

"Time Will Tell": DK Shivakumar On Karnataka Chief Ministerial Ambition

DK Shivakumar said that MLAs have dreams but "we have to listen to what the party says".

Mangaluru. (Agency)

Responding to the developments surrounding the leadership tussle and his camp pushing for his candidature for the post of Chief Minister, Karnataka Deputy Chief Minister and State Congress President DK Shivakumar on Saturday maintained that he will have to listen to whatever the party says. Speaking to reporters in Mangaluru, when asked about public aspirations for him to become Chief Minister, Shivakumar said, "People have dreams, MLAs have dreams, and even you (the media) have dreams. We have to listen to what the party says. When asked whether there would be a chance of sharing of power coming into effect after the State Budget, he replied, "Time will give the answer."

Asked about Dalit organisations expressing



their desire for Home Minister G. Parameshwar to become Chief Minister, he said, "Supporters will have their own aspirations. I cannot say no to that, and there is nothing wrong with it." The leadership tussle has resurfaced in Karnataka, with Chief Minister Siddaramaiah's son and Congress MLC Yathindra Siddaramaiah claiming that demands for a leadership change have not been accepted by the Congress central

leadership, and that his father will remain Chief Minister for five years. Speaking to reporters in Mysuru on Friday, Yathindra made these remarks, which have assumed significance amid reports that the statements were intended to counter Congress MLA Shivangana Basavaraj, a staunch supporter of Deputy Chief Minister D.K. Shivakumar. Basavaraj had urged the party high command to clear the confusion surrounding the leadership issue in the state and made his statement on Thursday. Responding to remarks by Chief Minister Siddaramaiah's son, Congress MLC Yathindra Siddaramaiah said that there would be no leadership change in the state and his father would complete the full term, Deputy Chief Minister and State Congress President D.K. Shivakumar on Friday taunted, "CM's son is our high command, and I will accept whatever he says."

Navjot Kaur Sidhu attacks Rahul Gandhi after quitting Congress

Navjot Kaur Sidhu attacked Rahul Gandhi on X, calling him disconnected from ground realities after quitting Congress, prompting reactions from party leaders and BJP figures amid political fallout in Punjab.

Chandigarh. (Agency)

Former Punjab MLA Navjot Kaur Sidhu on Friday launched a sharp attack on Congress MP and Leader of the Opposition Rahul Gandhi, accusing him of being disconnected from ground realities and unresponsive to party workers. In a series of posts on X, Sidhu said Gandhi had no time to listen to issues raised from the grassroots, adding that this lack of engagement had earned him the nickname "Pappu." She said repeated attempts to reach out to the Congress leadership had gone unanswered.

Sidhu also referred to her past association with the BJP, saying the party had recognised her talent by giving her a ticket in 2012 and appointing her Chief Parliamentary Secretary. She, however, clarified that she was not currently in touch with the BJP. Sidhu quit the Congress earlier

this month after being suspended by the party following her controversial remarks suggesting that a person with a suitcase of Rs 500 crore could become chief minister in

only after several months. "If Rahul Gandhi doesn't have time for party workers, then they also don't have time for him," she said in one of her posts. She also challenged Gandhi to ask Punjab Congress leaders to speak openly against the current government in the state. Earlier in the day, Punjab Congress in-charge Bhupesh Baghel said Sidhu was first suspended from the party and later removed, following her remarks. Sidhu's attack on Rahul Gandhi came shortly after Baghel's statement. Reacting to Sidhu's comments, Punjab Congress MLA Pargat Singh defended Gandhi, saying he was fighting against authoritarianism. "Rahul Gandhi is our leader, and people across the country

Punjab. She had also openly criticised Punjab Congress chief Amarinder Singh Raja Warring, calling him incompetent. Continuing her attack, Sidhu said Rahul Gandhi had little understanding of ground-level politics and responded to urgent calls

are looking up to him. Such statements should be avoided," Singh said. Former BJP minister Manoranjan Kalia took a swipe at Sidhu, saying her remarks about Rahul Gandhi reflected views held by many.



Ex-CJI Chandrachud lauds book for dismantling 'political mythology' of colonial benevolence

New Delhi. (Agency)

Former Chief Justice of India DY Chandrachud has praised a new book for rigorously dismantling the "political mythology" surrounding the British colonial rule in India. Justice Chandrachud on Friday said the colonial rule was portrayed as necessary, reluctant and civilising, rather than as a project of deliberate expansion and exploitation. He was speaking at the release event of a book by senior advocate and constitutional expert Rakesh Dwivedi titled 'Colonisation, crusade and freedom in India' by Rupa Publications.

The former CJI said, "A careful reading of colonial history across regions reveals that the justificatory patterns (for colonialism) are local or isolated. One repeatedly encounters a language of order, civilisation and progress. Colonial intervention is described as reluctant governance, reporting, responding to disorder, rather than the case of deliberate expansion." Chandrachud underlined that such history described pre-colonial societies as lacking coherence or historical continuity, unprepared for self-governance, while the colonial empire was made a reluctant custodian to manage the disorder.

Applauding the book, he said, "What sets this book apart is the method through which the political mythology (of the necessity or benevolence of the British empire) is brought to light. It does not follow a conventional, chronological narrative, nor does it organise the analysis around isolated historical episodes. This approach resembles that of a distinguished senior counsel who is."

He said that the author identified recurring propositions across centuries of Imperial writing, and then tested them against evidence drawn from economic history, global geopolitics and comparative colonial experience.

"Each proposition is evaluated in connection with others that serve the same justificatory process, allowing patterns to emerge through structured examination rather than assertion."

Centre can't digest our growth: Udhayanidhi Stalin says Budget snubs Tamil Nadu

Chennai. (Agency)

Tamil Nadu Deputy Chief Minister Udhayanidhi Stalin on Friday slammed the Centre, calling the Narendra Modi government "fascist" and alleging repeated infringements on the state's constitutional and financial rights. He made the remarks at a party gathering, accusing the Centre of mistreating Tamil Nadu through its policies and budget allocations.

Speaking at an event in Thanjavur, Stalin alleged that the Centre was attempting to marginalise the state by curtailing its financial and educational rights, claiming it was unable to accept Tamil Nadu's success. The Deputy Chief Minister also targeted the Union Government's education policies,

arguing that they sought to impose non-Tamil languages in the state. "Unable to digest Tamil Nadu's growth, the BJP government is snatching our financial rights, education rights and trying to impose Hindi and Sanskrit languages," he said.

Udhayanidhi Stalin also criticised the recently-passed Union Budget, noting the absence of any schemes dedicated to Tamil Nadu. "There was not even one single project for the state and even the word 'Tamil Nadu' was not even mentioned in the budget speech."

"Sitharaman claims she is from Tamil Nadu. But there was no mention of even one project for the benefit of Tamil Nadu in her



budget presentation. The Centre has been deceiving Tamil Nadu," he further said.

Udhayanidhi Stalin highlighted a pattern of neglect by the Centre, pointing to the previous year's budget, saying, "Even the word Tamil Nadu did not feature in the

budget." "Nirmala Sitharaman proudly says she's from Tamil Nadu but not even a single scheme for Tamil Nadu announced in the budget. EPS praised the budget even before it got released fully. You would all have heard of blind bhakts, EPS is blind slave of BJP," he added. He also slammed opposition leader Edappadi K Palaniswami for supporting the budget. "The Leader of the Opposition, Edappadi Palaniswami praised the budget even before reading it completely. He is a staunch devotee of the BJP, or rather, a staunch slave," he went on, adding, "Edappadi Palaniswami is acting as a slave of the BJP, which is why he is welcoming this budget."

KIIT Continues Strong Placement Performance for 2025 Batch; NVIDIA, Microsoft Among Top Recruiters

The Sikh Times

Bhubaneswar: KIIT

Deemed to be University (KIIT-DU) has once again demonstrated its strong standing among India's leading universities with an impressive on-campus placement performance for the 2025 batch. Despite a challenging job market globally, KIIT recorded an overall placement conversion of around 92.5 per cent, reaffirming why it is consistently regarded as one of the best institutions for campus placements in the country.

During the 2025 placement season, over 757 companies visited the KIIT

campus to recruit from around 5,000 eligible students, resulting in approximately 4,621 job offers across various schools and disciplines.

Strong Performance by KIIT School of Technology

The KIIT School of Technology (KSOT) led the placement drive, with more than 3,800 job offers made by 451 companies. The average CTC stood at Rs 8.5 lakh per annum, while 739 students secured multiple offers, reflecting the strong industry demand for KIIT graduates. Notably, over 1,500 offers were classified as "Dream Offers", and 59 companies offered packages of Rs 10

LPA and above. The highest package of Rs 51 LPA was offered by Microsoft, while mass recruiters such as TCS (530 offers) and Wipro (342 offers) hired in large numbers. In addition, 1,209 paid internship opportuni-

ties were generated, providing valuable industry exposure to students even before graduation.

NVIDIA Among Top High-Paying Recruiters

One of the key highlights of the 2025 placement season was the

recruitment by NVIDIA, which offered a CTC of Rs 36.28 LPA, placing it among the top-paying companies at KIIT. NVIDIA's participation reflects KIIT's growing reputation among global technology leaders and its strong focus on future-ready skills in areas such as artificial intelligence, computing, and advanced engineering.

Other companies offering packages above Rs 40 LPA included Human Resocia, Hike, and PayPal, further underlining the diversity and quality of recruiters visiting the campus. The KIIT School of Management (KSOM) witnessed participation from

161 companies, generating 401 offers for MBA students. The highest package was Rs 20 LPA, with an average package of Rs 7.25 LPA. The KIIT School of Rural Management (KSRM) once again achieved 100 per cent placement, maintaining its consistent record. In all, 51 companies recruited students, with the highest package reaching Rs 20.71 LPA and an average of Rs 5.75 LPA. The KIIT School of Biotechnology (KSBT) recorded 85 per cent placement, with several students opting for higher studies. 42 companies participated, and the highest package was Rs 8 LPA.



News box

FIRs to be filed in Manesar against violators for waste dumping, defunct STPs

Gurgaon.(Agency)

Municipal Corporation of Manesar (MCM) on Friday announced that the civic body will get FIRs registered against individuals and entities, especially residential societies with closed sewage treatment plants (STPs), for illegal dumping of rubbish and the discharge of untreated water – stepping up the agency's zero-tolerance approach towards the issue.

Civic body commissioner Pradeep Singh directed officials to also intensify routine inspections and ensure that action is taken on the spot against offenders, rather than issuing repeated warnings. The directive was issued during a meeting with Haryana State Industrial and Infrastructure Development Corporation (HSIIDC), where concerns over environmental damage and public hygiene were reviewed. Singh said open dumping of waste and untreated sewage would no longer be allowed under any circumstances, and enforcement agencies must act immediately when violations are detected. The move comes amid growing complaints about sewage being released into open drains and vacant plots, leading to pollution and health risks. "Societies found with non-functional or shut STPs will be reported to the Haryana State Pollution Control Board," an official said. "We will recommend punitive action to other departments, including cancellation of occupancy certificates by the town and country planning department and dissolution of residents' welfare associations through the district registrar," the commissioner said.

The commissioner also directed HSIIDC officials to launch joint enforcement drives with the police in Manesar's industrial areas to tackle traffic and encroachment issues. Action will be taken against vehicles parked illegally on roads, footpaths and central verges, as well as street vendors obstructing traffic movement. HSIIDC was asked to coordinate with the IMT Industrial Association to ensure strict adherence to designated parking norms in industrial zones.

Nurse dies by suicide in Gurgaon, cops suspect she was in distress

Gurgaon.(Agency)

A 33-year-old woman, who worked as nursing staff at a private hospital in the city, died by suicide at her residence in Jharsa on Tuesday. Police suspect mental distress as a possible reason.

The deceased was identified as Anuradha Chauhan of Ghaziabad in UP. She worked at Medanta Hospital and had shifted to Gurgaon around three months ago with her husband and their one-year-old son. The couple had been married for two years and lived in a rented accommodation. Police said Anuradha was alone at home at the time of the incident. When her husband returned, he found her hanging inside the house and immediately alerted the police. A team reached the spot and initiated proceedings. No suicide note was recovered during the search. Police said there were no visible signs of foul play. Statements of family members and neighbours were recorded as part of the investigation. An officer said the parents of the deceased informed police that Anuradha had been suffering from depression for a long time and did not suspect any foul play. No complaint has been filed in the matter. The body was sent for autopsy and later handed over to the family. Police said the autopsy report will be examined along with other evidence to complete the inquiry. Proceedings under Section 194 (inquest) of BNSS have been initiated.

Gurgaon court junks bail plea of accused in conversion case

Noida.(Agency)

A local court in the city has dismissed the bail application of an accused in a case involving allegations of forced religious conversion, assault and fraud, underscoring the seriousness of the charges against him.

The order was issued by Judicial Magistrate First Class (JMFC) Shivani Rana, who held that the allegations were grave and the investigation remains at a preliminary stage, making bail inappropriate at this point. The case stems from a complaint filed by a 22-year-old woman in Jan this year at Sector 14 police station, alleging she was deceived into marriage by a man who used a false identity and subsequently subjected her to assault and coercion, including attempts to forcefully convert her to his religion.

The accused, identified as 35-year-old Aarif alias "Aarav", was arrested by the Gurgaon police on January 28 after the woman lodged a detailed complaint.

Counsel for the woman, Manish Shandilya, argued before the court that the gravity of the offences and risk of interference with evidence justified continued judicial custody for the accused. "Police found identity cards of the accused in different names with different faiths," said Shandilya. In her bail order on February 3, JMFC Shivani Rana observed that the FIR and supporting documents revealed "serious acts of deception, physical harm and conspiracy" that cannot be lightly treated at this stage. According to the woman's written statement and preliminary investigation reports, a man named Tarif (34) initially approached the woman at her workplace in 2022 and later introduced her to Aarif under a fabricated identity. Tarif was also arrested on January 28. Aarif is accused of posing as a Hindu contractor named "Aarav," gaining the woman's trust, entering into a romantic relationship and solemnising a marriage in a temple.

The complainant said she discovered she was pregnant, after which Aarif tried to convince her to abort the pregnancy. When she refused, she was assaulted. Following childbirth in early 2025, she came to know that Aarif was already married with three children. The woman also alleged ongoing threats, violence and pressure to convert to another religion by Aarif's family members.

Temple to trishul, Kedarnath set to come alive at Noida flower show this

Gurgaon.(Agency)

For four days in Feb, a corner of Noida will be transformed into a riot of colour, with a floral reimagining of the Kedarnath shrine rising at the centre of the city's annual flower show.

The 38th edition of the flower show will be organised by Noida Authority from Feb 19 to 22 at Shivalik Park near Shilp Haat in Sector 33A. This year, visitors will be greeted by a 25-foot-high floral gate and temple-inspired installation at the heart of the event, designed to evoke the Himalayan shrine through thousands of fresh blooms.

While the Kedarnath replica will be the visual and thematic anchor of the event, flower-crafted trishuls, elephants and everyday objects like drums, earthen



pots and a piano, turning the venue into an immersive landscape rather than a conventional exhibition. Flowers will be sourced from Bengaluru, West Bengal and other regions to ensure a broad mix of varieties and colours. A food court will operate on-site

throughout the event. At its commercial core, the exhibition will feature 90 stalls, with participation from 38 nurseries. Visitors will be able to browse a wide range of offerings, including flowers, seeds, manure, gardening tools, decorative planters and nursery products. Officials said the aim was to appeal not only to casual visitors but also to home gardeners and

horticulture enthusiasts. Several public bodies and private institutions will also mount displays, among them the Greater Noida Authority, Yamuna Authority, Northern Railways, the New Delhi Municipal

Council, the Indian Army, Bharat Petroleum, LG, Adobe Systems and Delhi Public School. Nearly 350 participants are expected to compete across multiple categories. Cultural programmes will run alongside the exhibition, with musical performances by Delhi-based Sarvatra Band, dance presentations by school students and a kavi sammelan featuring poets from the region on the concluding evening.

Additional CEO Vandana Tripathi said preparations were underway as the event was expected to draw thousands of visitors over four days. The Authority is expected to spend around Rs 2 crore on the show, 60% of it to be funded by private firms. It has arranged for parking facilities for nearly 2,000 vehicles at Shilp Haat and nearby areas. Golf carts would also be arranged for senior citizens and the disabled.

Work on missing link starts in Gurgaon, to connect NH8 & Pataudi Road

Noida.(Agency)

After remaining incomplete for over a decade, construction of the missing link of the master road dividing sectors 88 and 89 has finally begun. The 350-metre stretch will connect directly to Pataudi Road, creating another crucial link between the Delhi-Gurgaon Expressway (NH-8) and Pataudi Road. The road was stalled for years due to land acquisition issues involving a private manufacturing unit located along the proposed alignment. The partially constructed road ended abruptly at the unit's boundary. The matter reached the Punjab and Haryana High Court after the manufacturing unit challenged the land acquisition. The court advised both sides to work towards an amicable resolution, but the issue remained unresolved until last year.

In 2025, Haryana Shahari Vikas Pradhikaran (HSPV) handed over the required land parcel to GMDA, clearing the way for completion of the long-pending stretch. The project was subsequently awarded at an estimated cost of Rs 2 crore. Although the official deadline is Sept, officials said efforts are underway to complete the work within six months. Due to land availability constraints, a minor realignment of the remaining portion was also carried out. "HSPV has agreed to realign the proposed sewer line that earlier fell along the road alignment. With this, all hurdles have been removed. Tree removal has been completed and construction has started. We are aiming to finish the project ahead of schedule," a GMDA official said. On whether the road will integrate with the internal roads of sectors 88A and 89A, officials said the recent realignment requires a revised traffic design. "Because of the slight change in road alignment, we need to work out connectivity to sectors 88A and 89A through a roundabout intersection or any other best possible way. A consultant will be engaged to ensure seamless integration," the official added.

Gurgaon.(Agency)

Residents of Malibu Towne have urged the department of town and country planning (DTCP) to de-seal Malibu Towne Country Club, which has remained shut for nearly two years following compliance-related objections raised by planning authorities.

The 204-acre township in Sector 50, developed in the mid-1990s, depended on the club for facilities such as a swimming pool, garden areas, spaces for community events and social gatherings – facilities that families said they sorely missed since the seal order was issued.

Chairman of Malibu RWA Federation Vijay Shiv Nath said the club was sealed after the authorities identified deficiencies on the premises and cancelled the builder's township licence. The developer, Malibu Estate Pvt Ltd, was directed to rectify the shortcomings and get the licence renewed before applying for an occupation certificate (OC). "The builder has completed the rectifications and got the



township licence renewed from DTCP Chandigarh on Jan 9, 2026. The OC application has been submitted to the district town planner (DTP)," said Nath. Recently, RWA representatives and local councillor Kuldeep Yadav submitted a presentation to DTP to expedite approval so the club could reopen. "Officials assured cooperation and indicated that the OC may be granted soon," Nath said. Residents said reopening the club would restore vital recreational and community

spaces that have remained inaccessible for nearly two years. The township's compliance issues date back to 2020, when DTCP cancelled its completion certificate for failing to develop community sites within the deadline of Nov 2020. Of the 16 approved community sites, only 11 were constructed as per norms. Malibu Towne, which is home to more than 10,000 people, has also faced allegations of violations, including unauthorised construction in green belt areas, development without mandatory environmental clearance and deviations from approved plans. In 2020, a case was registered against the developers and directors of the project following a complaint by DTP over multiple regulatory violations. Gurgaon police registered the case after finding the developer's response to the notices unsatisfactory.

Man kills coworker at dairy farm after spat over cow dung, arrested

Gurgaon.(Agency)

A 35-year-old man was arrested on Friday for allegedly killing his co-worker at a dairy in Teela Mod after the two got into an argument over cow dung. On Wednesday morning, police received information that the body of 40-year-old Sunil Kumar was discovered in one of the rooms at Kamdhenu dairy in Ristala. Kumar had been employed at the dairy for around six months. Kumar's brother Veerwal filed a police complaint in the matter later that same day, alleging that an unknown person had struck Kumar on the head with an axe, killing him. An FIR was subsequently registered under Section 103(1) (murder) of the BNS at the Tila

Mod police station. ACP (Shalimar Garden) Atul Kumar Singh said that a team was formed to trace the accused. Investigation led police to Dakshraj alias Heera, a resident of Mirzapur. On Friday, based on a tip-off from an informant, police arrested Dakshraj from his room at Kamdhenu Dairy. "The woollen jersey T-shirt, with blood stains, worn by the accused at the time of the murder and one blood-stained axe were recovered from the accused's possession," ACP said.

According to the ACP, the accused told cops that he had a dispute with Kumar on Tuesday over washing milk cans and collecting cow dung. Later that night, the accused found Kumar asleep in his room at the dairy and struck him dead with the axe.



Mod police station. ACP (Shalimar Garden) Atul Kumar Singh said that a team was formed to trace the

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In 2 weeks, Greater Noida seals 100 illegal flats, frees over 54k sqm on Hindon floodplains

Gurgaon.(Agency)

Greater Noida Industrial Development Authority (GNIDA) has reclaimed more than 54,000 square metres of encroached land across five villages over the past two weeks, stepping up enforcement against illegal construction in environmentally sensitive areas along the Hindon floodplain. Officials said the drive, carried out over the last 16 days, covered Kheeda Choghanpur, Bhanota, Haibatpur, Chipyana Khurd and Rohillapur. As part of the action, eight unauthorised residential towers comprising more than 100 flats were sealed, and several illegal structures were demolished.

On Friday, the Authority's team demolished unauthorised construction at Shivam Enclave in Haibatpur village, which lies within the Hindon floodplain. The operation cleared nearly 7,000 square metres (sqm) of encroached land. GNIDA general manager (project) AK Singh said the action was taken in compliance with directions issued by the National Green



Tribunal. This marked the second major enforcement action in Haibatpur in less than 10 days. On Jan 28, the Authority had reclaimed around 6,000 sqm of land in the same village. Officials said the area falls within a restricted zone where construction is prohibited, but building activity had continued despite repeated instructions to stop work. Another demolition drive

complaints of unauthorised plotting in the floodplain. In Bhanota village, the Authority has carried out multiple drives this year. On Feb 4, illegal construction covering about 10,000 sqm was demolished, freeing land officials valued at around Rs 20 crore. GNIDA said colonisers had attempted to develop an unauthorised colony by fencing the land and dividing it into plots. A warning was issued that any attempt to rebuild would attract legal action. Earlier, on Jan 20, another 11,340 sqm of land in Bhanota was cleared after colonisers allegedly began unauthorised plotting by erecting boundary walls and marking with trees without approvals. Action was also taken in Kheeda Choghanpur on Jan 29, when eight residential towers built on a plot in a notified area were sealed. Officials said the towers, which contained more than 100 flats, had been constructed without approved layout plans or building sanctions. The flats were vacant at the time of sealing, and notices had been issued earlier.

An FIR has also been registered in the case.

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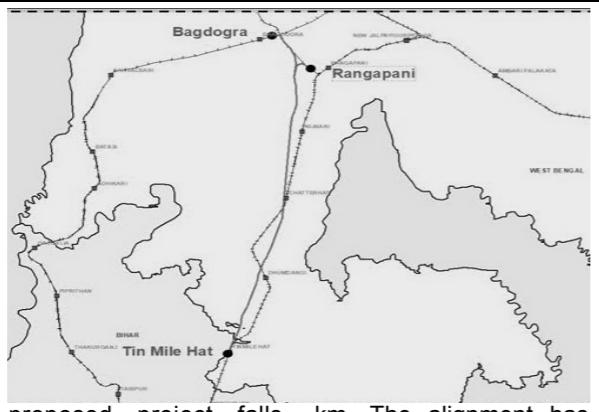
Website: www.thesikhtimes.in

Email: sikhstimesindia@gmail.com

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Indian Railways Plans New Underground Rail Line Near Siliguri to Strengthen Northeast Connectivity

Maligaon. As part of Government of India's sustained efforts to reinforce regional connectivity to the North-eastern States, Indian Railways has decided to construct a new underground railway line. The proposed new line will pass through the Siliguri Corridor, often referred to as the "Chicken's Neck". The proposed underground line will extend from Tinnile Hat to Rangapani and then onward to Bagdogra. Speaking during a media interaction, Hon'ble Union Minister for Railways, Information & Broadcasting and Electronics & Information Technology, Shri Ashwini Vaishnavi stated that the project is aimed at ensuring secure, reliable and uninterrupted rail connectivity in this strategically sensitive corridor. The



proposed project falls under the Katihar Division of Northeast Frontier Railway and spans parts of Darjeeling and Uttar Dinajpur districts of West Bengal and Kishanganj district of Bihar.

The proposed underground railway line has a total length of 35.76 km between Dumdangi and Bagdogra with a narrow stretch of land approximately 22 km wide. Given the corridor's proximity to international borders with Nepal,

km. The alignment has been planned primarily as an underground corridor to ensure secure, uninterrupted and resilient connectivity in the strategically sensitive Siliguri Corridor, which connects mainland India with the North-eastern States through a narrow stretch of land approximately 22 km wide. Given the corridor's proximity to international borders with Nepal,

Bhutan and Bangladesh, as well as its vulnerability to natural disasters, congestion and security-related disruptions, the underground railway line will be of immense importance. The underground alignment will provide a protected and non-visible alternative route, enabling uninterrupted movement of defence personnel, military equipment and emergency relief materials during emergencies. The project will also support air-rail logistics integration due to its proximity to Bagdogra Air Force Station and the Bengdubi Army Cantonment of the Indian Army's 33 Corps.

Modern technology and advanced engineering practices have been adopted for the project. The project proposes a 2x25 kV AC electrification

system, Automatic Signalling (Standard-IV) with VOIP-based communication on OFC and quad cables, bridges designed to RDSO 25-ton axle load standards and twin tunnels using Tunnel Boring Machine (TBM) methodology with NATM tunnels for crossovers.

The proposed Tinmille Hat – Rangapani – Bagdogra new underground railway line reflects Indian Railways' commitment to strengthening strategic infrastructure in the Northeast. Rooted firmly in national interest, the project will play a vital role in reinforcing security, resilience and long-term connectivity of the North-eastern region, in alignment with the Government of India's vision for integrated and secure infrastructure development.

PUBLIC NOTICE

It is for general information that I, Jagdeesh Lodhi S/o Dayaram Lodhi R/o 2413-A Gali No. 181, Ganeshpura, Tigr Nagar, Onkar Nagar, North West Delhi, Delhi-110041 declare that name of mine and my minor son has been wrongly written as Jagdish Lodhi and Satyender Kumar in my minor son Satyender Kumar Singh aged 14 years in his School Records. The actual name of mine and my minor son are Jagdeesh Lodhi and Satyender Kumar Singh.

NAME CHANGE

I hitherto known as Anish S/o Jumma R/o JB-675, T/F, Welcome, Seelampur, Shahdara, NCT of Delhi-110053 have changed my name and shall hereafter be known as Mohd Anis.

NAME CHANGE

I, MOHD DILSHAD S/O MOHAMMAD ILYAS R/O 313/101-L KH NO-288, Right Portion 3rd Floor, Tuls Nagar Inder Lok, Onkar Nagar, North West Delhi, Delhi-110035 have changed the name of my minor daughter ALVEERA aged 17 and she shall hereafter be known as SALEENA.

NAME CHANGE

It is for general information that I, ALEXIO PAULINO NELSON DESA S/O FRANCISCO DA VITORIA DESA R/O B-853, G/N, 26 Burari, Kamalpur Majra, Burari, North Delhi, Delhi-110084, declare that name of my minor daughter ALVEERA aged 17 and she shall hereafter be known as SALEENA.

NAME CHANGE

It is for general information that I, AJAY KUMAR son of Shri HARCHARAN, residing at D-135A, Top Floor, United No.4, Krishna Park, Deoli, South Delhi, Delhi-110062, declare that name of mine has been wrongly written as AJAY in my minor daughter namely HANSHITA aged 17 years in her 10th Class Educational Documents. The actual name of mine is AJAY KUMAR, which may be amended accordingly.

S&T ASSOCIATED WORK

E-Tender Notice No. S&T/APD/J/52 & 53; dated: 04-02-2026. E-tenders are invited by the undersigned for the following work: SN.1. E-Tender No.: AP-ST-52-2025-26; Name of Work: At Jorai- Development of Goods Yard, Provision of CCTV, Goods office, Labour Rest Room, Merchant Room, water Supply System, Toilet Facility Connecting Road etc. (S&T Associated work). Advertised Tender Value: ₹56,61,651.86; Bid Security: ₹1,13,200.00. SN.2. E-Tender No.: AP-ST-53-2025-26; Name of Work: At Gouripur- Upgradation of infrastructure like platform extension, goods office, merchant room, labour shed at goods circling area with toilet drinking water, cover shed, CCTV. (S&T Associated work). Advertised Tender Value: ₹55,01,926.28; Bid Security: ₹1,10,000.00. E-tenders will be closed at 15:00 hrs. on 06-03-2026 and will be opened on 06-03-2026 after closing. The complete information with tender document of above tender will be available in website www.treps.gov.in.

DRM (S&T), Alipurdur Jn., Northeast Frontier Railway

"Serving Customers with a smile"

Health Card Becomes Lifeline for Labourer Sulakhan Singh, 3 Lakh Treatment Done Without Spending a Single Rupee: Dhaliwal



Amritsar, Aam Aadmi Party (AAP) Punjab's Chief Spokesperson and MLA Kuldeep Singh Dhaliwal said that the promises made to the public by the Bhagwant Mann government are now clearly being fulfilled at the ground level. Due to the visionary thinking of National Convener Arvind Kejriwal and Chief Minister Bhagwant Singh Mann, the Chief Minister Health Insurance Scheme has now become fully effective. Addressing a press conference on Saturday along with AAP leaders Prabhbir Singh Brar and Gurpartap Singh Sandhu, Dhaliwal said that under this scheme, nearly 65 lakh families in Punjab have been ensured cashless treatment of up to ₹10

lakh, which is nothing short of a boon, especially for poor and middle-class families. Citing a living example of the scheme's success, Dhaliwal shared the case of Sulakhan Singh, a resident of village Gurdas Nangal in

ship, it was impossible for the family to bear this expense, but under the Chief Minister Health Insurance Scheme, his health card was prepared within just one day. After that, his heart was successfully operated on and stents were placed at a private hospital in Amritsar without spending even a single rupee. Dhaliwal said that Sulakhan Singh returning home healthy is a strong reply to those opponents who label the government's policies as mere "rhetoric". Dhaliwal said that strengthening the infrastructure of education and health is the main agenda of the Punjab government. By investing in both sectors, the government is preparing a strong and

secure future for the coming generations. During previous governments, the poor either drowned in debt due to expensive treatment or died due to lack of medical care, but the Mann government has made healthcare a basic right of every citizen.

He clarified that hospitals are being regularly monitored to ensure that no patient faces any kind of inconvenience and that no hospital can demand any additional payment from cardholders.

Targeting the opposition, the AAP leader said that those who remained in power for decades while neglecting these basic facilities are now unable to digest the change. He appealed to the public to

PUBLIC NOTICE

It is for general information that I, Sabir Ali S/o Badruddin R/o C-165 Ground Floor, Ajmal Bagh, Noor Nagar, Jamia Nagar, South Delhi, Delhi-110025 declare that name of my wife has been wrongly written as Nasreen in my minor daughter Maryam Sabir aged 14 years in her School Records. The actual name of my wife is Nasreen Begum.

PUBLIC NOTICE

This is to inform you that Mrs. Archana Ray intends to purchase Residential House No. A-42, measuring 40 sq. yards (i.e., 33.44 sq. meters), cut of Khasra No. 334, situated in the Purani Abadi, Sajwan Nagar, at Village Shahbad alias Mittehpur, Pargana Loni, Tehsil & District Ghazipur, Uttar Pradesh, from Mr. Pratham Prabhakar Ray. The original owner of the entire property was Mr. Mohammad Ali, who transferred the same to Mr. Puran Singh Sajwan through a notarized GPA/ATS/Will dated 26.04.1993. Thereafter, Mr. Puran Singh Sajwan transferred the property to Mrs. Savita Devi and Mr. Kali Charan through two separate notarized GPA/ATS/Will dated 26.03.2011. Unfortunately, Mrs. Savita Devi and her husband, Mr. Kali Charan, both passed away, leaving behind their following legal heirs, namely their two sons, Mr. Deepak and Mr. Ajit Kumar. Mr. Deepak and Mr. Ajit Kumar sold the said property to Mr. Pratham Prabhakar Ray through a Sale Deed dated 17.09.2025, registered as Document No. 10944. Please also note that the said property is proposed to be financed by Vastu Housing Finance Corporation Ltd., Noida Branch, Uttar Pradesh. If any person(s)' objection & regarding subject property, then kindly may submit his/her objection within 07 days from the date of the Notice in writing. The said objection may be kindly sent to the undersigned by way of the Registered Post on the address given below and by E-mail, failing which, the claim as per aforementioned shall be treated as null and void in respect of the said property.

NAME CHANGE

I, BACCHAN SINGH S/o BISHAN SINGH R/o PLOT-NO-165, GANJ NO-18, RAKSHA ENCLAVE, MOHAN GARDEN, UTTAM NAGAR, WEST DELHI, DELHI-110059, have changed my name from BACCHAN SINGH to BACHAN SINGH for all future purposes.

PUBLIC NOTICE

It is for general information that I, Hulas Vashista S/o Ashok Kumar Vashista R/o 602/16, Ward No. 3, Teachers Colony, Merauli, South Delhi, Delhi-110030 declare that name of mine, my father and my mother has been wrongly written as Hulas Vashista, Ashok Kumar Vashista and Kamlesh in my 10th and 12th Class Educational Documents. The actual name of mine, my father and my mother are Hulas Vashista, Ashok Kumar Vashista and Kamlesh Kumar.

NAME CHANGE

I, ANANDANaidu Father of No-2612569X Rank-HAV Name-RAVI KUMAR CHONGALA Presently residing at VPO-GEDDALUPPI, MANDAL-SEETHANAGARAM, DIST-VIZIANAGARAM, ANDHRA PRADESH-535546, have changed my name from ANANDANaidu to CHONGALA ANANDHANaidu for all future purposes and in my son's service records my date of birth wrongly mentioned as 18/07/1947 instead of my correct date of birth as 01/01/1946 vide Affidavit dated 07/02/2026 before Notary Public, Delhi.

PUBLIC NOTICE

NOTICE is hereby given to public at large that my client Sh. Imran Khan is the owner of Land measuring 100 Sq. yards, out of Khasra no. 245, situated Village Haldon, Pargana & Tehsil Dadri, Distt. Gautam Budh Nagar, U.P. vide GIFT DEED dated 17.01.2025, Registered as doc no. 2661, book no. 1, vol. no. 30110, Page no. 243 to 267, on 17.01.2025. My client Sh. Imran Khan is the owner of Land measuring 100 Sq. yards, out of Khasra no. 245, situated Village Haldon, Pargana & Tehsil Dadri, Distt. Gautam Budh Nagar, U.P. vide GIFT DEED dated 17.01.2025, Registered as doc no. 2661, book no. 1, vol. no. 30110, Page no. 243 to 267, on 17.01.2025. My client Sh. Imran Khan is the owner of Land measuring 100 Sq. yards, out of Khasra no. 245, situated Village Haldon, Pargana & Tehsil Dadri, Distt. Gautam Budh Nagar, U.P. vide GIFT DEED dated 17.01.2025, Registered as doc no. 2661, book no. 1, vol. no. 30110, Page no. 243 to 267, on 17.01.2025.

NAME CHANGE

I, L. CHANDHYARANI Wife of No-2612569X Rank-HAV Name-RAVI KUMAR CHONGALA Presently residing at VPO-GEDDALUPPI, MANDAL-SEETHANAGARAM, DIST-VIZIANAGARAM, ANDHRA PRADESH-535546, have changed my name from CHANDHYARANI to CHONGALA CHANDHYARANI for all future purposes and in my husband's service records my date of birth wrongly mentioned as 12/06/1988 instead of my correct date of birth as 01/07/1990 vide Affidavit dated 07/02/2026 before Notary Public, Delhi.

PUBLIC NOTICE

NOTICE is hereby given to public at large that my client Mr. Angad Maurya is the purchasing the Property bearing No. 33723 (Old Camety No. 355/18), admeasuring 153 sq. yards, pertaining to the Khasra No. 8766/1111/16, situated at Gali No. 2, in the colony known as Hira Nagar, in the area of village Gurgaon, Tehsil & District Gurgaon (Haryana) from Mrs. Urmila Devi who was the owner of the abovementioned property vide SALE DEED dated 20/04/2010, Registered as Doc No. 1617, in Book No. I, Volume No. 9753/82, Page No. 1405/53 on 20/04/2010 (SRO- Gurugram) and intend to mortgage the said property with Utshar Small Finance Bank Limited. That the Sale Deed dated 22.12.1988 which was registered as Doc No. 8137 was Misplaced/lost. If any person(s) has/have any objection(s) or claim(s) with respect to the right, title or interest in the said property may please contact us within 14 days from the date of this notice on the number & address mentioned herein below, failing which my client(s) shall not be held responsible in any manner whatsoever.

Khalan & Khalan

I, MOHD. KHALAN & KHALAN Plot No. 100, 1st floor Okhla Phase III, New Delhi Ph. No: 011-49774545

PUBLIC NOTICE

NOTICE is hereby given to public at large that my client Mr. Angad Maurya is the purchasing the Property bearing No. 33723 (Old Camety No. 355/18), admeasuring 153 sq. yards, pertaining to the Khasra No. 8766/1111/16, situated at Gali No. 2, in the colony known as Hira Nagar, in the area of village Gurgaon, Tehsil & District Gurgaon (Haryana) from Mrs. Urmila Devi who was the owner of the abovementioned property vide SALE DEED dated 20/04/2010, Registered as Doc No. 1617, in Book No. I, Volume No. 9753/82, Page No. 1405/53 on 20/04/2010 (SRO- Gurugram) and intend to mortgage the said property with Utshar Small Finance Bank Limited. That the Sale Deed dated 22.12.1988 which was registered as Doc No. 8137 was Misplaced/lost. If any person(s) has/have any objection(s) or claim(s) with respect to the right, title or interest in the said property may please contact us within 14 days from the date of this notice on the number & address mentioned herein below, failing which my client(s) shall not be held responsible in any manner whatsoever.

NAME CHANGE

I, MOHD. KHALAN & KHALAN Plot No. 100, 1st floor Okhla Phase III, New Delhi Ph. No: 011-49774545

PUBLIC NOTICE

It is for general information that I, ASMA BEGAM W/O ABRAR HUSAIN R/O 1-2/111, GALI NO-1, SANGAM VIHAR, MEHRALI, SOUTH DELHI, DELHI-110062, declare that name of my minor son has been wrongly written as MD SOIB in my minor son namely MOHAMMAD SUHAIB aged 8 years in his aadhaar card No. 53145 5909 1369. The actual name of my minor son is MOHAMMAD SUHAIB which may be amended accordingly.

Khalan & Khalan

Plot No. 100, 1st floor Okhla Phase III, New Delhi Ph. No: 011-49774545

PUBLIC NOTICE

It is for general information that I, CH. CHONGALA ESWARAMMA Mother of No-2612569X Rank-HAV Name-RAVI KUMAR CHONGALA Presently residing at VPO-GEDDALUPPI, MANDAL-SEETHANAGARAM, DIST-VIZIANAGARAM, ANDHRA PRADESH-535546, in my son's service records my date of birth wrongly mentioned as 22/03/1952 instead of my correct date of birth as 03/03/1989 vide Affidavit dated 07/02/2026 before Notary Public, Delhi.

DATE OF BIRTH CHANGE

I, NO-15495315M Rank-DFR Name-LALJAMES DOUGEL residing at SAIKUL, SENAPATI, MANIPUR-783118, in my service record my mother's (NEMKHONENG DOUGEL) date of birth wrongly written as 01/07/1961 instead of her correct date of birth as 01/01/1964 vide Affidavit dated 07/02/2026 before Notary Public, Delhi.

NAME CHANGE

I, MOHD. KHALAN & KHALAN Plot No. 100, 1st floor Okhla Phase III, New Delhi Ph. No: 011-49774545

PUBLIC NOTICE

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NAME CHANGE

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DATE OF BIRTH CHANGE

I, NO-15495315M Rank-DFR Name-LALJAMES DOUGEL residing at SAIKUL, SENAPATI, MANIPUR-783118, in my service record my mother's (NEMKHONENG DOUGEL) date of birth wrongly mentioned as 01/07/

NEWS BOX

Former US VP Harris slams 'cover up' after Trump deletes racist post

WASHINGTON. (Agency)

Former US Vice President Kamala Harris slammed what she called a "cover up" at the White House on Friday, after President Donald Trump shared a racist video depicting Barack and Michelle Obama and later deleted it. Trump shared a social media post with a video depicting the Obamas as monkeys, a racist trope that caused outrage across the US political spectrum. The White House initially rejected "fake outrage" over the video shared on Trump's Truth Social account late Thursday night, only to then blame the post on an error by a staff member.

Harris rejected that explanation.

"No one believes this cover up from the White House, especially since they originally defended the post. We are all clear-eyed about who Donald Trump is and what he believes," said Harris, who lost to Trump in the 2024 US presidential election.

Casual Porn Search Turns Into Nightmare After Man Finds Himself On Screen

Washington. (Agency)

What began as a casual search for porn online quickly turned into a nightmare when a man realised the couple in the video was him and his girlfriend.

In 2023, Eric, identified by a pseudonym, stayed at a hotel in Shenzhen, southern China, with his girlfriend. Weeks later, while browsing an adult content channel he regularly used, he stumbled upon a video. Within seconds, he recognised the hotel room, the sequence of events, and then themselves, according to the BBC. The footage showed the couple entering the room, placing their bags down and later engaging in intimate moments, all unknowingly recorded by a hidden camera inside the hotel room. The video had been uploaded without their consent and was accessible to thousands of viewers online. Describing the experience as terrifying, Eric, from Hong Kong, said a hidden spy camera had recorded him and his girlfriend inside their hotel room for nearly an hour.

He told the BBC that he was initially drawn to porn videos because they felt more real to him than conventional pornography, as the people being filmed didn't know they were on a spy camera.

"What drew me in is the fact that the people don't know they're being filmed. I think traditional porn feels very staged, very fake," he said.

While watching one of the videos, he suddenly realised that he himself was in it.

When Eric broke the news to his partner, Emily, she initially didn't believe him and thought he was joking. When she saw the video herself, she got terrified that people she knew, including friends, family members, or colleagues, might have already watched the footage online. Horrified, the couple didn't talk to each other for several weeks. According to LadBible, the couple often wear hats when they go out, and they try to stay away from hotels as much as possible.

Explained: What Is ISIS, The Terror Group Claiming Responsibility For Pak Mosque Blast



Islamabad. (Agency)

The so-called Islamic State (ISIS) on Friday claimed responsibility for an attack by a suicide bomber on a Shi'ite Muslim mosque in Islamabad that killed at least 31 people. It was the deadliest attack of its kind in Pakistan's capital in more than a decade. Here are some more details on the group.

WHAT IS ISLAMIC STATE?

The Sunni Muslim group emerged in Iraq and Syria and quickly created a "caliphate", declaring its rule over all Muslims and largely displacing al Qaeda.

At the height of its power from 2014-2017 it held swathes of the two countries, ruling over millions of people. It had a base only a 30-minute drive from Baghdad, and also held the city of Sirte on Libya's Mediterranean coast. On its territory, IS sought to rule like a centralised government, imposing its interpretation of Islamic Sharia law strictly and deploying shocking brutality including public executions and torture. Its fighters also carried out or inspired attacks in dozens of cities around the world.

The caliphate eventually collapsed in Iraq and in Syria after a sustained military campaign by a U.S.-led coalition.

WHERE DOES IT NOW OPERATE?

After being ousted from its bases in the Syrian city of Raqa and the Iraqi city of Mosul, the group took refuge in the hinterlands of the two fractured countries. It retains a significant presence in Syria and Iraq, parts of Africa including the Sahel region, and in Afghanistan and Pakistan. Fighters are scattered in autonomous cells, IS leadership is clandestine and its overall size is hard to quantify. The U.N. estimates a membership of 10,000 in IS heartlands.

Many foreign fighters have joined Islamic State's Khorasan branch (ISIS-K), named after an old term for the region that included parts of Iran, Turkmenistan and Afghanistan.

Judge orders Trump administration to bring back three families deported to Honduras, other countries

Court rules deported families should have stayed in the US under 2018 Trump-era family separation settlement.

SAN DIEGO. (Agency)

A judge says the federal government must return three families hurt by the first Trump administration's policy of separating parents from the children at the border, saying their deportations in recent months relied on "lies, deception and coercion." The order, issued Thursday, found the deported families should have been allowed to remain in the United States under terms of a legal settlement over the Trump administration's separation of about 6,000 children from their parents at the border in 2018. Each mother had permission to remain in the U.S. until 2027 under humanitarian parole. U.S. District



Judge Dana Sabraw in San Diego said the administration also had to pay for their return travel costs. One woman and her three children, including a 6-year-old U.S. citizen, were deported to Honduras in July after being ordered to check in with ICE at least 11 times over two months, which, she said, caused her to lose her job. Sabraw rejected the government's argument that

the family left the U.S. voluntarily. The woman said ICE officers visited her home and asked her sign a document agreeing to leave but she refused. "This did not make any difference to these officers. They took me and my children to a motel and removed my ankle monitor. They detained us for three days and then removed us to Honduras," the woman said in court

documents. The other two families, identified only by their initials, bore similarities. "Each of the removals was unlawful, and absent the removals, these families would still be in the United States and have access to the benefits and resources they are entitled to," wrote Sabraw, who was appointed by President George W. Bush. Lee Gelernt, an attorney for the American Civil Liberties Union who represents the families, welcomed the decision. "The Trump administration has never acknowledged the illegality or gratuitous cruelty of the initial family separation policy and now has started re-deporting and re-separating these same families. The Court put its foot down and not only ordered the families return but did so at government expense," he said. The Homeland Security and Justice departments did not immediately respond to messages seeking comment Friday. Under a "zero-tolerance" policy, parents were separated from their children to be criminally prosecuted when crossing the border illegally. Sabraw ordered an end to the separations in June 2018, days

Sheikh Hasina: The Rise, Rule And Downfall Of Bangladesh's 'Iron Lady'

HONG KONG. (Agency)

For nearly two decades, Sheikh Hasina stood as one of the most powerful faces in Bangladesh's politics. She was often described as the country's "Iron Lady." Hasina, who served multiple terms as Bangladesh's Prime Minister before a powerful student-led movement overthrew her Awami League government, is now watching the country go to the polls from across the border in India. The Awami League has been banned from contesting elections. Under her leadership, Bangladesh saw major infrastructure projects, including bridges, highways and metro rail systems, take shape. The economy also grew steadily. For many ordinary citizens, life became stable compared to the past. But her critics accuse her of ruling like an autocrat.

When Sheikh Hasina entered politics In 1975, Sheikh Hasina, 27 years old at the time, was living abroad. While she was away, Bangladesh went through one of its darkest moments. Hasina's

father and the country's first Prime Minister, Sheikh Mujibur Rahman, was murdered by rebel army officers. In the same attack, she lost her mother and three brothers. Six years later, she

Ershad. Despite being rivals, Hasina and Khaleda Zia joined hands to end military rule, and in 1990, Ershad was forced to step down.

Soon after, Hasina and Zia fell out, and for decades, Bangladeshi politics revolved around these two women.

From the poorest country to fast economic growth Once among the poorest countries in the world, Bangladesh recorded an average growth of more than six per cent every year since 2009. The garment industry, driven mostly by female factory workers, became the backbone of the economy. Millions were lifted out of poverty under Hasina's rule. Electricity reached more than 95 per cent of the population. In 2021, Bangladesh's per capita income even overtook India's. During her tenure, she built the Padma Bridge over the Padma River, which connected the underdeveloped southwest region to the capital, Dhaka.

returned to the country and took charge of Awami League, her father's political party. It was a tumultuous time for Bangladesh; the army had seized power from the civilian government, and leading politicians such as Hasina and Khaleda Zia were often arrested. In the 1980s, Bangladesh was ruled by military dictator Hussain Muhammad

ranks. "Starting with the 2026-27 academic year, the Pentagon will discontinue graduate-level professional military education, fellowships and certificate programmes,

The statement said. Personnel currently attending classes at Harvard will be able to finish those courses. Similar programmes at other Ivy League universities will be evaluated in coming weeks, Hegseth said. Hegseth earned a master's degree from Harvard but symbolically returned his diploma in a 2022 Fox News segment. A Pentagon social media account run by Hegseth's office resurfaced the clip in which Hegseth, then a Fox News commentator, returned the diploma and wrote "Return to Sender" on it with a marker.

The military offers its officers a variety of opportunities to get graduate-level education both at war colleges run by the military as well as civilian

institutions like Harvard. Broadly, while opportunities to attend prestigious civilian schools offer less direct benefit to a servicemember's military career than their civilian counterparts, they help make troops more attractive employees once they leave the military.

Harvard has long been President Donald Trump's top target in his administration's campaign to bring the nation's most prestigious universities to heel. His officials have cut billions of dollars in Harvard's federal research funding and attempted to block it from enrolling foreign students after the campus rebuffed a series of government demands last April. The White House has said it's punishing Harvard for tolerating anti-Jewish bias on campus. Harvard leaders argue they're facing illegal retaliation for failing to adopt the administration's ideological views. Harvard sued the administration in a pair of lawsuits.

Pentagon Calls Harvard "Woke", Ends Military Training, Fellowship Programmes

LONDON. (Agency)

The Pentagon said Friday it is cutting ties with Harvard University, ending all military training, fellowships and certificate programmes with the Ivy League institution.

The announcement marks the latest development in the Trump administration's prolonged standoff with Harvard over the White House's demands for reforms at the Ivy League school. Defense Secretary Pete Hegseth said in a statement Friday that Harvard "no longer meets the needs of the War Department or the military services." "For too long, this department has sent our best and brightest officers to Harvard, hoping the university would better understand and appreciate our warrior class," Hegseth said. "Instead, too many of our officers came back looking too much like Harvard - heads full of globalist and radical ideologies that do not improve our fighting

The statement said. Personnel currently attending classes at Harvard will be able to finish those courses. Similar programmes at other Ivy League universities will be evaluated in coming weeks, Hegseth said. Hegseth earned a master's degree from Harvard but symbolically returned his diploma in a 2022 Fox News segment. A Pentagon social media account run by Hegseth's office resurfaced the clip in which Hegseth, then a Fox News commentator, returned the diploma and wrote "Return to Sender" on it with a marker.

The military offers its officers a variety of opportunities to get graduate-level education both at war colleges run by the military as well as civilian

Won't apologise': Trump defiant after racist post about Obamas is deleted amid backlash

CAIRO. (Agency)

WASHINGTON: US President Donald Trump said on Friday that he would not apologise after a racist social media post depicting former President Barack Obama and former first lady Michelle Obama as primates was deleted following widespread backlash from both Republicans and Democrats.

"I didn't make a mistake," Trump said later on Friday. The Republican president's Thursday night post was removed after criticism from civil rights leaders and senior Republican senators, who condemned the video as offensive. The White House initially blamed the post on a staff member, calling it an error.

The deletion marked a rare admission of a misstep by the White House and came hours after press secretary Karoline Leavitt dismissed criticism as "fake outrage". After calls for its removal — including from Republicans — the White House said a staffer had posted the video erroneously. The post was part of a flurry of overnight activity on Trump's Truth Social account that amplified his false claims that the 2020 election was stolen from him, despite courts across the country and Trump's own first-term attorney general finding no evidence of systemic fraud.

Trump has a record of intensely personal attacks on the Obamas and of using incendiary, sometimes racist, rhetoric — from promoting the false claim that Obama was not a native-born US citizen to making crude generalisations about majority-Black countries. The post appeared during the first week of Black History Month, just days after Trump issued a proclamation praising "the contributions of Black Americans to our national greatness" and "the American principles of liberty, justice, and equality". A spokeswoman for Obama said the former president had no response. An internet meme

Nearly all of the 62-second clip appeared to come from a conservative video alleging deliberate tampering with voting machines in battleground states during the 2020 election count. At around the 60-second mark, a brief scene shows two jungle primates with the Obamas' smiling faces superimposed on them. Those frames originated from a separate video previously circulated by a prominent conservative meme creator. The video portrays Trump as "King of the Jungle" and depicts Democratic leaders as animals, including Joe Biden — who is white — as a jungle primate eating a banana. "This is from an internet meme video depicting President Trump as the King of the Jungle and Democrats as characters from The Lion King," Leavitt said in a text message. Disney's 1994 film, however, is set on the savannah, not in the jungle, and does not feature great apes. "Please stop the fake outrage and report on something today that actually matters to the American public," Leavitt added.

By midday, the post had been removed, with responsibility placed on a subordinate.

US Aims For Russia-Ukraine Peace Deal In March: Report

DHAKA. (Agency)

U.S. and Ukrainian negotiators have discussed an ambitious March goal for Russia and Ukraine to agree on a peace deal, though that timeline is likely to slip given a lack of agreement on the key issue of territory, according to three sources familiar with the matter.

Under the framework being discussed by U.S. and Ukrainian negotiators, any deal would be submitted to a referendum by Ukrainian voters, who would simultaneously vote in national elections, according to five sources, who requested anonymity to discuss private deliberations. The U.S. negotiating team - led by special envoy Steve Witkoff and President Donald Trump's son-in-law Jared Kushner - has expressed to Ukrainian counterparts in recent meetings in Abu Dhabi and Miami that it would be best if that vote occurred soon, three of those sources said. U.S. negotiators have said Trump is likely to

focus more on domestic affairs as the November congressional midterms approach, meaning top U.S. officials will have less time and political capital to spend on sealing a peace accord, two sources said. A second round of U.S.-brokered talks concluded on Thursday in Abu Dhabi with the release of 314 prisoners of war and a commitment to resume discussions soon. Ukrainian President Volodymyr Zelenskiy said the next trilateral meeting was likely to take place soon in the United States.

VOTING IN MAY DISCUSSED

Two of the sources said U.S. and Ukrainian officials had discussed the possibility that the national election and referendum could occur in May. But several sources with visibility into the negotiations described the U.S.-proposed timeline as fanciful. Ukrainian election authorities have projected that it would take around six months to organise an election under



current conditions. "The Americans are in a hurry," said one source familiar with the matter, adding that a vote could be organised in less than six months, but it would still take a substantial amount of time. Organising such an election would require legislative changes, as such votes are prohibited during martial law in Ukraine. It would also be costly. Ukraine wants a ceasefire throughout the voting campaign to protect the referendum's integrity, and says the

Kremlin has a history of breaking its word on agreed-upon halts in fighting, one of the sources said. "Kyiv's position is that nothing can be agreed until the security guarantees for Ukraine from the United States and partners are in place," said the source. The White House declined to comment. The Ukrainian president's office and the Russian embassy in Washington did not immediately respond to requests for comment.

PEACE DEADLINE DRAWS SKEPTICISM

While Ukraine has sent high-level political delegates to the peace talks, including Zelenskiy's chief of staff and the head of his parliamentary faction, Russia's negotiating team is military-focused and led by the head of the GRU military intelligence agency, Admiral Igor Kostyukov. Kostyukov's deputy, Lieutenant General Vladimir Alexeyev, was shot in Moscow on Friday by an unknown assailant.

NEWS BOX

Ahmedabad college student 'ends life' at Gujarat University guest house

Ahmedabad. (Agency)

A 21-year-old woman—a student of LD Arts College in Ahmedabad—allegedly died by suicide at a guest house of Gujarat University on Friday, police said.

Police identified the deceased as Maheshwari Khachar, who hailed from Botad and was staying at a paying guest accommodation in Ahmedabad. No suicide note has been recovered, police said. An accidental death report has been registered and further investigation is underway, police said.

Inspector S R Bawa of Gujarat University police station said, "She was lodged in the guest house because she was attending a National Service Scheme (NSS) camp."

Gujarat University Registrar P M Patel told The Indian Express, "More than 200 students and NSS officers from 10 states are participating in a 'national integration camp' being conducted in Gujarat University from February 4-10. Students were accommodated in four facilities, including Gujarat University Guest House and Transit House, within the campus. The third-year student died around 3:30 pm. This came to light when she did not respond to calls as she was to receive an NSS team from Kolkata. The university authorities then informed the police."

Around Town: Pooja Dhingra is back with a cafe; here's what to expect from Pardon Our French

Mumbai. (Agency)

A decade ago, Pooja Dhingra launched Le15 Café in Colaba—an extension of her much-loved patisserie Le15, founded in 2010. Located opposite Ling's Pavilion and diagonally across from Bademiani, the cafe quietly built a loyal following. So much so that even six years after it shut during the COVID-19 pandemic, Dhingra is still asked: "When are you bringing Le15 Café back?" On Thursday, she finally returned to the cafe format, but not with Le15 Café. Instead, she launched Pardon Our French, which she describes as "a brand-new cafe by the team of Le15."

"It was so loved, people really miss it, and there's a lot of nostalgia attached to it," she said. "But it was time to stop living in the past and move towards the future, to build something fresh. It felt like the right place, right time." The idea took shape mid-last year, when Dhingra reached out to her friend Purva Mehra, Group Creative Director at creative agency Please See//.

A Parisian cafe with SoBo energy

Located in Ballard Estate, close to IF.BE, Pardon Our French announces itself with a matte inky-blue facade and soft cream signage, giving a very Parisian-in-SoBo energy. Inside, the palette shifts to creams, muted burgundy, and dusty rose. The interiors feel deliberately un hurried. While cloche-turned pendant lights cast a warm, intimate glow and burgundy-painted ceilings add drama, painted curtains, scalloped details, and beaded mirrors introduce a playful, patisserie-like lightness. "I started Le15 when I was 23. I turn 40 this year," said Dhingra, who intuitively wanted to do something that felt like a more mature version of herself. "The idea was—what if a 40-year-old woman came back from Paris and wanted to start something? What would that look like?"

Local body polls in Karnataka to be held using ballot papers, says minister HK Patil

LAKKUNDI (GADAG). (Agency)

Elections to all local bodies, including zilla, taluk and gram panchayats and Greater Bengaluru Authority, will be held using ballot papers and not electronic voting machines, said Law and Parliamentary Affairs Minister HK Patil on Friday.

"People have lost faith in EVMs. That is why the government is using ballot papers," he said. Unveiling five temples and five wells at the historical Lakkundi village in Gadag district, he said, "Many big democracies have turned away from EVMs to adopt ballot papers. We informed the Election Commission about our decision. We also told EC to amend laws if needed and that we would provide funds for ballot papers. We will not decide on the Assembly and Council polls," he said. Asked if it was not a step backward, he said, "It is not. Many big democracies have turned to ballot papers. The worry is that EVMs can be hacked. We had advised EC to hold a hackathon, but they were neither ready to run the challenge nor willing to hold a discussion."

In Mysuru, MLC Dr Yathindra Siddaramaiah said, "Even technologically advanced countries have moved away from EVMs and returned to ballot papers. They will be appropriate in the future too."

No change, clear signal from brass: Congress leader Yathindra

MYSURU. (Agency)

Amid ongoing speculation over a possible change in leadership in Karnataka, Congress MLC Dr Yathindra Siddaramaiah on Friday said that his father, Chief Minister Siddaramaiah, will continue in office for the full five-year term and that the party high command has given a clear signal in this regard.

Speaking to media persons in Mysuru on Friday, Dr Yathindra dismissed reports of internal confusion within the Congress over the CM's post and termed it as a settled issue. "There is no uncertainty at all. Siddaramaiah will remain CM for five years. The high command may not have stated it directly, but the signal is clear," he said.

He further clarified that no one within the party has demanded Siddaramaiah's removal. "At present, nobody is asking for a



change in leadership. These are baseless rumours and a discussion just happening in media," he said.

On the ongoing political tussle between the BJP and Congress over the Mahatma Gandhi National Rural Employment

Guarantee Act (MGNREGA), Dr Yathindra said the Congress is committed to Mahatma Gandhi's vision of gram swaraj. He alleged that the BJP is not interested in people-centric welfare or Gandhian ideals, and that this is

the reason behind their move to rename schemes associated with Mahatma Gandhi.

On allegations that he interfered in the functioning of Energy Minister KJ George and the energy department, Dr Yathindra denied any wrongdoing. "I am not aware of any such interference. KJ George himself has already clarified. The BJP has unnecessarily dragged my name into the matter," he said.

Referring to the special court's acceptance of the 'B report' to chief minister and his family in the MUDA case, the MLC said that the verdict reaffirmed their faith in the judicial system.

"We had complete trust in the law as we had done nothing wrong. We welcome the court's decision. Even my mother has expressed happiness," the Congress MLC added.

Karnataka unveils post-harvest value-addition model to boost farmers' incomes beyond cultivation

The SuATI project promotes sustainable agriculture while strengthening, adapting and scaling up agroecological practices to enhance livelihoods, soil health and biodiversity.

BENGALURU. (Agency)

Sometimes, a plan can be a key to open the doors to future prosperity if the implementation is right and there is a political will supporting it from the backstage. In this case, it is about the prosperity of the farming communities.

Karnataka Agriculture Minister N Chaluvayashwamy on February 4 announced that the state government is introducing a first-of-its-kind post-harvest value-addition model aimed at significantly improving farmers' incomes by moving beyond cultivation-centric agriculture. The model focuses on processing, branding, packaging and marketing of produce, enabling the farmers to earn four-five times higher incomes and reduce their dependence on middlemen.

"It was so loved, people really miss it, and there's a lot of nostalgia attached to it," she said. "But it was time to stop living in the past and move towards the future, to build something fresh. It felt like the right place, right time." The idea took shape mid-last year, when Dhingra reached out to her friend Purva Mehra, Group Creative Director at creative agency Please See//.

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Chaluvayashwamy announced this at a two-day conference "Agriculture Beyond Production – Empowering Farmers". It was organised by the Department of Agriculture under bilateral cooperation with the Union Ministry of Agriculture and Farmers Welfare through the Support of Agroecological Transformation processes in India (SuATI) project, a German Gesellschaft für Internationale Zusammenarbeit (GIZ)-India initiative commissioned by the German Federal Ministry for Economic Cooperation and Development (BMZ).

The SuATI project promotes sustainable agriculture while strengthening, adapting and scaling up agroecological practices to enhance livelihoods, soil health and biodiversity. The project is focusing on Karnataka,

opportunities for the agrarian womenfolk to enhance their incomes to much more than four times their current earnings.

An ideal opportunity lies in fruit and vegetable drying—a method by which the produce is dehydrated, powdered, packed and then stored, with a shelf-life that extends to months and years. Dehydration of fruits and vegetables is an ancient practice, which removes up to 80%-90% of the moisture by using heat. It inhibits microbial and bacterial growth, and enzyme activity, shrinking the produce to allow compact storage, and concentrates its nutrients. It is rehydrated with water while cooking without the loss of its flavour or nutrients.



Madhya Pradesh, and Assam. This step is in the right direction, which would be of much value to the entire farming community if systematically implemented. But the new model should also aim at generating business

Maharashtra drops physical verification for Ladki Bahin scheme, extends e KYC deadline to March 31

Mumbai. (Agency)

The Maharashtra government has cancelled its earlier decision to carry out physical verification of ineligible beneficiaries under its flagship Chief Minister Majhi Ladki Bahin scheme through Anganwadi workers and has instead extended the deadline for completing and correcting e KYC details on the online portal till March 31.

The decision was taken by the Women and Child Welfare department of the Government of Maharashtra after several complaints were received from beneficiaries facing difficulties during the e KYC process.

Complaints have been received regarding difficulties in accessing scheme benefits due to some beneficiaries selecting incorrect options during the e KYC process. Specifically, all eligible sisters who have completed e KYC but are yet to receive the benefits are being given another opportunity to correct their e KYC information," said Women and Child Welfare minister Aditi Tatkare. She said the facility to correct e KYC details through the online portal will now remain open until March 31, 2026.

According to sources, Anganwadi workers had opposed the plan for physical verification, citing excessive workload and lack of incentives for the additional task. "There were some complaints that they are burdened with additional work. So, we decided to carry out e KYC till March 31. Those who cannot complete the process till that date will

undergo physical verification," an official from the department said.

The issue arose after a wrongly framed question in the e KYC process led to more than 24 lakh beneficiaries being incorrectly classified as state government employees, resulting in the suspension of their monthly assistance of Rs 1,500.

Following the error, the Women and Child Welfare department had earlier ordered nearly one lakh Anganwadi workers across the state to physically verify the affected beneficiaries.

The problematic question in Marathi read, Tumchya Gharatle koni sarkari nokriti nahi na? (Nobody in your family works for the government, right?) Beneficiaries who should have responded with a no are said to have marked yes due to confusion caused by the framing of the question.

The state government spends nearly Rs 3,700 crore every month on the scheme, which covers nearly 2.25 crore beneficiaries, with each eligible woman receiving Rs 1,500 per month.

The e KYC exercise was initiated following complaints that male members were receiving benefits under the scheme or that government employees had been wrongly registered as beneficiaries.

Launched ahead of the 2024 state Assembly elections, the Majhi Ladki Bahin scheme provides monthly financial assistance to eligible women.

Three students booked for attacking classmate 'using blade' at Ahmedabad school where another was murdered last year

Ahmedabad. (Agency)

Three students of a school in Ahmedabad were booked on Thursday for allegedly assaulting a 12-year-old boy, who is a class monitor, for "enforcing queue discipline". The three juveniles in conflict with law allegedly used a blade to cut off the boy's uniform buttons. The use of blade was mentioned in the police complaint but not in the complaint with the Education Department.

This is the same school in eastern Ahmedabad where a 15-year-old student was murdered using a foldable box cutter blade allegedly by his classmate in August last year. The chargesheet has been filed in the murder case and the trial is underway. In the latest case, an FIR was filed at the jurisdictional police station on February 5 based on a complaint by the father of the 12-year-old boy. The FIR stated that he received a call from his elder son, who is in college, saying that his younger son was assaulted by some other students of the same school. The complainant advised his elder son to file a written complaint with the school and then all three reached the police station. When the

complainant asked his son what had transpired, the boy said that since he was a class monitor, he had been in charge of enforcing queue discipline after school hours while the students were lining up to be picked up by parents, the system put in place after last year's murder case at the school.

Around 12:30 pm on Wednesday (February 4), three boys, who allegedly refused to walk in the single line, were pulled out of the queue by the complainant's son, and made to stand by the side. The three accused juveniles allegedly threatened the class monitor following which, he allowed them to rejoin the queue, the FIR stated. Later, in the bicycle parking of the school, where the three juveniles were waiting, allegedly told him "Kal tereko dekh lenge (we will see you tomorrow)". The next day, on February 5, when the complainant's son went to the school washroom about 11 am, two of the three students allegedly approached him, one caught hold of him while the other tore off the buttons on his uniform with a blade, thrashed him, and allegedly threatened to kill him if he pulled them out of the queue again, the FIR said.

Gas leaks on highways: How to respond and what the Mumbai-Pune Expressway incident shows

A look at the recent tanker accident on the Mumbai-Pune Expressway reveals critical gaps in the response to flammable gas leaks on our highways.

Mumbai. (Agency)

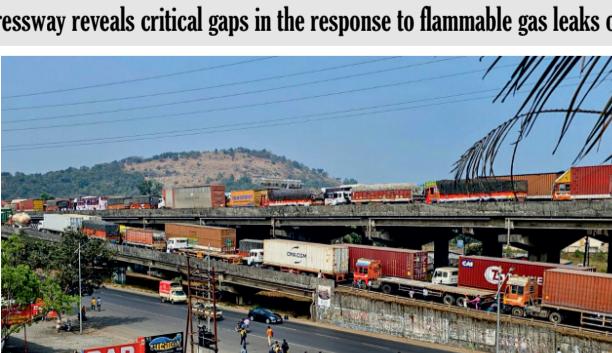
For nearly 32 hours, a tanker leaking highly flammable propylene gas lay toppled on the Mumbai-Pune Expressway, bringing traffic on one of India's busiest highways to a halt. While a disaster was ultimately averted, the prolonged response has exposed serious gaps in how hazardous chemical leaks on public roads are handled.

What dangers does a propylene gas leak pose? A product of petroleum, propylene gas is highly flammable. Static electricity, using a mobile phone, a stray spark from a car's exhaust, would have the potential to ignite a vapour cloud of gas, causing an explosion. However, propylene is not toxic to breathe, and responders only needed a PPE kit to venture near the leak.

What is the first step taken in such situations?

Standard practice around the world dictates that the area around the leak is isolated. While the extent of this area depends on the amount of gas leaking into the air, a minimum radius of 50 metres is recommended. At points after the incident, the lower explosive limit (LEL) was in the dangerous territory at a distance of 500 metres too.

When asked, Maharashtra State Road Development Corporation (MSRDC) officials said "incident management" of a varying range falls under the responsibility of the contractor responsible for the road, in this case, IRB Mp



Expressway Pvt Ltd.

A spokesperson for the company said, "The company has a robust Emergency Response Protocol (ERP) and a well-trained, skilled team already in place, well equipped with

required machinery and systems to handle such situations. In fact, the IRB team, after analysing the situation and understanding the gravity of the issue, prompted immediate action of halting traffic on safe distance from the accident spot with the help of police authorities as a first and most important safety response."

In line with this, traffic was halted on both parts of the carriageway initially. **What is the next step?** Once the severity of the leak and the presence of the gas in the air are ascertained, attempts to contain this sphere of influence—with water sprays, for instance—are the next step. In the case of propylene, a water spray could help contain the leak.

Vadodara doctors stunned as 1-year-old's 'pneumonia' turns out to be a LED bulb lodged in lung

Vadodara. (Agency)

The chest X-ray of a one-year-old boy stunned doctors at a Vadodara hospital in Gujarat this week, revealing an unexpected finding—an LED bulb lodged inside the airway. The parents of the toddler had brought their child to the paediatric department of Gujarat Medical Education Research Society's (GMERS) Gotri hospital from Malsar village in Anand district following complaints of cold, cough, and fever that had been unresolved for close to two months. He was also treated for pneumonia.

After he was referred to the ENT department, an X-ray of his chest revealed a foreign body lodged in his right bronchus—the airway that leads from the windpipe to the lung. When the ENT doctors took a close look, they were surprised to see a 1cm broad LED bulb lodged inside the airway, completely blocking the right lung, which was "on the verge of collapse".

What followed was an immediate surgery to remove the foreign body via bronchoscopy—a procedure performed using a bronchoscope that is moved down the throat and windpipe into the airways to remove the 'foreign' object by using grasping forceps. "The child was suffering from complaints of continuous fever, cough and cold since the last one and a half months. For treatment, the parents of the child had consulted many private hospitals, where he was also treated for pneumonia. Despite receiving initial medical care, the symptoms did not improve significantly. Considering the persistent symptoms and clinical condition, the patient's family decided to bring him for further treatment at GMERS Gotri in Vadodara," Dr Hiren Soni, Head of Department of ENT, GMERS, Vadodara, told. The child arrived at the hospital on February 4 and underwent a detailed imaging and examination. "By God's grace, the patient did not have difficulty in breathing as only the right lung was impacted.

Many more steps needed to ensure menstrual rights

When the Supreme Court declared menstrual health a fundamental right and directed free sanitary provisions in schools, it did something more than correcting a long injustice. It issued us a moral summons. For too long, menstruation has been treated as a private embarrassment, a matter of cleanliness or charity rather than a constitutional question of dignity, bodily autonomy and equal opportunity under Article 21 of the Constitution. That legal recognition is historic. Now the real test shall truly begin—turning a judgement into changed lives. Across India, menstruation touches the lives of hundreds of millions. As I had set out in my Private Member's Bill to amend the National Menstrual Hygiene Policy, a submission grounded in public-health evidence and lived experience, India is home to over 393 million menstruators, and the policy framework must respond to that scale with rights. The Bill insisted on what the court's ruling implies: menstrual health is structural, systemic and intersectional.

What does that mean in practice? Firstly, the supply is inadequate. Free sanitary pads in schools are essential and welcome, but access must be expanded to reusable, low-waste options and to supply chains that make them affordable and dignified. My Bill called explicitly for support to enterprises producing sustainable menstrual products and for incentives to scale up these markets so that choices are available to all communities, urban and rural alike.

Secondly, menstrual health cannot be siloed in sanitation. It belongs in health systems, in education, in labour policy and in disaster planning. The Bill promotes cross-ministerial collaboration between labour, health and education. So that the implementation is planned, monitored and accountable across departments.

It also aims to mandate that reproductive and menstrual healthcare be comprehensive, including diagnosis and treatment of disorders often ignored. This includes awareness about polycystic ovary syndrome, endometriosis, and other conditions that leave millions untreated and in pain. Third, we must make education humane and early. Too many girls learn about menstruation at menarche, startled and shamed; boys are largely left out of this education. My Bill proposed menstrual education from ages seven to eight, and communication strategies that normalise menstruation while challenging stigma, because information shapes dignity and behaviour long before policies arrive in adulthood. Fourth, inclusivity must be explicit. Menstruators are not a single demographic group: sanitation workers, persons with disabilities, transgenders and non-binary people, menopausal workers, each has distinct needs. The Bill asked that monitoring and evaluation include lived-experience data disaggregated by disability, gender identity, caste and age, and that disability and trans-led organisations be funded as partners. This prevents programmes that help some while excluding others. Finally, we must stop pretending that messaging is merely promotional. The Bill recommended removing formal and informal censorship of menstrual health content, and strengthening culturally-sensitive media campaigns that dismantle shame rather than sell products. In crises such as heat waves, water shortages and floods, menstrual needs must be part of emergency planning. I say this not as an ideologue, but as a legislator who has watched how piecemeal interventions fracture into tokenism. In my writing on campus care, I warned against sentimental solutions that off-load labour onto women and family structures; we must learn the same lesson here. Do not mother this problem away with charity alone. Menstrual health requires public systems, trained professionals and legal entitlements that citizens can claim, not charity they must beg for. The court's judgement is a mandate. However, Parliament must translate it into enforceable entitlements: guaranteed products including reusable options, funded health services for menstrual disorders, inclusive sanitary infrastructure, mandatory curriculum changes and cross-departmental accountability.

ON January 31, Baloch fighters carried out synchronised attacks across Pakistan's Balochistan province, killing 33 civilians and 17 security personnel. The banned Balochistan Liberation Army (BLA) owned up to the attacks, the biggest that Pakistan has seen yet in Balochistan. The militants hit at least 12 locations simultaneously, including police stations, military facilities and government offices manned by civilians. At least two women fighters were involved in the attacks, one of them a suicide bomber who blew herself up outside an ISI office at Nushki in northwestern Balochistan. The coordinated attacks appear to have overawed the security forces, who later claimed that in the fighting that followed, they had killed 145 militants. Pakistan's Interior Minister Mohsin Naqvi captured the shock and awe of the moment with his remark that "these were not normal terrorists." He added the "India hand" allegation, which Pakistan has repeated in the last two decades without evidence. Naqvi, too, offered none, but he was right about one thing. The attackers were not "normal terrorists". From the contested accession of Kalat that led to the first uprising in 1948 to as late as the early 2000s, the Baloch insurgency depended on low-grade guerrilla hit-and-run tactics. Militants would attack government infrastructure, such as gas pipelines, power lines and electricity transformers, and scamper into the hills. The insurgent groups were affiliated to some big Baloch tribe, such as Bugti or Marri, and led by tribal sardars, who were part and parcel of the Pakistan establishment. Akbar Khan Bugti, hunted down and killed in Balochistan in 2006 on the orders of General Pervez Musharraf, then Pakistan's military ruler, was a politician-turned insurgent and a former CM of Balochistan. At the time of his killing, he was a member of the National Assembly. Khair Baksh Marri, sardar of the Marri tribe, who played a leading role in the leftist insurrection against the Pakistani state in the 1970s, was a parliamentarian when he led the revolt. Bugti studied in Oxford. Both went to Aitchinson College in Lahore, a pillar of the Pakistani establishment. The political system had many open lines to them. Many leading politicians counted Bugti and Marri as their friends. Musharraf's refusal to negotiate with Bugti on his 14 demands, including for provincial autonomy and control over its resources, was a huge mistake. The fifth and the ongoing Baloch uprising was sparked by Bugti's killing. Bugti's unaddressed demands were not new. They had been made by others too. Balochistan is the country's richest in terms of resources, with its deposits of oil and gas, minerals and metals, including copper and gold, a sample of which Field

Marshal Asim Munir carried to the US to show to President Donald Trump. The Baloch people are marginal in Pakistan's extractive relationship with the province. Until at least the late 2000s, pipelines carried gas from the Sui gasfields to other provinces, but it was unavailable for most of Balochistan. Since 1993, Pakistan has been giving out mining leases to foreign companies to prospect at Reko Diq for gold and copper. In the 2000s, China, which had been awarded the Gwadar port project by the Musharraf government, was also granted a lease for mining in the Saindak copper-gold mines in Chagai. Now, Munir has dangled the same

carrying Chinese workers in Dalbandin was targeted. The BLA has carried out several other attacks targeting Chinese nationals and interests, including another coordinated attack in 2018, a precursor to last week's attack. The 2025 train hijacking, too, was claimed by the BLA. Zeb and Nazar came into the insurgency scene in the time of social media, which has helped them address wider audiences and attract new recruits. The growth of an urban middle class beyond the capital Quetta, in southern Balochistan areas around Gwadar, such as Turbat, Panjgur and Khuzdar, over the last two decades, is a big factor. From these towns has risen a new generation of youth, more educated than their parents and angrier at their marginalisation and the excesses of the military.

The involvement of women in the insurgency is recent and came with the BLA's new leadership. Even when the conservative tribal sardars controlled insurgency, women stepped out of their homes to lead civil society protests to demand the return of thousands of men — their fathers, brothers, husbands and sons — who had disappeared, allegedly by security forces' involvement. Their shift to combatant roles came to the fore with the 2022 incident of a BLA woman suicide bomber, another first for the Baloch insurgency. The 30-year-old Shari Baloch's act of blowing herself up outside

the Chinese state-run Confucius Institute, University of Karachi, appears to have motivated other women, and men, to join the BLA and volunteer for the "Majeed brigade", said to be the group's suicide squad. A year after Shari, Sumaiya Qalandrani Baloch blew herself up on a security convoy in Turbat. In 2024, a woman carried out a fidayeen attack on a Frontier Corps camp to mark the 18th anniversary of the killing of Akbar Bugti. Experts say if Baloch women are ready to pick up the gun or wear a suicide vest, it is because they have been driven to the wall by the Pakistan state. Last week's morale-shattering attack by the BLA is a sign of the determination with which the new generation of Baloch militants is taking on the army. It signals a new turning point for the insurgents. The attack is also a not-so-subtle message to the big powers. What next? The track record shows that the army, humiliated by the attack, will punish Baloch people more severely. The cycle of violence will continue. Accusations will be levelled against India, and Delhi will reject them, as it did to the latest one. But if there is one common lesson that history offers to the region, from Sri Lanka to India's Kashmir and North-East to Balochistan, it is this: blaming neighbours may play to domestic galleries, but it does not make challenges, whose geneses lie within, disappear or easier to overcome.



carrot before Trump, but last week's attack may have taken the sheen off those shiny objects in his briefcase. Pakistan's exploitation of its largest but least populated province has been a festering sore that could have been addressed politically. Instead, the military, which has ruled the country for most of its existence, has opted for an iron fist, that has only made its challenge in the province more difficult than earlier. Today's Baloch insurgency is much more aggressive. It is led by people who bear no political or social resemblance to the tribal sardars, who live in camps on the rugged hills, but were otherwise Baloch elites whose politics was not anti-Pakistan, aimed only at a fair arrangement within the federation, with themselves as the main beneficiaries. In contrast, Bashir Zeb, who has led the BLA since 2018, is a diploma holder in mechanical engineering. His father is a doctor and Zeb grew up in middle-class home at Nushki, a small town in Balochistan, cutting his political teeth as a member of the Baloch Students Organisation Azad, founded by another middle-class professional, Allah Nazar, a doctor and now the leader of the Baloch Liberation Front. Neither man is a political moderate. Under their leadership, the Baloch insurgency has grown more violent, more ambitious. The BLA claimed the first suicide bombing in 2018, in which a bus

Not just a game: Ghaziabad, Kullu suicides trigger concern

The Tribune Editorial: These heartbreaking incidents should spur a conversation on mental well-being of the youth in the digital age



intersect with emotional vulnerabilities, social isolation

and unmet mental health needs. However, experts emphasise that gaming or online friendships alone do not cause suicide; suicide is a complex, multifactorial phenomenon. But problematic digital engagement, especially when accompanied by withdrawal from offline life, disrupted schooling and acute emotional stress, can exacerbate distress in susceptible young minds.

These heartbreaking incidents should spur a conversation on mental well-being of the youth in the digital age. The tragedies require nuanced responses: equipping parents with digital awareness, strengthening mental health education in schools, and ensuring accessible psychological support for adolescents. Open communication within families must be fostered so that children feel heard before distress escalates into crisis. Parents and teachers must listen more than they censor; policymakers must ensure that online environments prioritise safety for minors.

Business as unusual

India ought to have challenged economic & moral foundation of Trump's tariff tantrum

THERE is one simple question about US President Donald Trump's grouse against India that few economists have asked. What is wrong if a less developed economy, with a per capita income of less than \$3,000, runs a large trade surplus against the world's richest economy which has a per capita income close to \$90,000? India ought to have challenged outright the economic and moral foundation of Trump's tariff tantrum. It is a different matter that as a weaker power, we have finally agreed to have our arms twisted, but why accept the logic of the demand? And, what is the economic logic of zero tariffs on any US imports? Incidentally, some members of the Union government's economic policy team have often claimed that while the reforms of 1991 were undertaken under external pressure, this government has been voluntarily pursuing reforms. If a government wakes up after nearly 12 years in office to unveil radical trade reforms, it is surely not out of conviction but owing to the external pressure being exerted. The trade policy reform unveiled through the recent Union Budget as well as the concessions being granted to the US, especially in trade in agricultural products, are all in response to such pressure. Much is being made of how the 18% tariff announced by President Trump through a tweet places India at an advantage vis-à-vis many South-East Asian economies that face US tariff rates of over 18%. This is a laughable claim. Even with a few percentage points' disadvantage, many Asian economies can out-compete India because of lower costs and their economies being more competitive. Another laughable proposition, instantly peddled by apologists for the US in India, is that Trump's tariff reduction from 50% to 18% has restored the India-US strategic partnership. Even if that 18% is far above an earlier 0-5% rate. That this somehow places the relationship on a sound and durable

foundation. This is the hope of a desperate nation. Not the aspiration of a rising power. The fact is that over the past year, President Trump has pursued an avowedly anti-India policy, insulting Indian leadership and questioning Indian domestic and foreign policies. It is claimed that Prime Minister Narendra Modi has exercised 'strategic patience'. Silence is golden, speech would have been wooden. Fair enough. But what exactly has Trump's unilaterally announced 'trade deal' done to restore trust to the damaged relationship? The fact also is that we are still no wiser on what exactly the 'deal' is. A deal by definition has two sides to the equation. Even after Commerce Minister Piyush Goyal's press conference, the terms of the 'deal' remain hazy. Different claims are being made in New Delhi and Washington DC. To begin with, the first 25% tariff against India and a second 25% imposed due to India purchasing Russian oil were both levied through executive orders issued by the President. These orders are still being challenged in American courts. The presidential tariff tweet has not yet become an executive order and does not clarify if he is bringing the effective tariff down from 50% to 18% or from 25% to 18%. India has said nothing about stopping the purchase of Russian oil. Such uncertainties would not have been important in a strategic relationship based on trust, which is what India and the US established under the leadership of President George W Bush and Prime Minister Manmohan Singh. But with trust gone, presidential tweets have to be followed by executive orders before foreign policy analysts go gaga. How will the world, and especially India's neighbours, view the US-India relationship as it has evolved over the past one year? The evidence would suggest that it is no longer a "strategic



than it has dealt with Pakistan or most other developing economies. While China and Brazil have been particularly targeted and India is the only member of BRICS that has found some favour with Trump, most countries would see that Trump's US has lost Indian trust. An 18% tariff for India over a 19% for Pakistan is not going to help. Is India's friendship worth only one percentage point more than Pakistan's? Would Modi's

support base accept this valuation of Indian friendship? As for China, while the Trump administration persists with the geo-economic containment of China, it has signalled calming of tensions on Taiwan. India, too, has changed its stance on China. Moreover, India is in no position to supply to the US what China is able to and the US needs. India's place in America's 'China+1' strategy is marginal. On the other hand, under pressure from the US, the European Union has diluted its China+1 policy and is reaching out to China. All these developments suggest that President Trump's overall foreign economic policies and his new national security strategy place India in a position of relative disadvantage, compared to what was the case even a decade ago, and not in any great position of advantage.

How this implies any return to a relationship of the early 21st century, as claimed by some in India, is not at all clear. It is misplaced enthusiasm masquerading as expertise. Finally, as of now, the Modi government has maintained stoic silence on Trump's claims about India ending the purchase of Russian oil and switching to Venezuelan oil. The US has also demanded an end to Indian import of Iranian oil. If all this turns out to be true, then the Modi government should stop talking about strategic autonomy. It is not merely by defending one's borders that a nation secures its sovereignty. Asserting national interest in reducing critical dependencies, as in oil and defence equipment, is also a sovereign decision that should not be bargained away in a trade deal about shrimps and soyabean.



In reality, most houses and flats include at least one awkward space, maybe a narrow hallway, or a tiny study struggling to double as a spare bedroom, or an oddly-shaped lounge.

Surprisingly, these can prove to be assets. Problem rooms can be transformed into charming and original spaces with just a

bit of knowledge, confidence and the ability to highlight the positive points and minimise the negative. We all have a room that we wish we could fix. Either it's too small, too

It goes without saying that a living room set up is incomplete without a pleasant seating. An aptly designed couch makes for a complete interior experience. Comfort seating and loads of aesthetic value are big pluses that go with a well chosen sofa. A seating system that complements the decor is truly a must while decorating the living room.

Cane sofas, carved wooden couches, white metal and black iodised sofas, solid wood based sofas with fabric and leather upholstery, textile sofas and leather sofas are commonly in vogue. Spreading across all budgets from a modest, 15,000 to a whopping 3 lakh a set of sofa systems are available as sets in the ready made market and as customised pieces at sofa makers. The patterns available are countless and the combinations, variable. One needs to look into individual needs, space availability, colour of the living room, the decor theme et al while choosing just the right sofa. A hurried decision on buying sofas can at times lead to a frustrating experience. Additional seating like modas, bean bags and Mona Lisa deewans can go well with sofas of all shapes.

Javed Tajuddin Qazi, a sofa maker from a city suburb, says, "The patterns available with sofa makers are much more than what is available at leading showrooms. Made to order sets are much cheaper, use better material and are at times even sturdier than what might be sold off as branded pieces. Plus, tailored sofas can be matched with any decor as per the need."

Ready made branded

versions, however, supposed to add an 'oomph factor' apart from comfort angles for seating. Avers Smita Thite, an interior designer says, "I recommend the use of ready made branded sofas to my customers as they look elegant and are high on style quotient too". Smita feels the Pune customers are an aware lot and have no hang ups on outlaying big budgets for sofas. "The

elected to make a sofa look more elegant. Maintenance is as important as looks, if not more.

Javed says, "One must never use sofas without maintaining them." This expert further elaborates, "Cane sofas must be dusted with vacuum cleaners from time to time and a polish treatment is given once in five years. These can last forever if taken care of properly. What's more,

the

go with any kind of decor, modern or traditional. Polishing is a must for wooden sets of all types. Re-cushioning and repairing the loosened seats of sofa are best done before it starts sagging.

A small investment of 5000 on reconditioning every four years can go a long way in using the same set forages. In this process, one can change

We all crave the large, airy, light-filled rooms featured in interior magazines that promise relaxation and sophistication without the real life tangles of TV wires and cluttered surfaces, and unsuitable furniture.

dark, too narrow, has a low ceiling, or other undesirable features. Here are some tips:

Go smaller Is your room too big? Divide it into more intimate areas. Grouping a couple of chairs with a loveseat, two chairs and a small table, a sofa and chair, or other similar arrangements will make the room seem cosy. Warm colours advance visually, so painting the room a warm colour will make the room seem more intimate.

Small spaces Internal windows are a clever way of increasing light, and giving small rooms a welcome outlook into adjoining areas.

Narrow spaces Distract attention from a room's narrowness by adding a dramatic colour or painting to one of the shorter walls. Place a sofa covered in a horizontal stripe fabric on a short wall, which tricks the eye into seeing the wall as wider.

Awkward shaped rooms Be bold when decorating an oddly-shaped room — a half-hearted attempt makes the whole thing look like a mistake. Choose a soft colour or subtle print -anything too dark will make the walls close in. Soften angles and strong lines by painting walls and ceiling white or a pale receding colour. Create symmetrical



displays on shelves and tables to offset angles.

Go taller Is your ceiling too low? Add height to your room with tall, vertical elements, such as bookcases. Long curtains which drape on the floor can also add visual height, as will tall lamps or torches. Painting the ceiling a light, cool colour (which appears to recede) will make the room seem brighter and more open. Stretch a room's height by using full-length curtains on windows regardless of their size. Use uplighters to direct soft light towards the ceiling making

it appear further away. Accentuate the vertical with floor-to-ceiling stripes on walls.

Go shorter Is your room too tall? Lower the ceiling by incorporating more horizontal lines in the room. Shelves, art and crown moldings are just a few of the elements that can lower the height of the room. Another way to lower the room is to install molding or chair rails one half to three quarters of the way up the walls. This trick visually shortens the room. Painting the ceiling a dark, warm colour will also shorten the visual space.

Go brighter Uncover windows by opting for shutters instead of curtains, or sweep drapes clear of the frame back onto walls. Paint garden fences and walls white or a pale colour to bounce light into the interior. Lay pale-coloured paving stones below doors and windows for a lightening effect. Use sparkly, shiny surfaces to bounce light around a room — mirrors, kitchen units in stainless steel, or mirrored splashbacks.

Go shorter Bring lofty ceilings down a peg or two by painting the area above the picture rail a warm shade deeper than the walls. Use pendant lights and avoid uplighters.

Couch is everything a living room needs



the

available for artificial and pure leather sofas and is an investment worth it.



As for the colours in vogue, Smita adds, "Black is an all time favourite in Italian designs. It goes well on any background. Other colours in rage are beige, off white, light mauve, light crimson, sandy brown and olive green. These go well with any background. People are also trying bold colours like yellow and pink, but they have to be carefully displayed, lest they look gaudy."

Box type sofas, C-shape seating, L-shape sets are all the current favourites. Pine and rubber wood benches are added as an accessory

if space demands. Wood goes well with any background and a generous display of this material lends style quotient to any design.

Floor pillows, Indian seating that is at a lower level than a sofa and a set of broad chairs can mingle well with any sofa system in a large living room. The right sofa material for individual need, the correct texture of the fabric for every decor and the apt shade for any living room can add magic to an otherwise boring ambience. One has to make a learned decision before buying the right sofa. Otherwise, hurry can lead to worry later.

17 Indian students killed in violent attacks in Canada since 2018: Govt

Parliament was told that 17 Indian students died in violent attacks in Canada between 2018 and 2025, prompting the government to outline safety measures, consular support and evacuation efforts abroad.

New Delhi.(Agency) Seventeen Indian students studying in Canada died in "violent attacks" between 2018 and 2025, the government told Parliament on Friday. Minister of State for External Affairs Kirti Vardhan Singh, in a written reply to a Lok Sabha question by AIMIM MP Asaduddin Owaisi, said Canada recorded the highest number of such deaths during the period under review. Sharing country-wise data, Singh said 17 Indian students died in violent incidents in Canada, followed by nine in the United States, three in Australia and one each in the United Kingdom, China, Denmark, Germany and Grenada. Two such deaths were reported from Kyrgyzstan.

Owaisi had asked whether the government was aware of what he described as rising incidents of violence against Indian students abroad and whether timely investigations had been



conducted. "The Government accords high priority to the safety and security of Indian students abroad and monitors incidents of violence against them," Singh said. "Violent and untoward incidents are immediately taken up by the Indian Missions and Posts with the concerned authorities of the host country to ensure that they are properly investigated and the perpetrators are punished." He said Indian

missions remain in regular contact with students and conduct pre-departure and post-arrival orientation sessions to brief them on "potential challenges, risks and precautions," along with issuing advisories when required. To ensure timely support, students are encouraged to register with Indian missions and use platforms such as the MEA's MADAD portal, dedicated WhatsApp groups, consular camps, open houses and emergency helplines, the minister said. Responding to questions on diplomatic measures in high-risk countries, Singh said Indian missions "remain vigilant, particularly in countries affected by political instability or economic crises," and that any incident involving Indian students is promptly raised with host governments. Consular assistance, including emergency medical help and temporary accommodation, is extended when required, with support also provided through the Indian

Community Welfare Fund, he said. Singh noted that India has carried out large-scale evacuation operations during emergencies to protect its nationals abroad, including students, citing Operation Devi Shakti in Afghanistan, Operation Ganga in Ukraine, Operation Kaveri in Sudan, and Operations Ajay (Israel) and Sindhu (Israel and Iran) linked to West Asia.

"These efforts demonstrate the government of India's unwavering commitment to ensuring the safety and well-being of Indian students abroad and towards protecting them from miscreants and an unsafe security situation," he said. In response to a separate query, Singh said the government of India is aware that "some Indian nationals, including students, in Canada and other countries, such as the USA and the Gulf, are facing deportation proceedings for alleged violations of visa norms, non-compliance with the regulations of host countries and submission of fraudulent letters of admission to academic institutions".

Meghalaya coal mine explosion: Toll rises to 25 after 7 more bodies found

New Delhi.(Agency) The death toll in the explosion in an illegal coal mine in Meghalaya's East Jaintia Hills mounted to 25 on Friday following the recovery of seven more bodies, Director General of Police I Nongrang said. The explosion occurred on Thursday at the mine in the Thangsku area of Umsngat village, prompting the authorities to begin



large-scale search and rescue operations involving multiple agencies. Eighteen bodies had been found on Thursday.

"So far, seven additional bodies have been recovered today, taking the total number of deaths to 25. Out of these, 12 bodies have been identified," Nongrang told PTI.

Search operations are continuing at the site as teams of the State Disaster Response Force, Special Rescue Team and the National Disaster Response Force were pressed into service. Medical teams and ambulances have also been deployed, officials said. "The search operation is still underway, and all efforts are being made to find out any remaining victims and complete the identification process at the earliest," the DGP said. Officials said that the Army and the Air Force remain on standby as the district administration and the State Disaster Management Authority continue to monitor the situation closely.

Delhi HC flags 'lack of will' as DCPCR remains non-functional since '23

New Delhi.(Agency)

Despite speculations last month that the appointment of the next Chairperson of the Delhi Commission for Protection of Child Rights (DCPCR) was nearing completion, the process has once again landed in uncertainty, with the Delhi HC on Friday sharply criticizing the city government for its prolonged inaction and terming the delay a "case of lack of will."

Hearing a petition related to the non-functioning of

Delhi government begins drafting bill for transport authority

The task force brings together senior officials from key departments including transport, urban development, finance, planning, public works and Delhi Police.

New Delhi.(Agency)

In an institutional reform aimed at transforming urban mobility in the capital, the Delhi government has initiated the process of drafting a comprehensive Bill for the creation of the Delhi Unified Metropolitan Transport Authority (DUMTA) along with a dedicated Delhi Urban Transport Fund (DUTF). The proposed legislation seeks to rationalise, integrate and coordinate Delhi's presently fragmented transport ecosystem under a single, coherent planning and governance framework. The move marks a significant milestone in the government's vision to create a modern, efficient, people-



centric and environmentally sustainable transport system for the capital.

To ensure expeditious and inclusive drafting of the proposed law, CM Rekha Gupta has constituted a high-level task force under the chairmanship of the Chief Secretary. The task force has been mandated to prepare and submit the draft Bill at the earliest,

reflecting the government's sense of urgency and commitment to reform. This decision responds to long-standing demands from urban planners, transport experts and civic stakeholders for a unified transport authority capable of synchronising planning, investment and operations across agencies.

Recognising that Delhi's rapid urbanisation, rising population and mounting vehicular pressure demands systemic solutions rather than piecemeal interventions, the chief minister has taken the step by setting the legislative process in motion. The task force brings together senior officials from key departments including transport, urban development, finance, planning, public works and Delhi Police.

EC member raises concern over Delhi University panel's mechanical adoption of audits

New Delhi.(Agency)

A member of the University of Delhi's Executive Council submitted a formal Note of Dissent objecting to the adoption of the University's Audited Annual Accounts for the financial year 2024-25, which were taken up during an emergent online meeting of the Executive Council held on Friday. In the dissent note, the professor raised concerns over both the procedure followed for the meeting and the contents of the financial document presented for approval.

The professor objected to the decision to convene an emergency meeting held online for deliberating on the audited accounts, describing the matter as one of significant institutional importance. The note further pointed out that the agenda and supporting documents were circulated less than 24 hours before the meeting,

leaving members insufficient time to study what was described as a "bulky" financial document. Submitting the note, Professor Mithuraj Dhusiya, executive council member, said, "This is totally unacceptable, as statutory bodies like the

Higher Education Financing Agency (HEFA) loan, amounting to Rs 13.06 crore, noting that the document did not clearly specify what proportion of this repayment came from student fees. The professor argued that greater transparency was required, particularly in light of recurring concerns about rising student fees.

Additionally, the note highlighted a significant increase in fees collected from students during 2024-25 compared to the previous financial year. According to figures cited in the dissent, student fee collections rose by 66.88 per cent, from approximately Rs 195.56 crore in 2023-24 to about Rs 292.42 crore in 2024-25. The professor stated that the accounts did not provide a detailed breakdown explaining the reasons for this sharp increase.



Executive Council of Delhi University cannot be used as a rubber stamp to table and approve important matters." The dissent also flagged alleged gaps in the data provided in the audited accounts. Specifically, it referred to the internal receipts shown for repayment of the

Delhi-NCR Warms Up, Air Quality Stays In 'Poor' Category

New Delhi.(Agency)

Delhi-NCR witnessed a gradual rise in temperatures as residents woke up to bright sunshine on Saturday, even as the region's air quality continued to remain in the 'poor' category. Daytime temperatures in the national Capital have been steadily climbing under clear and sunny conditions.

Earlier on Friday, Delhi recorded a maximum temperature that was 1.5 degrees Celsius above the seasonal average, indicating the beginning of a slow transition in weather patterns, according to data released by the India Meteorological Department (IMD).

The weather department has predicted that similar conditions will prevail on Saturday as well. Wind speeds are expected to range between 15 and 25 kilometres per hour during the day. The maximum temperature is likely to remain between 23 and 25 degrees Celsius, while the minimum temperature is expected to range between 9 and 11 degrees Celsius.

The IMD also indicated that haze during the early hours of the morning is likely to continue, but it is expected to gradually dissipate as the day progresses, allowing bright sunshine to dominate weather conditions once again. Despite the pleasant daytime weather, air quality across Delhi remained a concern, with the overall Air Quality Index (AQI) recorded at 260, which falls under the 'poor' category.

Burari recorded an AQI of 202, Anand Vihar reported 260, Chandni Chowk recorded 232, DTU registered 204, Dwarka Sector-8 measured 243, ITO recorded 223, and Okhla Phase-2 reported an AQI of 228, among other areas reflecting deteriorating air quality levels.

Meanwhile, in a move aimed at transforming urban mobility in the national Capital, the Delhi government has constituted a task force to draft a Bill proposing the creation of a Delhi Unified Metropolitan Transport Authority (DUMTA), along with establishing a dedicated Delhi Urban Transport Fund (DUTF). According to a statement issued by Chief Minister Rekha Gupta's office, the proposed legislation aims to streamline, integrate and coordinate Delhi's currently fragmented transport network under a unified planning and governance framework.

The initiative is being seen as a significant step towards achieving the government's broader vision of building a modern, efficient, people-centric and environmentally sustainable transport system for the national Capital.

Delhi's Janakpuri tragedy: Biker called friend minutes before falling to his death

New Delhi.(Agency)

A friend of 25-year-old biker Kamal Dhyani, who died after allegedly falling into an open pit in Delhi's Janakpuri area, has said that Kamal had called him shortly before the incident, informing him that he was just 15 minutes away from home.

Kamal, a resident of Kailashpuri, had left his office in Rohini on Thursday night but never reached home. His family searched for him through the night, along with police teams, but no trace of him could be found.

Around 8 am on Friday, a woman reportedly called the police to inform them about a body lying inside a 15-foot-deep pit. Police personnel reached the spot and found Kamal's body inside the pit, with his bike toppled nearby.

Initial investigations indicate that Kamal died after falling into the open pit, which had reportedly been dug for Delhi Jal Board (DJB) work. Speaking to ANI, Kamal's friend said they last spoke to him at around 11:30 pm on the night of the incident.

"Last night at 11:30, we spoke to him. He said he had reached the District Centre and that it would take him 15 minutes to reach home... After 30 minutes, we called him 10 times, but he didn't answer. We became worried and went out to search for him, but couldn't find him," he said.

The friend further alleged that after Kamal went missing, he and the family approached the Janakpuri Police Station to register a First Information Report (FIR), but police refused, claiming that an FIR could only be registered after 24 hours.

"We requested, Sir, please trace his phone while it is still ringing. They found the location and sent it to us, but then deleted it.... When we went back, they said they couldn't give us the location again as it is a confidential..." he added. Kamal's mother also expressed grief and anger, stating that the family was

devastated after receiving the news of his death.

"Someone picked up his phone in the morning and told us he had fallen into a pit."

Meanwhile, the Delhi Police rejected allegations of inaction and said officers remained with the family throughout the night, trying to trace Kamal's location using mobile tower tracking and CCTV footage. The incident has sparked outrage and drawn a response from the Delhi government. Delhi PWD Minister Parvesh Verma termed the incident "tragic" and announced strict action, including suspensions and a probe.

"The incident that happened here yesterday is very tragic. We have ordered an inquiry from the Delhi Jal Board. A committee has been formed, comprising director-level officers. The report will be available within 24 hours. Three officers have been suspended and we will take the strictest possible action against the company that was working here," Verma said.



the DCPCR, a bench of Chief Justice D K Upadhyaya and Justice Tejas Karia pulled up the Delhi government for failing to fill the posts of chairperson and members of the statutory body since July 2023. The court observed that despite repeated assurances and multiple interventions, the appointment process remains incomplete.

The court's remarks come after speculation within government circles suggested that the race for the chairperson's post had narrowed down to two names: senior IAS officer S B Shashank, former Secretary in the Women and Child Development Department, and O P Vyas, former Chairperson of the Child Welfare Committee.



He told me yesterday that I have the next day off, so we will celebrate your anniversary. He had bought things for the celebrations, added. Kamal's mother also expressed grief but never came back. All we want is justice," she said.

NEWS BOX

Let the game begin: Can a 20-team T20 World Cup heal a fractured sport

NEW DELHI. (Agency)

In 2003, my world was measured in laser-printed A4 sheets. I remember the smell of fresh ink and the static on the paper as I biked through my neighbourhood, sliding the ICC World Cup schedule into my friends' mailboxes like a clandestine scout. We didn't care about the ICC's central revenue pool or the diplomatic standoff in the subcontinent. We cared about whether Sachin could handle Shoaib's pace and if the underdog Kenyans could actually pull off a miracle. Fast-forward to 2008: the dawn of the IPL. I remember the frantic pleading with my parents to upgrade our DTH box because the free-to-air channels weren't enough. We were desperate for every ball, every boundary. Back then, cricket felt like an inheritance—a pure, unadulterated joy that belonged to us, the fans. Looking back, that desperation feels innocent, almost romantic. Cricket tournaments weren't events you merely watched—they were things you prepared for.



You counted days. You argued about squads before they were announced. You imagined match-ups long before a ball was bowled. The excitement lived not just in the games themselves, but in the waiting. As the T20 World Cup begins on Saturday, with twenty teams lining up across continents, cultures and cricketing histories, it should feel like one of those moments again—a global festival, noisy and unpredictable, full of stories yet to be told. Instead, the air around this tournament feels heavier than it should. The conversations leading into it haven't been about young players chasing impossible dreams or first-time teams daring to believe. They've been about who isn't playing whom, who didn't travel, who pulled out, and why. Cricket, once so good at uniting rooms full of strangers, now finds itself trapped in headlines it never wanted.

I think of how tournaments used to arrive. The World Cup didn't knock politely—it barged into everyday life. School timetables were adjusted around matches. Families negotiated television access like it was a diplomatic summit.

Matchday Preview: Forgotten heroes West Indies begin campaign with India, Pakistan

NEW DELHI. (Agency)

The T20 fever is set to take over the entire world as the T20 World Cup 2026 officially begins on Saturday, February 7. The opening day of the tournament will feature three matches, with Pakistan and the Netherlands locking horns in the curtain-raiser of the competition in Colombo.

The second match of the day will see West Indies take on Scotland, while hosts India will be in action in the final game of the evening at the Wankhede Stadium in Mumbai. While Asian giants India and Pakistan are expected to take the limelight on the opening day, the two-time champions



West Indies will also be eager to reclaim their lost glory on the very soil where they won their last title in the 2016 edition. All matches will be telecast on Star Sports, with live streaming available on JioHotstar.

Here's a quick preview of the three games on Day 1 of the T20 World Cup.

MATCH 1 prediction: Pakistan vs Netherlands in Colombo

Pakistan are coming into the tournament having whitewashed Australia 3-0 on home soil. The Salman Agha-led side is carrying strong momentum into the event, having earlier beaten South Africa, hammered Sri Lanka and Zimbabwe in a tri-series, and further drawn their series against Sri Lanka 1-1. Having decided to boycott their highly anticipated fixture against India, Pakistan have put themselves in a precarious position, as they now need to win all of their remaining fixtures for a smooth transition into the Super Eights. On the other hand, the Netherlands qualified for the tournament after winning the European qualifiers in July 2025. The Scott Edwards-led side finished on top of the table with three wins from four matches, collecting six points. The Netherlands also featured in the 2024 edition of the tournament but were knocked out in the first stage after winning just one of their four matches.

From the simple magic of ink-stained schedules to the heavy drama of modern boycotts, cricket's soul is at a crossroads. As twenty nations take the field today, can the purity of the pitch finally silence the noise of the boardroom

MANCHESTER. (Agency)

In 2003, my world was measured in laser-printed A4 sheets. I remember the smell of fresh ink and the static on the paper as I biked through my neighbourhood, sliding the ICC World Cup schedule into my friends' mailboxes like a clandestine scout. We didn't care about the ICC's central revenue pool or the diplomatic standoff in the subcontinent. We cared about whether Sachin could handle Shoaib's pace and if the underdog Kenyans could actually pull off a miracle. Fast-forward to 2008: the dawn of the IPL. I remember the frantic pleading with my parents to upgrade our DTH box because the free-to-air channels weren't enough. We were desperate for every ball, every boundary. Back then, cricket felt like an inheritance—a pure, unadulterated joy that belonged to us, the fans. Looking back, that desperation feels innocent, almost romantic. Cricket tournaments weren't events you merely watched—they were things you prepared for. You counted days. You argued about squads before they were announced. You imagined match-ups long before a ball was bowled. The excitement lived not just in the games themselves, but in the waiting. Somewhere along the way, that feeling



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changed. As the T20 World Cup begins on Saturday, with twenty teams lining up across continents, cultures and cricketing histories, it should feel like one of those moments again—a global festival, noisy and unpredictable, full of stories yet to be told. Instead, the air around this tournament feels heavier than it should. The conversations leading into it haven't been about young players chasing impossible dreams or first-time teams daring to believe. They've been

about who isn't playing whom, who didn't travel, who pulled out, and why. Cricket, once so good at uniting rooms full of strangers, now finds itself trapped in headlines it never wanted. I think of how tournaments used to arrive. The World Cup didn't knock politely—it barged into everyday life. School timetables were adjusted around matches. Families negotiated television access like it was a diplomatic summit. Neighbours who barely spoke to each other suddenly shared opinions on opening combinations and death bowling. Cricket had that power. It didn't ask for permission; it demanded attention.

TOO MUCH OUTSIDE NOISE?

Today, ICC tournaments arrive preceded by press releases, clarifications, rebuttals and political footnotes. Long before the first over, the narrative is already crowded—not with cricketing possibilities, but with administrative explanations. It's hard to build anticipation when the loudest voices are off the field. The dominant storyline has been Pakistan threatening to boycott their match against India, Bangladesh's withdrawal, and the familiar fog of geopolitics that seems to settle over cricket every time a global event approaches.

Sunil Gavaskar shreds Pakistan over T20 boycott: It's always us reaching out

BENGALURU. (Agency)

Indian cricket legend Sunil Gavaskar has flagged what he believes is a long-standing imbalance in how India and Pakistan approach sporting and cultural exchanges. Gavaskar said Pakistan cannot keep expecting India to always extend invitations first when the gesture is rarely returned. Speaking to India Today in an exclusive interview, Gavaskar pointed out that India has historically opened its doors to Pakistani participation, whether through the IPL or broadcast panels, while Pakistan has seldom reciprocated the same warmth. "Well, we already have. We started in 2008, and we did have Pakistani players in the IPL. I think just about every franchise had a Pakistani player. We also had Pakistani commentators. Pakistan always wants India to invite them, but we've never really seen the same in return, even before relations reached the state they are in today. There was hardly anything," Gavaskar said. How many of our singers, how many of our film stars, are invited to act in Pakistani films? It's always us making the first move. We



At the centre of it all was Vaibhav Sooryavanshi.

Vaibhav's stunning 175 was far more than just a match-winning effort. On the grandest stage of junior cricket, he produced an innings that felt like an announcement to the world. With fearless intent and complete control, the left-hander ripped through England's attack and turned the final into a one-sided spectacle. He reached his hundred in just 55 balls, the second-fastest century ever recorded in Under-19 World Cup history, after already flying to a 32-ball fifty. And once he crossed three figures, he only grew more ruthless. The next burst was even quicker, with his second fifty coming in only 23 deliveries, as England ran out of ideas and the scoreboard kept racing ahead. By the time he was dismissed, Vaibhav had struck 30 boundaries, including 15 sixes, with 150 of his runs coming purely through fours and sixes. He became the youngest centurion in Under-19 World Cup history, set a record for the highest individual score in a final, and powered India to the highest total ever recorded in a title clash. Chasing an impossible 412, England never truly found their footing despite a lone fighting century.

Sanjiv Sooryavanshi added. How did India win the U19 World Cup 2026? India were crowned world champions in men's Under-19 cricket for a sixth time after producing a final of overwhelming authority, dismantling England by 100 runs at the Harare Sports Club on February 6. Led by Ayush Mhatre, India piled up a colossal 411 for 9 before bowling England out for 311 to seal one of the most emphatic title wins in tournament history.

T20 World Cup: Favourites India begin bid for history in Green Card vs Aadhaar Card clash

NEW DELHI. (Agency)

Cricket does not often look like this. On one side are the defending world champions. On the other side is a team built across continents, time zones and passport stamps. When the defending champions, India, open their T20 World Cup campaign against the United States at the Wankhede on Saturday, February 7, it will be less about where the teams come from and more about how far the game has travelled. The India vs USA group clash will get underway at 7 pm IST. JioHotstar will offer live streaming, while Star Sports will provide TV coverage of the match in India. The USA will walk out with a squad filled with journeymen from India, Pakistan, South Africa and Sri Lanka at one of India's most famed cricket grounds on Saturday. This American side tells the story of how cricket now travels. Only four players were born in the United States, all to immigrant families. The rest are first-generation

arrivals, including three born in Pakistan, bringing with them skills learnt on distant pitches before finding a home in American



colours.

GREEN CARD vs AADHAAR CARD

With eight members of the USA squad tracing their roots back to India, Saturday's ICC Men's T20 World Cup clash at the Wankhede Stadium has been playfully dubbed Green Card versus Aadhaar Card. A

Green Card, officially known as a permanent resident card, confirms lawful permanent residency in the United States.

Aadhaar, by contrast, is India's 12-digit unique identification number issued by the Unique Identification Authority of India, serving as proof of identity and address across the country. Captain Maunak Patel, spinner Harneet Singh, batter Shubham Ranjane, Jasdeep Singh, Sanjay Krishnamurthi, Milind Kumar, Saiteja Mukkamalla and experienced left-arm pacer Saurabh Netravalkar form the Indian-rooted spine of the American side. For Harneet, Shubham and Netravalkar, this fixture carries a deeper resonance. All three are products of the Mumbai maidans, where long days under the sun once saw them share space with future India stars such as Suryakumar Yadav and Shivam Dube, chasing the same ambitions that now meet at the World Cup.

The ICC responded sharply, warning that selective participation undermines the basic principles of a global tournament. With the India-Pakistan fixture considered cricket's biggest commercial draw, its potential absence could result in major losses for broadcasters and sponsors.

The ICC responded sharply, warning that selective participation undermines the basic principles of a global tournament. With the India-Pakistan fixture considered cricket's biggest commercial draw, its potential absence could result in major losses for broadcasters and sponsors.

India-Pakistan issues not our concern: USA's Saurabh Netravalkar stays clear of debate

USA pacer Saurabh Netravalkar says India-Pakistan tensions have never entered the American dressing room. As the T20 World Cup begins, he insists USA remain focused only on cricket, not politics.

NEW DELHI. (Agency)

USA pacer Saurabh Netravalkar has stayed well clear of the India vs Pakistan debate, insisting the growing tension around the rivalry has never seeped into the American dressing room. The left-arm pacer said the USA camp remains focused only on cricket as the T20 World Cup 2026 begins.

With India-Pakistan clashes increasingly shaped by off-field controversies, the USA squad stands out as a rare mix of Indian- and Pakistani-origin players sharing the same

badge. Speaking at the USA pre-match press conference ahead of their World Cup opener against India at the Wankhede Stadium on February 7, Netravalkar said such issues are simply not discussed within the group. "Yes we have players from all parts of the world. We gel and bond together because of our love for the game. And no I don't think we have ever discussed the India-Pakistan issues amongst ourselves. We are all proud to play for USA," he said. With the India clash presenting a chance to make a positive start to their tournament, Netravalkar also spoke about the challenge of facing the hosts in their own backyard, admitting the Americans remain underdogs but not without belief.

"We are probably more unknown to them, but there is quite a bit of videos going around, so I think they would have done their homework. We have done our homework as well," he said, calling it an "even contest" in preparation.

They are one of the best teams in the world

but the format itself has some kind of a luck factor. If the right guys build the right partnership or we have the few key moments



"go for us then we can give a good fight," he added. Will India vs Pakistan match happen

in T20 WC 2026?

The backdrop, however, remains complicated. Pakistan announced on Sunday that while they will participate in the tournament, they will boycott their marquee group clash against India on February 15 in Colombo, citing solidarity with Bangladesh after the ICC replaced them with Scotland.

The ICC responded sharply, warning that selective participation undermines the principles of a global tournament. With the India-Pakistan fixture considered cricket's biggest commercial draw, its potential absence could cause major losses for broadcasters and sponsors.

As the World Cup begins, India face USA in Mumbai while Pakistan take on the Netherlands in Colombo. Yet uncertainty still hangs over whether the sport's most watched rivalry will actually play out on February 15.

RBI holds rates at 5.25%, keeps neutral stance as inflation outlook improves

Mumbai.(Agency)

India's central bank on Friday kept its key policy rate unchanged and maintained a neutral policy stance, citing easing inflation pressures, strong economic fundamentals, Reserve Bank of India Governor Sanjay Malhotra said after the Monetary Policy Committee (MPC) meeting. The Monetary Policy Committee (MPC) unanimously decided to hold the policy repo rate at 5.25% at the conclusion of its monetary policy review. All other policy rates were also left unchanged. Malhotra said, "Indian economy remains resilient; Monetary policy will be guided by new inflation data based on revised series." Malhotra added geopolitical tensions remain elevated and global trade pressures are rising, but the Indian economy continues to show resilience.

The RBI projected retail inflation at 3.2 percent in the fourth quarter of the current fiscal year and 2.1% for the full year. Inflation is expected to rise to 4.0% in the first quarter of FY27 and 4.2% in the second quarter, largely due to a sharp increase in gold and silver prices, the governor said. The central bank maintained that monetary policy decisions going forward would be guided by incoming inflation data based on a revised series. India's foreign exchange reserves stood at a healthy USD 723.8 billion at the end of January, Malhotra said, adding that the current account deficit is expected to remain moderate during the current fiscal year. He added that trade agreements with the European Union and the United States, which are either concluded or in sight, are expected to provide further momentum to growth.

The RBI projected gross domestic product (GDP) growth at 7.3% for the current fiscal year and raised its growth forecasts for the first and second quarters of the next fiscal year to 6.9% and 7.0%, respectively. The central bank had cut the repo rate by a cumulative 1.25 percentage points over four moves last year. In its previous meeting in December, it reduced the rate by 25 basis points to 5.25%.

Indian REITs Association welcomes RBI's decision to permit bank lending to REITs

Chennai.(Agency)

The Indian REITs Association (IRA) on Friday welcomed the Reserve Bank of India's (RBI) decision to allow banks to lend directly to Real Estate Investment Trusts (REITs).

The decision of the RBI's Monetary Policy Committee was announced by RBI Governor Sanjay Malhotra. This landmark move strengthens the financial framework for REITs and supports their long-term growth, IRA said.

Direct access to bank lending provides REITs with a stable, long-term source of funding, expanding the avenues of fund raising for these instruments. This is particularly important for an asset class built on long-duration, income-generating real estate.

According to IRA, the ability to borrow at the REIT level is also expected to result in more efficient financing costs. REITs today raise debt funds through issuance of debt securities which are subscribed by mutual funds, NBFCs and others.

Since these investors prefer instruments with 3-5 years tenor, long term funding remains a challenge.

With RBI allowing banks to lend to REITs, these vehicles will be able to access long term funding, said IRA.

With greater financial flexibility and access to long-term capital, REITs will be better positioned to support portfolio expansion and contribute to the formalisation and institutionalisation of India's commercial real estate sector.

India's five publicly listed REITs are Brookfield India Real Estate Trust, Embassy Office Parks REIT, Knowledge Realty Trust, Mindspace Business Parks REIT and Nexus Select Trust.

Jio triumphs with 333.47 Mbps 5G download speed across Odisha's Berhampur city

Bhubaneswar.(Agency)

Odisha's leading digital service provider, Reliance Jio, proved its 5G network dominance as it delivered the highest 333.47 Mbps 5G download speed at busy hotspots across Brahmapur city, in the latest independent drive test (IDT) results, published by Telecom Regulatory Authority of India (TRAI). Jio's 5G network superiority was evident from the fact that its 5G download speed was more than double that of its nearest competitor.

TRAI evaluated real-world conditions at multiple busy hotspots across Brahmapur city including Berhampur New Bus Stand, District Collector Office Brahmapur, Govt Science College Chhatrapur, MKCG Medical College Brahmapur, Municipal Corporation Office Brahmapur, Rock Garden Brahmapur, RTO Office Chhatrapur, Shree Maa Budhi Thakurani Temple in Brahmapur City to reflect stationary user experience. In the tests, Jio triumphed with the highest 5G download speed of 333.47 Mbps, followed by Airtel with 148.09 Mbps. The tests, part of TRAI's routine Quality of Service (QoS) assessments, were conducted between December 16 to 18, 2025, across Brahmapur city and adjoining areas, covering 360 kms Brahmapur city drive test, 4.1 km walk test and 8 hotspot locations. Leading another key network performance indicator, Jio recorded exemplary low latency of 24.71 milliseconds, nearly 50 percent less than competitors, reinforcing its network superiority for seamless video calls and gaming experience. Jio also topped with the highest overall download speed, double that of nearest competitor in the tests conducted by TRAI in Brahmapur city and adjoining areas, including the picturesque Gopalpur sea beach and the crowded Brahmapur Railway station. Reliance Jio proved its network dominance, delivering the highest overall data download speed of 242.

What happens if the world's 10 richest people donate half their wealth

A trillion dollars from the world's ten richest may stay theoretical, but imagine what becomes possible the moment you allow yourself to picture this group parting with half their wealth. In this story, we take you through what that world could actually look like.

New Delhi.(Agency)

Have you ever stopped to wonder what would happen if the ten richest people on the planet decided to give away half their wealth? It sounds like a dream-sequence idea, something you bring up at a dinner table when conversations drift toward unfairness and someone jokes that billionaires could sort out the world if they just opened their wallets. But take the question seriously for a moment. Not emotionally, not cynically, but with data. Once you do, something surprising happens. The world's biggest, messiest

problems start looking more measurable, more solvable, and much closer to the reach of human decision-making than we usually admit. The ten individuals are names we all recognise. Elon Musk, Jeff Bezos, Larry Page, Sergey Brin, Mark Zuckerberg, Larry Ellison, Bernard Arnault, Jim Walton, Rob Walton and Warren Buffett. Half their combined wealth today is approximately 1.25 trillion dollars. At Rs 90.59 to a dollar—the rupee's closing rate on Friday—the figure becomes nearly Rs 113.24 lakh crore. That is more than double what the Government of India plans to spend in the 2026-27 financial year. It's the kind of number that makes you pause because it instantly reframes what the world says it can and cannot afford.

WHAT A TRILLION DOLLARS CAN ACTUALLY FIX

To understand what USD 1.25 trillion can do, you first need a benchmark. In December 2025, researchers from UC

Berkeley, Stanford, and UC San Diego published a peer-reviewed study estimating the annual cost of reducing global extreme poverty to roughly one



percent of the world's population. Their figure was USD 318 billion per year.

This is not a guess. It is a calculation built from detailed poverty maps, World Bank thresholds, demographic projections and the observed effects of cash transfers in

low-income regions. Once that number is established, the math becomes obvious. If the world suddenly had a pool of 1.25 trillion dollars, and you divide it by 318 billion, the result is about 3.9.

In practical terms, this means a trillion dollars could fund nearly four full years of the interventions required to push global extreme poverty towards the one percent mark. It is not a claim from a study. It is simple arithmetic applied to the latest available research. The interventions behind that cost estimate are not speculative. Development economists have studied them for more than two decades using randomised evaluations across Africa, Asia, and Latin America. Direct cash transfers consistently improve food security and household stability. Nutrition programs for mothers and children reshape health outcomes for generations.

US stocks hit historic milestone as Dow crosses 50,000 points for first time

New Delhi.(Agency)

The US stock market roared back on Friday, as technology stocks recover much of their drops from earlier in the week and bitcoin halts its plunge, at least for now. The S&P 500 rallied 2% for its best day since May. The Dow Jones Industrial Average soared 1,206 points, or 2.5%, and topped the 50,000 level for the first time, while the Nasdaq composite leaped 2.2%. Chip companies helped drive the widespread rally, and Nvidia jumped 7.8% to trim its loss for the week, which came into the day at just over 10%. Broadcom climbed 7.1% and erased its drop for the week. They were the two strongest forces lifting the S&P 500, and they benefited from hopes for continued spending by customers diving into artificial-intelligence technology. Amazon CEO Andy Jassy, for example, said late Thursday it expects to spend about \$200 billion on investments this year to take advantage of "seminal opportunities like AI, chips, robotics, and low earth orbit satellites." Such immense spending, similar to what Alphabet announced a day earlier, is creating concerns of its own, though. The question is whether all those dollars will create big enough profits to make the investments worth it. With doubt remaining about that, Amazon's stock dropped 5.6%. Even with Friday's surge, the S&P 500 still fell to its third losing week in the last four. Besides worries about spending by Big Tech companies, which are Wall Street's most influential stocks, concerns about AI potentially stealing customers from software companies also hurt the market. Software stocks got hit particularly hard after AI firm Anthropic released free tools to automate things like legal services. Bitcoin, meanwhile, steadied following a week-long plunge that had sent it more than halfway below its record price set in October. It climbed back above \$70,000 after briefly dropping close to \$60,000 late Thursday.

Prices in the metals market also calmed a bit following their own wild swings. Gold rose 1.8% to settle at \$4,979.80 per ounce, while silver added 0.2%. Their prices suddenly ran out of momentum last week following jaw-dropping rallies, which were driven by investors clamoring for something safe to own amid worries about political turmoil, a US stock market that critics called expensive and huge debt loads for governments worldwide. By January, prices for gold and silver were surging so quickly that critics called it unsustainable. On Wall Street, the recovery for bitcoin helped stocks of companies enmeshed in the crypto economy. Robinhood Markets jumped 14% for the biggest gain in the S&P 500.

India to buy \$500 billion of US goods in 5 years as new trade deal cuts tariffs

New Delhi.(Agency)

India has lined up purchases of about USD 500 billion worth of American goods over the next five years, spanning energy, aircraft and parts, precious metals, technology items and coking coal, as New Delhi and Washington push to reset trade ties.

The plan was outlined in a joint statement released after India and the United States unveiled a framework for an interim trade agreement, aimed at reviving momentum toward a full bilateral pact following months of talks and tariff frictions. As part of the framework, United States President Donald Trump's tariffs on Indian goods will be brought down to 18 percent. Alongside large-scale purchases, both sides agreed to deepen trade in advanced technology. This will include higher volumes of Graphics Processing Units (GPUs) and other equipment

used in data centres, along with expanded cooperation in critical tech sectors. India intends to purchase \$500 billion of US energy products, aircraft and aircraft parts, precious metals,



technology products and coking coal over the next five years," the statement said.

The framework also addresses digital trade barriers. India and the US said that they are committed to tackling what they called discriminatory or

burdensome practices and to creating a pathway for "robust, ambitious and mutually beneficial" digital trade rules under the eventual Bilateral Trade Agreement (BTA). Both countries said they would promptly implement the framework and work toward finalising the interim pact, keeping the longer-term goal of a comprehensive BTA in focus.

On market access, India has agreed to cut or scrap tariffs on all US industrial goods and a wide range of farm products. These include dried distillers' grains, red sorghum for animal feed, tree nuts, fresh and processed fruits, soybean oil, wine and spirits. In return, the United States will lower its reciprocal tariff rate to 18 percent on Indian exports and remove duties on select items such as generic pharmaceuticals, gems and diamonds, and aircraft parts, subject to the deal being finalised.

IOC tops India's Russian crude imports in January 2026

India's total imports of Russian crude stood at around 1.16 million barrels per day in January 2026 with IOC importing about 598,000 barrels per day, accounting for more than half of India's total intake from Russia

New Dey

State-owned Indian refiners bought more Russian crude oil than the private companies as Reliance Industries drew a blank in January 2026. Indian Oil Corporation (IOC) emerged as the largest importer of Russian crude in January 2026, with Russia retaining its position as the country's top crude

supplier for the month. According to commodity market analytics firm Kpler, India's total imports of Russian crude stood at around 1.16 million barrels per day (bpd) in January 2026 with IOC importing about 598,000 barrels per day (kbd), accounting for more than half of India's total intake from Russia.

Private refiner Nayara Energy was the second-largest importer, sourcing around 410 kbd. Another state-owned company, Bharat Petroleum Corporation Ltd (BPCL), imported a comparatively smaller volume of 154 kbd, indicating limited but sustained engagement. In contrast, several refiners recorded zero Russian crude imports in January. Reliance Industries Ltd (RIL), India's largest private refiner, did not import any Russian crude during the month. HML, MRPL, and HPCL also reported no intake of Russian barrels.

India imports nearly 88% of its crude oil requirements from around 41 countries. Since the outbreak of the Russia-Ukraine war in 2022, Russian crude has accounted for the largest share of India's import basket. However, Western countries have pressured India to cut down on discounted crude from Russia, as the purchases indirectly support Russia's war effort in Ukraine. In August 2025, the US imposed an additional 25% tariff on India in response to continued energy purchases from Moscow. The US also sanctioned two of Russia's largest oil producers, Rosneft and Lukoil, in November 2025. Subsequently, India has reduced its Russian oil imports and diversified its crude sourcing, though not entirely.

Prices in the metals market also calmed a bit following their own wild swings. Gold rose 1.8%

to settle at \$4,979.80 per ounce, while silver added 0.2%.

Their prices suddenly ran out of momentum last week following jaw-dropping rallies, which were driven by investors clamoring for something safe to own amid worries about political turmoil, a US stock market that critics called expensive and huge debt loads for governments worldwide.

By January, prices for gold and silver were surging so quickly that critics called it unsustainable.

On Wall Street, the recovery for bitcoin helped stocks of companies enmeshed in the crypto economy.

Robinhood Markets jumped 14% for the biggest gain in the S&P 500.

Indian goods that were slammed with nearly 50% US tariffs last year will now face only 18%, and some key sectors even go duty-free. Here's how the interim pact changes the outlook for exporters.

New Delhi.(Agency)

India and the United States have finalised an interim trade framework that significantly eases the pressure on Indian exporters. A wide list of Indian goods that were facing effective duties close to 50% in the US will now attract only 18%. The higher duty came into force last year, after Washington imposed an additional 25% surcharge on Indian goods. With that now withdrawn, India's exports regain a level playing field in one of the world's biggest markets. This

interim framework also sets the stage for a full India-US Bilateral Trade Agreement, but even on its own, it brings tangible relief to sectors that were hit the hardest.

18% TARIFF NOW APPLIES TO KEY EXPORT CATEGORIES

Indian exporters in several labour-intensive and high-volume sectors will feel the relief first. The new 18% tariff applies to textiles and apparel, leather and footwear, plastic and rubber products, organic chemicals, home decor and artisanal goods, and select machinery and industrial equipment. These sectors depend heavily on the US market. With tariffs no longer at prohibitive levels, Indian products will become competitive again.

GENERIC MEDICINES NOW ENTER DUTY-FREE

One of the most consequential wins for India is the zero-tariff access for generic pharmaceuticals once the interim agreement is fully concluded. Generics are among India's strongest global export segments. The US is the world's largest pharmaceutical market, and Indian drugmakers supply up to 40% of its

generics. Duty-free entry strengthens India's cost advantage and benefits both established pharma giants and smaller manufacturers.

GEMS, DIAMONDS AND AIRCRAFT PARTS GET ZERO TARIFFS

India's push to become a global manufacturing and MRO hub.

WHY TARIFFS WERE SO HIGH BEFORE

The earlier 50% burden was the result of two overlapping US decisions: a reciprocal tariff hike on Indian goods and an additional 25% duty linked to India's continued purchase of Russian oil.

Together, they pushed tariff levels to the point where Indian exporters simply couldn't compete. With the surcharge removed and the reciprocal rate lowered, the tariff is now reset to 18%. Tariff cuts alone do not guarantee immediate export growth, but they remove the biggest obstacle exporters have faced since last year. Clusters in Tirupur, Panipat, Agra, Kanpur, Moradabad, Jaipur and Surat are expected to feel the impact first. These sectors are deeply price-sensitive. Even a small shift in duty changes order flows. The drop in tariff rates from 50% to 18% will see a lot of US buyers return to India again.



India has also rapidly built capabilities in manufacturing aerospace components. Duty-free access supports this young



Karishma Tanna

Fixing Husband Varun Banger's Kalava Is Her Love Language

Karishma Tanna tied the knot with Varun Banger on February 5, 2022, in what felt nothing short of a fairytale wedding. Four years later, the actress is still clearly soaking in those beautiful memories as she recently marked her wedding anniversary with a heartfelt throwback post. To celebrate the special day, Karishma shared a series of eleven pictures from her wedding celebrations, giving fans a peek into some unseen and cherished moments from the big day.

Karishma Tanna's Beautiful Anniversary Post

Karishma opened her carousel with a beautiful picture of herself and Varun, both dressed in their wedding outfits, smiling as they completed the wedding rituals. The second photo, too, featured the couple posing together, radiating happiness.

The third picture was from their haldi ceremony, where Varun was seen cutely pinching Karishma's cheeks, making for an adorable moment. The fourth frame captured a love-filled glance as Karishma looked at her husband with a smile.

The fifth and sixth pictures featured more romantic snippets

from the wedding

g ceremony, giving fans a glimpse into their heartfelt moments. The seventh and eighth images appeared to be from a traditional newlywed ritual, while the ninth and tenth photos showed the couple seated together during a puja ceremony.

The carousel ended on the sweetest note with a picture from Karishma's mehendi ceremony, where Varun was seen kissing her affectionately as she sat smiling, making it the most heart-melting moment of the post. Karishma captioned the post, "Happy 4 Lover."

Celebs And Fans Congratulate The Couple

Celebrities like Surbhi Jyoti, Terence Lewis, Rhea Chakraborty, Ira Dubey, and Gul Panag congratulated the couple on their fourth anniversary. Social media users too joined in. A user commented, "May god protect you guys from evil eyes." Another one added, "Happy anniversary, lovebirds." Someone wrote, "May your jodi be blessed for eternity with happiness, love and peace." "May you both always be healthy, prosperous, loved, and happy every day in life," commented another user. The anniversary post was indeed incredibly cute and wholesome, capturing so many beautiful moments from their special day.



Shreya Ghoshal

Recalls Her First Meeting With Lata Mangeshkar: 'I Was So Scared That My...

It has been four years since the legendary singer Lata Mangeshkar left for her heavenly abode back in 2022. Marking her death anniversary, a heartfelt tribute was paid to her on the singing reality show, "Indian Idol". During a special episode, judge Shreya Ghoshal decided to pay homage to the late maestro with a soulful rendition of the iconic song "Yeh Sama Hai Pyara Ka" from the movie "Jab Jab Phool Khile".

Shreya also recalled her memorable first meeting with Lata Mangeshkar. "Dear Lata Didi, like every singer, I too consider you my idol. Once it so happened that I was recording somewhere, and in that studio, Lata Didi also came to record. As soon as I came to know this, I was so scared that my focus was not at all, and the recordist only said, 'let's do the recording tomorrow, go and meet Didi today'. I ran to Lata Didi and wanted to say a lot, but before that, she said, 'Shreya, I have heard your songs, you sing very well.' So the first meeting with her was not a meeting; it was a darshan of Lata Didi for me," the singer remembered.

On the death anniversary of Lata Mangeshkar, several noted members from the entertainment industry decided to remember the 'Nightingale

of India' with heartfelt social media posts. Filmmaker Madhur Bhandarkar uploaded an old clip of himself with the Bharat Ratna, on X (Earlier known as Twitter) and penned, "Remembering iconic Bharat Ratna Lata Didi on her Punyatithi. Her ethereal songs, melodious voice, and unrivalled spirit will



remain etched in my heart forever. I dearly miss her presence, but I am consoled by the fact that her divine soul is immortal."

Singer Kumar Sanu's post read, "Some voices don't just sing, they become a part of our existence. Lata Didi's song carried emotion, grace, devotion, and timeless purity. Her voice didn't belong to one era — it belonged to generations. On her death anniversary, I bow in gratitude to the nightingale of India. Your music will forever guide, heal, and inspire us."



Engaged Season 2 Teaser Out: Elvish Yadav, Jiya Shankar To Host; Release Date, Cast Details Inside



Elvish Yadav and Jiya Shankar are not engaged, but they are teaming up professionally. The duo has been officially announced as the hosts of Engaged: Roka Ya Dhokha Season 2, putting an end to recent engagement rumours that had taken social media by storm. Jio Hotstar unveiled the first teaser of the new season, featuring Elvish and Jiya declaring, "Main aur Jiya aa raha hain in logon ki love story ko reset karne." The teaser confirms that the much-talked-about engagement post was purely a promotional move and not a real-life announcement.

Engaged Season 2 Teaser Hints At Past Breakups And Tough Choices

The teaser opens with Elvish saying, "Pyaar ne kuch logon ka system hila rakha hai," setting the tone for a season filled with emotional reckonings. The show will reportedly feature contestants who have dated in the past but failed to make their relationships work. These former partners will now be forced to confront unresolved issues and test whether love deserves another chance.

Adding a new twist, the trailer also reveals that parents will be brought into the mix to judge the authenticity and seriousness of the couples' commitment. Sharing the teaser, Elvish wrote, "Dil toot chuka hai lekin hope nahi! Iss Valentine's, main aur @jiyaashankarofficial lekar aa raha hain Engaged S2."

Contestants And Release Date

Engaged Season 2 will feature Splitsville fame Devkaran Sharma, Nikhil Malik and Pallak Yadav among its participants. The reality show is set to premiere on February 14, 2026, streaming exclusively on Jio Hotstar.

Engagement Rumours Explained

Speculation around Elvish and Jiya began after Elvish shared a photo holding Jiya's hand, with a ring prominently visible. The caption read, "Gave love another chance & I found my ❤️." The post quickly went viral, with many assuming the duo had secretly gotten engaged.

However, the rumours were soon debunked, especially as Jiya was already being linked to someone else. It has now been confirmed that the post was part of a promotional strategy for Engaged Season 2.

Shark Tank India's Kanika Tekriwal Recalls Battling Cancer And Unbearable Pain At 21



Shark Tank India Season 5 has shown many emotional moments. In one episode, new shark Kanika Tekriwal shared a very personal story. She talked about fighting cancer when she was just 21 years old and the severe pain she went through during her treatment. She revealed that she was diagnosed with cancer 17 years ago and had to undergo chemotherapy every two weeks. "I used to be dying in pain," Kanika shared, recalling how difficult those months were for her and her family.

Kanika further spoke about the frightening medical opinions she received at the time. "I was 21 and 40 doctors told me that you will survive for 4 months or 4 days," she said. Despite the grim prognosis, she refused to give up and chose to fight. She recalled meeting a doctor in Mumbai and telling him, "We will have a drink 40 years later, now, let's talk," showing the determination that helped her survive the illness.

Pain During Treatment Affects Patients More Than the Disease

During the pitch of a CBD-based pain relief product, Kanika explained how managing pain is one of the biggest challenges cancer patients face. She said doctors had advised her parents to get CBD oil to ease her pain, but it was not available in India at the time. "I think more than the cure, it's the pain and the treatment that kills them," Kanika said, highlighting why pain management solutions matter deeply to her today.

Supports Ethical and Evidence-Based Healthcare Solutions

Kanika clarified that although she does not like allopathy, she completed her full course of chemotherapy and radiation. She praised the startup for focusing on ethical practices and evidence-based medicine, noting that the founder had conducted multiple clinical trials. Kanika liked the product and the research behind it. She teamed up with Aman Gupta and Namita Thapar to invest Rs 1.5 crore for a 7.5 percent share in the company, valuing it at Rs 20 crore.

Give your Bedroom a romantic touch

Considering that we spend a major part of our lives in our bedrooms, we should make it one of the most comfortable zones in our homes. It should be a room that spells romance and

makes you feel good as soon as you step inside — a space that stimulates your senses. So, what do you need to make your boudoir a cosy love nest? Read on to find out some tips...

Make it look great:

The way your bedroom is lit, can make or break the look you want to create. Interior designer Ketki Passi says, "The right kind of lighting can help create a romantic ambience."

Candles can work wonders — they are what romance is all about. the mysterious light and shadow effect of a candle can give a very special aura to your bedroom. Bright, harsh bulbs are a big no-no. For the ideal romantic look dim, soft lights are key. Use heavy curtains to escape the glare of harsh street-lights. Of course, table and floor lamps are indispensable.

Make it comfortable:
A bed that looks comfortable is a basic essential here. Four-poster beds look romantic. Use light fabric drapes in pastel shades around the bed to get a soft look. When it comes to bedspreads and covers, avoid rough and uncomfortable fabrics — soft, smooth and comfortable ones like satin, silk and very good quality airy cotton are essential. Using sexy colours makes your room look, well, sexy. Choose bright bold colours like red, orange or



rust.

Place plush pillows on the bed of different sizes to make it look comfortable and inviting. Two large pillows, four medium rectangular pillows and around four to five smaller square cushions. A fluffy and soft comforter can add to the romantic look.

Prioritise privacy:

Curtains spell romance — pretty, flimsy, sheer curtains that sway with the breeze, light ones in lovely pastel shades that leave you feeling calm and relaxed. Of course, you should also have those heavy drapes to guard your privacy.

Indulge the senses:

Romance is about titillating the senses and the sense of smell is important. Spraying room freshener is passe. Opt for fragrances of incense sticks, scented sachet, aromatic candles in lavender, vanilla, and camomile etc. Go and have fun doing up your bedroom!



From farmville to the Real farm



potter! What's very popular, especially with kids is to try rangoli and garland making as well as see the pinguli (puppetry) performances. "Parents are increasingly realising that kids must understand the village set up and way of living," she adds.

FOOD AND FUN

At a farm at Vikramgarh, Palghar district -just two hours drive away from the city -you enter through a mud path, into a 6,000 sq foot area of tribal built mandaps or shamianas made from bamboo and teak leaves. There are waterfalls here even in summer, one learns. Founder Hemant Chhabra says it's quite the antidote to the gadget-hungry crowd. "More people are opening to a pure honest hands-on farm experience as it is so different," says Chhabra. Society folk can live the rural life here -learning to bake bricks, weave bamboo baskets and pick vegetables for the daily meal. "At a mental level people want to experience what a farmer's life is all about -right from farming, to cooking the food in the right way so as to get the highest nutrition from the soil and more, plus on another level it touches the five senses." Farms like this also grow their own crops and prepare fresh food using them. One can relish fresh natural traditional Indian foods here like bhakri,



unpolished rice and local chutneys like khurasini (made of a nut) or even til chutney. A big part of the fun is to harvest fruits. "Families love to go fruit-picking," says Chhabra. "They pick chikoo and bananas (20 varieties are grown here) as well as apples, starfruit and cherries. They also plant seasonal palak, ambat chuk (sour spinach) and local tomatoes."



Decorating your house is indeed an interesting activity, choosing each and every item piece by piece to suit the most special corners of your house is a task in itself. Here's some help in order to make a sound choice...

Colour of your house

This is one of the most important factors, if your walls are light in colour, then you can experiment with metal or dark coloured artefacts that would look striking. For bright coloured walls, you could go in for white, ivory or gold coloured artefacts. You can also place dramatic ones at some neglected corners with dull colours to create a in amazing contrast.

Inclination

Knowing what exactly inspires or interests you is extremely pivotal when you choose artefacts. Something might look extremely attractive but it might suit your personality and beliefs, so make



Ways to choose Artefacts for your house

sure you like and believe in each and every piece of artefact you choose. Since, they would set the mood of the house and also to some extent influence your thoughts.

Positive charm

Make sure everything you choose is not just artistic, but also positive in

approach and exudes a pleasant charm. Do not choose anything depressing, demotivating or sad to decorate your home. Decorating your house is indeed an interesting activity, choosing each and every item piece by piece to suit the most special corners of your house is a task in itself. Here's some help in order to make a sound choice...