assured women. And honestly? That's the magic. Love you beyond words. Many congratulations on your book launch — you've always been fabulously awesome, and now through your book, you're teaching the world how to own their fabulousness too. Here's to confidence, class, and being beautifully unstoppable."

Shalini Passi Responds To Tanya Mittal's Post
Shalini Passi was quick to respond in the comments, expressing her appreciation for Tanya's presence and support. She wrote, "Thank you so much, Darling for being

there. Lots of love to you. You have such great energy. So happy that you got attend the book launch. Thank you for your love. Stay blessed."

Shashi Tharoor Praises Shalini Passi's Book

Renowned author and politician Shashi Tharoor also attended the launch and shared a few words about the occasion.

"Book launches are always special," he said, adding, "We celebrate your work and the ideas you have put



in these pages." His presence further elevated the significance of the event.

From Reality TV Fame To Literary Expression

Shalini Passi first gained widespread recognition through her appearance on Fabulous Lives vs Bollywood Wives, where her refined taste, elegance and cultural sensibilities stood out. With her debut book, she now invites readers into the philosophy that shapes her distinctive personality.

Bhagyashree Celebrates 57th Birthday With Paparazzi, Thanks Them For Lovely Surprise



Actress Bhagyashree, widely admired for her charming presence and dedication to fitness, rang in her 57th birthday on February 23 and it would not be wrong to say she is ageing like fine wine. While the Maine Pyar Kiya star chose to celebrate her special day with family and loved ones, she also marked the occasion with the paparazzi, who surprised her with a cake and flowers, making the celebration even more heartwarming.

Bhagyashree Celebrates Her 57th Birthday With Paparazzi

In a video, she is seen celebrating her special day surrounded by paparazzi. She thanked them for the sweet surprise as they sang the birthday song for her while she cut a chocolate cake. After cutting it, the actress also distributed slices among them. The birthday girl looked graceful in a white kurta-palazzo set, styled with oxidised jewellery.

Bhagyashree Shares Her Birthday Plan

Despite her busy shooting schedule, Bhagyashree decided not to treat her February 23 birthday like a regular workday. Instead, she chose to spend the time with her family and reflect. This year, she has taken a break and gone on a mother-daughter holiday with her daughter Avantika.

As reported by The Times of India, she said, "This year on my birthday I am taking a off with my daughter Avantika for a mother-daughter bonding holiday. We used to do these regularly, but we haven't been able to for the last two years. I think now is the time to break that jinx. This feels like the perfect way to celebrate my birthday." At home, birthdays turn into a three-day celebration. Her father-in-law celebrates on February 21, her son Abhimanyu on February 22, and Bhagyashree on February 23. She shared "After two massive celebrations, all I want to do is sit in a spa and relax. But like I said, this year is going to be different, as I am taking off for a holiday." There is one ritual she never skips. She said "As you grow older, birthdays are just a circle around the sun for another year. But something I follow religiously every year is a full body health checkup. As women, we often take our health for granted. The only way to remember it is to fix it to a significant date. I make sure that happens year after year."

Disha Patani Channels Perfect Summer Day Out Look In Tank Top And Shorts



Disha Patani channelled the perfect summer vibe as she went out in Mumbai. The actress was spotted yesterday out and about in the city in a casual yet stylish outfit. The actress was seen coming out of a café wearing a cropped butter-yellow tank top, which she paired with light-wash denim jorts, showcasing her toned abs. Disha was seen covering her face with a beige baseball cap and carried a matching brown slingback.

Disha Patani's Romance with Talwiinder

Disha Patani recently grabbed attention for her personal life after getting spotted with singer Talwiinder. Following their joint appearance at Nupur Sanon and Stebin Ben's reception, social media has been buzzing with speculations. During a recent interview with The Hollywood Reporter, the singer broke silence about the rumours. Addressing the speculations Talwiinder shared, "We just got to know each other just before the wedding, and all of this attention caught us off guard. We don't want to give in to the pressure or the rumours. We are still discovering ourselves, still figuring out ourselves."

He further added, "I would just like to leave it at that because if they are going to try to spread rumours, I am going to let the rumours be rumours." When asked if he is in love with the actress, he revealed, "I fall in love every day; I am falling in love right now." Disha, on the other hand, has not yet addressed the dating rumours.

Disha Patani on the Work Front

Following her cameo appearance in Vishal Bhardwaj's O'Romeo, Disha Patani is all set to appear in Holiguards Saga – The Portal of Force. Directed by Kevin Spacey, the supernatural action thriller is the first instalment in the Statiguards vs Holiguards franchise.

The film also stars Spacey, Dolph Lundgren, Tyrese Gibson, Brianna Hildebrand, and Eric Roberts. Disha Patani will also appear in the much-awaited sequel of the 2007 cult classic film Awarapan. In the sequel, Disha will star alongside Emraan Hashmi. As per reports, Awarapan 2 is scheduled to hit the theatres in April 2026.

Signs that a co-worker likes you



Signs that a co-worker likes you
Office romance is not uncommon. In fact, a large percentage of people dream to find their special someone within their office premises. But it can be tricky as many companies see an office romance as a breach of policies. Every love has its pros and cons, but if you still want to go ahead with someone from the office, then you need to be sure that the other person likes you. Here are some signs a co-worker might be into you.

They talk to you the most

If that certain coworker keeps talking to you a lot, in between meetings, coffee breaks and more, then chances are high that they might be interested in you. If you're new in the office, they will certainly take an initiative to introduce you to the office curriculums but if you're no longer new, and they still prefer to talk to you, then you know what to expect!

Wants to know more about you outside of the office

Your coworker will make it a point to know more about you, outside your employee profile. They would want to know your preferences and dislikes and build up a conversation at any time of the day. What's best is that they might even ask you to go out for a brunch with them. Take it as a hint for a date!

Brings you coffee

Work and coffee go hand in hand. It's almost impossible to survive office pressure without a good cup of coffee. And so, your coworker might even bring you coffee to clear your mind up! Now, that's a move only people do, who care about you. That person will make it a point to get you coffee at your most pressuring times, just to help you ease up.

Helps you out anytime

They might be crazy busy, but if your coworker is always up for helping you out despite their heavy workload, then be rest assured that they're into you. Taking out time and putting efforts into doing the heavy work for you is simply a bonus point if your coworker likes you.

Engaging in interesting conversations

Your coworker will always have something to talk about, so that you both may never run out of topic to converse on. It becomes quite evident that they love talking to you. They even seem to know your birthday and other special dates because they're simply into you! Another strong indication of their feelings towards you is by wanting to know more about your love life, and if you're single!



How to get your first Job right



No matter where your career takes you in the future, the memory of your first job will live with you for the rest of your life. Your first job, which represents your transition from college to the corporate world, must be replete with learning opportunities and provide a strong platform for building a solid foundation that can ensure that your career is on the growth track.

Profile first

The work you do is very important. A very crucial parameter in choosing your first job

is the profile on offer. Choose a job that exactly fits your interests, does justice to your educational qualifications and career aspirations and is something you are passionate about. Explains Nishant Kantawala, founder and CEO, IndieMix, "Many freshers make the error of ranking salary as the most important criteria while evaluating job offers. Always remember that money is not always important. You have the rest of your career to grow your earnings. Instead, focus on the

5 tips for women to take control of their Careers

Focus on your strengths and make a few wise moves to jumpstart your career.

Working women face unique challenges at the workplace. Lack of investment in professional development, the absence of a role model, and juggling between work and family life are just a few of the barriers. However, it is possible to cross these hurdles and come out a winner. Suggests Deepa Sapatnekar, head of communication, LinkedIn India, Korea and MENA region, "Don't wait for your employer to give you guidance on your career path. Choose someone you admire at your company or elsewhere, and look at the career steps they made to be successful.



Find out, for instance, how long they stayed in their role, and how often they moved to a new company."

More ways to take control:

1. Seek out women who can act your mentor. Join business networking sites LinkedIn groups to find professional women in your industry or region and make new connections.
2. Ask questions about what you should look for in a mentor.
3. Research positions similar to your own to understand the skills involved and pay scales so you can have regular informed conversations about your remuneration.
4. Save time and effort by using online networks to meet like-minded women professionals, mentors and key business contacts.
5. Can't find the time to attend networking events? Take a bit of time each day online to reach out to one key contact.

Securing the right job is vital as it sets the tone for the rest of your professional life. here are a few tips on how to go about it

There is no right or wrong answer to the debate between working at an established corporate or a start up. A first job with an established corporate will add weight to your CV and give you the opportunity to learn coveted business practices. However, life at a start-up will be dynamic and provide you a range of hands-on experiences across different profiles. While both start-ups and corporates have their merits and demerits, remember that the industry you choose to work in matters more. "My advice would be to enter a booming or upcoming sector or industry. There is no point joining a sector which is incurring losses, as this limits your growth, learning, opportunities and the buzz of activity within the sector" opines Kantawala.

Lasting impression

It's all too easy to get misguided while choosing your first job. People around you will always have an opinion on the matter --whether family relatives or peers. Additionally, companies and hiring agent will make their own pitches to you. Spend time doing thorough research on the company, its policies, the industry, etc, to craft your own point of view. Don't hesitate to ask your recruiter questions. Many freshers hesitate to seek clarifications to their doubts as they are unsure about how their questions will be received. Obtain absolute clarity about the job before you take a binding decision. Don't make the error of looking at your first professional stint as just another job; rather, value it as the building blocks of your career.



quality of work you pursue."

Considering the fact that most companies are branching out to multiple locations today, both in India and abroad, freshers must also be open to exploring locations beyond their home city. To veto an interesting opportunity just because it involves re location may be a decision you will later regret; working in varied locations will enrich your personality and add value to your profile.

Learning is the key

Since your first job is all about learning and development, ensure that you imbibe crucial skills that are integral in building your career. "You should work in an organisation which supports and facilitates learning to the best of its ability. For example, an organisation with an extensive training and development programme for workers would be highly beneficial. Planned training programmes will give structure and rigour to your training," believes Prabha Shankar, recruitment consultant, Shell Consulting India.

Agrees Srishti Roy, creative head, Orange Vistas, "I was recruited from campus as a trainee at my first job with a leading creative agency. It was an extremely well planned, hands-on experience, exposing me to all aspects and workings of the business. This gave me a very grounded, yet holistic view of the industry and helped me perform well at work."

Corporates vs start-ups

Must-follow work Etiquette rules

What do those opting for an etiquette class with a royal legacy have in store?

You never get a second chance to make a first impression, says Nisha Mehta, a senior trainer with The English Manner, a British finishing school that recently opened doors at an Andheri five-star.

I am there for a crash course in corporate etiquette, one of the several modules they run, catering to a wide cross-section, from ladies to children above eight. So far, my trainers have been stoic nuns at my convent school to well-meaning grandaunts, generous with knuckle raps when I'd wipe grubby hands on easily-accessible clothing.

"In the old days, children from affluent homes attended finishing schools in Switzerland, while on summer break. Now, ninety six per cent of young adults who approach us can't recognize flatware," she says, referring to the confusion with figuring cutlery and its varied purposes.

The 20 trainers here, have all worked with their English counterparts and boast of a legacy that goes back to founder Alexandra Messervy, a former member of The Royal Household of Her Majesty the Queen, helm part-time courses that use practical situations as tools. I, like the other 19 in a batch, would have to spare anything between Rs 5,000 and Rs 80,000 depending on the nature and length of module. I can choose from wardrobe planning, social etiquette, flower arrangements, dining, afternoon tea and 'special courses' for ladies.

- How to stand

Department, which has little to do with being expelled from a country on account of illegal status, concerns how I stand, walk and carry myself. I am told I walk like a "little boy". Mehta shows me how to do it right. Feet together, shoulders erect, tummy in and hands by my side. Practising with a book on my head, stepping heel to toe, will help. The unnecessary bounce or noise that your shoes make can easily be undone by adjusting your gait; heels are no exception. Do not stand with your arms locked behind your back -it is a sign of submissiveness best restricted to those called in to the principal's office.

- The way to sit Myth buster: it's okay to cross your legs in front of elders. It is not disrespectful, says Mehta, rubbing what I was told when young. "They tell that to

children who may not be able to handle their skirts," she says. the more casual yet elegant option, though, is to tuck one leg behind the other at an angle. Place your right leg near the right leg of your chair at an angle so that it can serve as marker. The angle, she explains, lends your body a pleasant silhouette without making it stiff.

Never, says Mehta, reveal the sole of your shoe to the person before you. "It is disrespectful," she says, adding, "This applies for men too."

- Shaking hands

When it comes to physical interactions at the workplace, handshakes are the only acceptable form of contact. So, you might as well do it right. Ensure you have clean, manicured nails. Unkempt nails are a deal breaker. Fellows, it's the same for you.

Ideally, maintain a three feet distance between yourself and the person before you. Don't lean in; it signals submissiveness.

When you make contact, the webbed skin between your thumb and index finger must touch the other person's. Grip firmly and shake twice, no more.

Similarly, when handing over your business card, use both hands, holding either edge of the card with the writing facing the

person receiving it. Don't forget to smile. When receiving a business card, use the same stance. Also, it's rude to put it down before the person leaves your side.

- Never do

"Don't fidget with your fingers. It gives away more than you intend to," says Anita Newton Engineer, another senior trainer. If your face is calm, kudos for hiding your nerves but make sure your fingers have received the memo too. "A person's attention must be stayed on the triangle of your face (eyes drawing down to a point). When you twiddle your fingers, you take their attention away from your face," she explains.

- Email etiquette

Besides basic grammar, be careful with salutations. 'Dear' is appropriate; 'dearest' is too intimate. 'Hi' and 'Hello' are best avoided. If used, it should be restricted to inter-department emails. The email format follows the same rules of a letter. 'Yours truly' is not to be used in official mails unless you work for your wife.

