

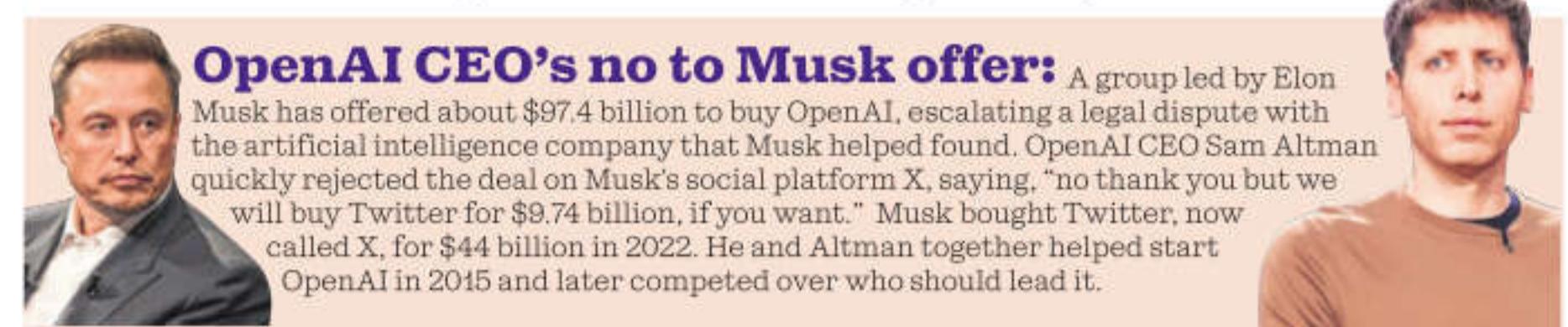


THE FREE PRESS JOURNAL

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**New Delhi to host next AI summit**

New Delhi will host the next Global Artificial Intelligence (AI) Summit. The announcement was made by the Ministry of Electronics and Information Technology, which emphasized India's growing role as a hub for technological innovation and its commitment to shaping the global AI landscape.

**OpenAI CEO's no to Musk offer:**

A group led by Elon Musk has offered about \$97.4 billion to buy OpenAI, escalating a legal dispute with the artificial intelligence company that Musk helped found. OpenAI CEO Sam Altman quickly rejected the deal on Musk's social platform X, saying, "no thank you but we will buy Twitter for \$9.74 billion, if you want." Musk bought Twitter, now called X, for \$44 billion in 2022. He and Altman together helped start OpenAI in 2015 and later competed over who should lead it.

PARIS MEET | Lays down ground rules for global collaboration

PM WANTS AI OPEN HOUSE

FPJ News Service
MUMBAI

In a compelling address at the AI Action Summit in Paris on Tuesday, Prime Minister Narendra Modi stressed the importance of pooling global resources and talent to drive innovation, while advocating an open-source AI system that fosters trust and transparency.

Emphasizing the need for high-quality, unbiased data sets as the foundation for effective AI models, Modi outlined a five-point agenda for the responsible development of artificial intelligence (AI). He called for the democratization of AI to ensure it benefits all people. He also highlighted cyber security challenges such as disinformation and deep fakes, urging efforts to secure the digital future.

JOB LOSS: Co-chairing the summit with French President Emmanuel

Macron, Modi acknowledged the potential of AI to reshape job roles. However, he also emphasized that it opens up new opportunities, provided there is significant investment in skill development.

"Job loss is the most feared disruption caused by AI, but history has shown that work does not disappear due to technology. It evolves, and new types of jobs are created," Modi said. He stressed the importance of skilling and re-skilling people to prepare for an AI-driven future, a message that resonated globally amid concerns about technological unemployment.

AI V/S HUMAN INTELLIGENCE: Addressing fears about AI surpassing human intelligence, Modi reassured that no machine can determine humanity's future without human guidance.

► Contd on | nation



US & UK not on the same page

FPJ News Service
PARIS

US Vice President JD Vance struck a confrontational tone on Tuesday at a global summit on artificial intelligence (AI) in Paris, cautioning European allies against over-regulating the US-dominated AI sector

and warning China against using the technology to consolidate its authoritarian grip on power. His remarks marred the spirit of unity that host nation France had sought to foster during the two-day gathering of world leaders and tech industry chiefs.

The summit, attended by

representatives from 60 nations, including China, France, Germany, and India, culminated in a joint statement emphasizing the need for AI to be "open, inclusive, transparent, ethical, safe, secure, and trustworthy" under international frameworks. Notably, the United States and the

United Kingdom, which is no longer an EU member, did not sign the communiqué. Vance, addressing the audience at Paris's Grand Palais, argued that excessive regulation could stifle innovation in the AI sector just as it begins to flourish.

► Contd on | nation

Major fire at Oshiwara furniture market

**Devashri Bhujbal**
MUMBAI

A massive fire broke out in the Oshiwara furniture market on Tuesday morning, engulfing at least 100 furniture units containing wooden items and damaging 350 to 400 units. Cylinder blasts further fuelled the fire and a thick black smog shrouded the entire locality, causing panic among residents and passersby. The fire was declared Level II (major) at 11.46pm.

At least eight fire engines and 10 water tankers were rushed to the spot. It was 6pm by the time the flames were doused. According to the Mumbai Fire Brigade, at least 12 to 15 residents were rescued from the spot. No injuries were reported in the incident; however, authorities are ascertaining if there are people who may have been trapped in the fire or whether any injury has gone unreported.

► Contd on | nation

Preserve EVM data, orders SC

Online Report
NEW DELHI

The Supreme Court has sought the reply of the Election Commission to an application filed by the Association for Democratic Reforms (ADR) seeking directions to the ECI to allow verification of the burnt memory and Symbol Loading Units of the Electronic Voting Machines (EVMs).

The court on Tuesday also told the ECI to not erase or reload the data in the EVMs while carrying out the verification. Live Law reports.

ADR had filed the application contending that the Standard Operating Procedure framed by the ECI for verifi-

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Road rage case: ACCUSED NABBED

Raina Assainar
NAVI MUMBAI

More than a week after the road rage incident in Kharghar, in which an IT professional on a two-wheeler was bludgeoned to death by two men on a motorcycle, the Navi Mumbai crime branch has nabbed one of the two alleged accused in the case on Monday night. The arrested accused has been identified as Rehan Shaikh, 20, while the wanted accused is identified as Faizan Shaikh, 20.

► Contd on | nation

cation of the EVMs was not in accordance with the April 2024 judgment in the EVM-VVPAT case.

A bench comprising Chief Justice of India Sanjiv Khanna and Justice Dipankar Datta heard the matter. CJI Khanna told Senior Advocate Maninder Singh, ECI's counsel, that the directions in the April 2024 judgment did not intend to erase or reload the polling

► Contd on | nation

media. He emphasised the need for legislation to curb influencers who exploit freedom of speech to post "all kinds of nonsense."

The Ministry of Information and Broadcasting, ever eager to assert its authority,

swiftly directed YouTube to remove the offending episode, which it did.

Kanchan Gupta, the ministry's senior adviser, announced the directive on social media with the solemnity of a judge pronouncing a

life sentence. However, the internet, true to its nature, had already preserved and redistributed the clip countless times.

The backlash was immediate and unrelenting. The Mumbai Police, acting on a complaint, visited Ranveer's residence to investigate. Not to be outdone, the Maharashtra Cyber Department filed a case under the IT Act and demanded the removal of all 18 episodes of India's Got Latent.

► Contd on | nation

Outrage, legal action | A bad joke has a life of its own

FPJ News Service
MUMBAI

YouTuber Ranveer Allahbadia found himself at the centre of a national uproar on Tuesday following his controversial remarks on the show India's Got Latent.

Little did he anticipate that his comments would reverberate within the hallowed halls of Parliament; yet, they did. During the Zero Hour, Shiv Sena MP Naresh Mhaske raised the issue, calling for stricter regulations on social

Maharashtra cyber cell unit has filed a case against not just Ranveer Allahbadia but all the people involved from Episode 1 to 6 of "India's Got Latent" - including guests. Sources said altogether, action has been taken against 40-odd people

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IAF CHIEF IS MIFFED WITH HAL

FPJ News Service
MUMBAI

A leaked on-camera exchange of Indian Air Force (IAF) Chief Air Chief Marshal Amar Preet Singh criticizing Hindustan Aeronautics Limited (HAL) has caused a stir at the ongoing Aero India show at Bengaluru's Yelahanka IAF base.

In a video posted by the defence news portal National Defence, the IAF chief is heard reprimanding HAL officials.

"I can only tell you our requirements and concerns. You need to address those and instill confidence. At the moment, I am just not confident in HAL, which is a very wrong thing to happen."

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Trump pauses law, big relief for Adani

FPJ News Service
MUMBAI

ment guidelines, reports The Independent.

Trump complained that the anti-corruption measure, which was signed into law by then-president Jimmy Carter in 1978, nearly 48 years ago, was a "disaster" for this country" because "it made it very, very hard, from a practical standpoint, to make deals" overseas without violating the law, implying that bribes are expected to be a routine part of business, including for American companies.

Trump signed the document on Monday directing Attorney General Pam Bondi to stop enforcing the 1934 law until she issues new enforce-

ment guidelines, reports The Independent.

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It hurts the country. And many, many deals are unable to be made because of it.

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Hubby liable for wife's stock debit balance

FPJ News Service
MUMBAI

The Supreme Court on Monday ruled that a husband can be held jointly and severally liable for the debit balance in his wife's stock trading account if an oral agreement and their financial dealings establish shared responsibility.

The ruling came in the case of AC Choksi Share Broker vs. Jatin Pratap Desai, with a Bench of Justices PS Narasimha and Sandeep Mehta holding that an arbitral tribunal has jurisdiction over the husband under the

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HC nod to Adani to cut 209 mangroves

Urvi Mahajan
MUMBAI

The Bombay High Court has permitted the Adani Group to axe 209 mangroves near Vasai Creek for the construction of a high-voltage transmission line proposed for increasing electricity supply to the city and its suburbs. The court noted that the project was of public importance.

A bench of Chief Justice Alok Adarsh and Justice Bha-

rati Dangre, said on February 6, the project for the construction of the electricity transmission line is critical for Mumbai as the existing capacity of the transmission corridor was not sufficient to carry further power to the city. The HC allowed the petition by Adani Electricity Mumbai Infra Ltd seeking permission to cut 209 mangroves for the setting up of a high-voltage

► Contd on | nation

Trump drops the penny

FPJ News Service
MUMBAI

Former President Donald Trump has announced that he has ordered the US Mint to halt penny production, citing the coin's high manufacturing cost. "For far too long, the United States has minted pennies that literally cost us more than 2 cents. This is so wasteful!" Trump wrote on his Truth Social platform.

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LIC/P-RPS/2024-25/33/Eg



64-yr-old killed during robbery at Bandra flat

Megha Kuchik

MUMBAI

A 64-year-old woman's decomposed body, with her hands tied, was found in her flat in Bandra West on Monday. Within two hours, the police nabbed one of her acquaintances, Sharif Ali Damsher Sheikh, 27, for allegedly killing her during the robbery.

The quantity of the stolen booty is yet to be determined as the victim lived alone and only her daughter, who lives separately in Malad, can quantify the theft. Sheikh has confessed to the crime, said the cops, adding

that the court has remanded him to police custody until February 17.

The murder took place in the afternoon February 5 and came to light five days later after the neighbours complained of foul smell. The accused, who lives in the adjacent building, frequented the house of the victim, no 22, second floor, Kanchan cooperative housing society, HIG Colony, near Lilavati Hospital. Her daughter, who works in a private firm, didn't pay a visit for the last two months due to some dispute.

According to the police,

CHILLING DETAILS

■ Victim lived alone and accused took advantage of it, says probe

■ He frequented her house on pretext of helping her

■ He allegedly brutally killed her using several household objects

■ He allegedly murdered her, fearing she would spill beans on him

Sheikh took advantage of the same and started frequenting Khonde's house on the pretext of helping her. He even acted as an intermediary between the mother-daughter duo, the probe found. A private firm employee, the accused lives with his parents and a brother, who works in Qatar Airlines.

After the neighbours complained of foul smell to Khonde's daughter, she came and opened the flat with a duplicate key. The victim bore injuries on her head and torso, inflicted with a sharp object. According to the police, Sheikh tied Khonde's hands before

attacking her and rendering her unconscious. He then stole gold jewellery and cash, they said.

"He used several household objects to kill her. The other flat on Khonde's floor has been sealed due to some legal reason. Hence, no one realised when the murder occurred," said a cop. During the probe, the accused assisted the police, which brought him under the scanner.

The cops then recorded statements from neighbours and relatives, and took Sheikh in custody after gathering evidence based on technical surveillance. He killed Khonde as

she would have spilled the beans on him after the robbery, said the police, adding that the medical report shows nothing apart from murder.

The victim was living on her late husband's pension and never used online banking, which was known to Sheikh. The building's watchman said that Khonde never misbehaved with anyone.

A case has been filed against the accused under sections 103(1) (murder), 311 (robbery or dacoity with an attempt to cause death or grievous hurt), among other charges of Bharatiya Nyaya Sanhita.

JAI BHIM NAGAR DEMOLITION

Second FIR filed, complainant's version included



Poonam Apraj

MUMBAI

tant commissioners of police (crime). The SIT submitted a report confirming that the demolition was "unlawful".

In October 2024, the HC ordered the Powai police to register an FIR against those responsible for the demolition, as per the report.

However, when the police filed an FIR without considering Limbole's

Meenabai Limbole, 37, who has been hit by the action, alleged first FIR didn't had her version, prompting her to move HC

complaint, she again filed another petition demanding to register a case on the basis of her Statement. On February 7, 2025, the court directed the police to record her statement and register an FIR accordingly.

A case has been filed against Sanjay Pandey and Arjun, the employees of Hiranandani builders, and BMC officials and staff, including Kasgikar, Pankaj, Amish Bangde, Biradar, Ashatai Chaware and Shilbodhi Bhanteji. Inspector Sonawane and other officers from the Powai police assaulted them during the June 6, 2024, demolition drive.

One of the displaced residents later approached the HC, which directed the formation of a special investigation team (SIT), led by the joint and assis-

Ganpati visarjan: BMC widens artificial lakes

FJP News Service

MUMBAI

The BMC has taken measures to ensure the proper immersion of Lord Ganesh idols, made from plaster of Paris (PoP), by deepening artificial immersion sites where necessary. The move comes after the civic authorities denied permission to several Ganpati mandals to immerse PoP idols in the natural water bodies.



The artificial immersion sites will remain operational for two additional days beyond the 11th day of 'Maghi Ganeshotsav' to accommodate many pending immersions. Additionally, the BMC, in coordination with the Mumbai police, has planned designated routes for the immersion processions.

Last week, the civic authorities denied permission to Ganpati mandals in Charkop, Kandivali and Marve Beach to immerse PoP idols in the natural water bodies. As a result, several Ganesh idols were returned to their pandals. However, some public mandals have argued that the artificial lakes can accommodate idols up to five feet tall.

Accordingly, the BMC has taken steps to deepen the artificial lakes at the Sanjay Gandhi National Park, Dahisar Sports Foundation, Maharashtra Pratap Udayan in Kandivali, Kadawadi Ground. While the first and last lakes can accommodate idols towering 15 and 19 feet, respectively, statues up to six feet can fit into the remaining two. In addition, an artificial lake of 30x30 feet has been set up at Bangur Nagar in Goregaon.

Mahakumbh 2025 Prayagraj

Maghi Purnima Holy Dip

Message of Mahakumbh
One Nation, Stronger Together

Upcoming Snan Date Maha Shivaratri - 26th February, 2025

13 January - 26 February

Mahakumbh Helplines

1920 Mahakumbh Mela Helpline	112 Emergency Service	1010 Food and Civil Supplies Helpline	102, 108 Ambulance Service	18004199139 Railway Helpline
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Ghatkopar hoarding panel gets extension



Ravikiran Deshmukh
MUMBAI

The government has extended the deadline for submission of the report into the Ghatkopar hoarding collapse, which killed 17 people and injured more than 70 last year.

The inquiry committee, headed by retired high court chief justice Dilip Bhosale, will now submit its report by March 31.

The four-member committee was set up in June last year to investigate the tragedy. A government order issued on Tuesday appointed a few persons to assist the committee and dropped a member from the Income Tax Department due to the non-availability of its officer.

A member from the chartered accountant category was also replaced; Advocate US Gandhi will be the member of the committee.

TIMELINE

May 13,
2024
Hoarding collapse

June 10
Appointment of
committee

July-end

instead of the firm Kirtane and Pandit LLP Mumbai.

Two advocates will assist the committee chief.

Deputy Municipal Commissioner Kiran Dighavkar will assist Additional Municipal Commissioner Ashwin Joshi; and Joint Commissioner of Mumbai Police (Crime) Lakshmi Gautam will assist Additional Director General of Police, Maharashtra, Nikhil Gupta.

REMIT

As per the terms and references set by the government, the committee is...

■ investigating roles of the entities responsible for the hoarding and the petrol pump

■ examining the records of the permission given to erect the hoarding, financial transactions, and any potential collusion with officials from various agencies

■ evaluating the current process for approving and installing hoardings on government and railway properties and recommending improvements to prevent future incidents

Urvi Mahajani
MUMBAI

Despite filing affidavits in Bombay High Court assuring that they will not erect illegal hoardings, political parties continue to deface the metropolis in contempt of the judiciary.

Recently, on Eknath Shinde's birthday, the city was swathed in hoardings greeting the deputy chief minister Malabar Hill, where the bungalows of most ministers and judges are located, is particularly affected. The then chief justice Dipankar Dutta had lamented that there were hoardings even outside his bungalow.

Even though it is eight years since HC issued a series of directions ordering the BMC and the government to take action against hoardings, both authorities appear to be taking these instructions lightly. There is no other explanation for the continuance of this menace.

Calling the situation "horrendous and sad", the court, on December 19, 2024, issued a show cause notice to all political parties, asking why contempt proceedings should not be initiated against them. The court also warned civic authorities against inaction, stating it would be "compelled to take very strict action" if the situation was not addressed.

The issue was raised by NGO Suswaraya Foundation in a PIL. In 2017, the court had disposed of a plea by the foundation and others while issuing strict directions to the authorities. However, it continued monitoring the issue



Illegal political banners on Eastern Freeway

through regular reports submitted by the authorities.

As hoardings, banners and posters continued to deface public properties, the HC revived the PIL on October 9 last year, underscoring the need for continuous monitoring. The court noted widespread non-compliance with its 2017 order to prevent the defacement of public spaces.

During the hearings, Suswaraya's advocate, Uday Warunjikar, pointed out that political parties were the primary violators. Earlier, all major parties – the BJP, Congress, Shiv Sena, NCP and MNS – had submitted undertakings assuring that their workers would not put up illegal hoardings or banners.

However, in the run-up to and aftermath of the 2024 parliamentary and assembly elections, the faces of political leaders were displayed everywhere, and the trend continues.

The judges also castigated municipal bodies and the government, questioning why court orders were necessary when the law already imposes a duty on these authorities to curb such illegalities. Warning that contempt notices could be issued if orders were not followed, the court said: "Don't push the court into a corner where we are compelled to take very, very strict action. This is a very sad situation."

In December 2024, the HC bench led by then chief justice DK Upadhyaya said: "It appears that political parties have not remained true to their undertakings.

"We issue notice requiring them [political parties] to show cause as to why appropriate action for defying the 2017 judgment should not be taken against them under the provisions of the Contempt of Courts Act."

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During the last hearing, State Advocate General Birendra Saraf informed the

STORY IN BRIEF

1 It is eight years since HC issued a series of directions ordering the BMC and the government to take action against hoardings

2 Both authorities appear to be taking these instructions lightly

3 Even the HC has not been spared. One hoarding was put up right outside its heritage building, not only 'defacing' the court premises but also 'damaging the roads'

court that around 22,000 unauthorised hoardings had been removed from Mumbai after the elections and over a lakh from the rest of Maharashtra. However, the bench remarked that the number was insignificant, given that the total number of illegal hoardings remained unknown.

Even the HC was not spared, as one such hoarding was put up right outside its heritage building, not only "defacing" the court premises but also "damaging the roads". The court observed: "These photos are testaments to the complete apathy of the authorities, who are not only mandated to check the menace of illegal hoardings but are also under an obligation to follow the orders of this court."

The plea is scheduled for hearing on February 12.

With 179 temples, state to be biggest participant in ITCX '25

FPJ News Service
MUMBAI

A total of 179 temples from Maharashtra will take part in the International Temples Convention & Expo (ITCX) 2025 in Tirupati between February 17 and 19.

The state will be the largest participant in the conclave – the world's biggest for temple administration and management – followed by Karnataka.

The gathering of 1,581 religious organisations from 58 countries will attempt to create a Guinness World Record



MLC Prasad Lad, Giresh Kulkarni, founder of Temple Connect, and Neeta Lad at MCA Club
—Vijay Gohil

for being the largest temple convention.

After the maiden edition of ITCX 2023 in Kashi, the second edition aims to explore innovative approaches and best practices of temple management, focusing on sustain-

able ecosystems, digitalisation, and strategies to enhance temple-based economics.

ITCX is an initiative by Temple Connect, which is striving to document information about Hindu, Jain, and Buddhist temples worldwide.

Online petition urges BMC to put brakes on Ferris wheel

Dhairyra Gajara
MUMBAI

Mumbaikars have launched an online petition urging the BMC to scrap its giant Ferris wheel project.

The petition, marked to Chief Minister Devendra Fadnavis, the Mumbai Metropolitan Region Development Authority and the BMC, has been signed by more than 2,000 people.

"Mumbai is facing pressing issues like air pollution, exacerbating toxins in the air... And yet, these issues remain unaddressed," read the petition.

The petition alleged that

construction debris is on the rise, instead of addressing these concerns, crores of rupees will be diverted towards projects like the giant Ferris wheel that will only serve as a tourist attraction for a handful of the city's population. The petition has also alleged lack of transparency in the project regarding the land and funds required for the project.

MSRTC plans depots on PPP model on its land bank

Bhalchandra Chorghade
MUMBAI

Transport Minister Pratap Sarnaik has announced that the Maharashtra State Road Transport Corporation (MSRTC) possesses a land bank of 3,360 acres across the state, which the government plans to develop into modern depots under a public-private partnership (PPP) model.

Speaking as the chief guest at a conclave organised by NAREDCO GenNext on Tuesday, Sarnaik called upon developers to collaborate on transforming these sites into state-of-the-art transport hubs. The government is considering leasing the land for 99 years and remains positive about the initiative.

The proposed depots will be developed at the district, taluka and village levels, with planning and design led by architect Hafeez Contractor. The project will follow the Unified Development Control and Promotion Regulations, with 90% of the land falling under its jurisdiction. Notably, MSRTC will serve as the planning authority for the developments.

The conclave was attended by NAREDCO Chairman Dr Nirjan Hiranandani, Vice Chairman Rajan Bandekar, and other key industry stakeholders, signalling strong support from the real estate sector for the government's vision.

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TRANSFOR^MATION
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Mukand Ltd. has truly transformed. From a company that was deep in debt to one that's reduced its debt substantially through strategic interventions. Today, we're a company that's firmly on a profitable growth trajectory. We have substantially increased our high revenue stainless steel production. We have introduced progressive policies that encourage a healthy work life balance, making it one of the best workplaces in the manufacturing sector. Our continued focus and emphasis on achieving superior quality products, while harnessing the experience of our 1,400 plus strong workforce, and our commitment to the environment and community make us a truly formidable company that India can showcase.

EXTRACT OF UNAUDITED STANDALONE & CONSOLIDATED FINANCIAL RESULTS FOR THE QUARTER AND NINE MONTHS ENDED DECEMBER 31, 2024.

Rs. in Crore

Particulars	Standalone Financial Results			Consolidated Financial Results		
	Quarter ended	Nine months ended	Quarter ended	Quarter ended	Nine months ended	Quarter ended
	31-Dec-24	31-Dec-24	31-Dec-23	31-Dec-24	31-Dec-24	31-Dec-23
Total income from operations	1,282.39	3,844.81	1,188.40	1,262.27	3,783.10	1,176.68
Net Profit for the period before Tax	30.40	91.28	23.53	29.32	94.17	21.91
Tax Expense (Charge) / Credit	(14.26)	(28.08)	(2.20)	(14.44)	(29.18)	(2.55)
Profit for the period	16.14	63.20	21.33	14.88	64.99	19.36
Other Comprehensive Income (net)	(1.01)	(3.03)	(0.07)	(1.01)	(3.03)	(0.07)
Total Comprehensive Income	15.13	60.17	21.26	13.87	61.96	19.29
Paid-up Equity Share Capital - Face Value Rs.10/- per Share	144.51	144.51	144.51	144.51	144.51	144.51
Reserves (excluding Revaluation Reserves) as per Audited Balance Sheet as at 31st March 2024				801.81		776.59
Earning per share of Rs.10/- each (not annualised for the quarters)						
Basic and Diluted EPS (in Rs.)	1.12	4.37	1.48	1.03	4.50	1.34

NOTES :

- The above results have been reviewed by the Audit Committee and approved by the Board of Directors at its meeting held on February 10, 2025. The Auditors have carried out a Limited Review of these Results.
- The Company jointly with Mukand Sumi Metal Processing Limited ("MSML"), a wholly owned subsidiary had filed the Scheme of Arrangement ("Scheme") for transfer of the Stainless Steel Cold Finished Bars and Wires Business from MSML to the Company by way of demerger ("Demerger") before the National Company Law Tribunal, Mumbai Bench ("Hon'ble NCLT"). The Scheme shall be subject to sanctions and/or approvals, inter alia, by Regulatory Authorities and Hon'ble NCLT. Pending approval of the Scheme, no effect of the Demerger has been considered in the current financial statements.
- The above is an extract of the detailed format of Quarterly/Nine months Financial Results filed with Stock Exchange under Regulation 33 of SEBI (Listing and Other Disclosure Requirements) Regulations, 2015. The full format of the unaudited Results for the Quarter and nine months ended 31st December, 2024 is available on the Stock Exchange websites (www.bseindia.com and www.nscln.com) and on the Company's website (www.mukand.com).
- Figures in respect of the previous period have been regrouped / recast wherever necessary in case of the above results.

By Order of the Board of Directors
For Mukand Ltd.,
Niraj Bajaj
Chairman & Managing Director



Regd. Office: Bajaj Bhawan, Jamnalal Bajaj Marg, 226, Nariman Point, Mumbai - 400 021. | Tel. No.: 022 6121 6666

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Adfactors 614/25

'Googly' prize to Shinde from Pawar

Kalpesh Mhamunkar

MUMBAI

Deputy Chief Minister Eknath Shinde was honoured with the Mahadji Shinde Rashtra Gaurav Puraskar by NCP leader Sharad Pawar on Tuesday in Delhi in the presence of Union Minister Jyotiraditya Scindia. The award includes a cash prize of Rs 5 lakh, a citation, a memento, and the traditional Shindeshahi turban.

No one understands the googly bowled by Pawar in politics. But I am sure he will not bowl a googly at me, says Shinde

During his speech at the event, Shinde lauded Pawar's political acumen, stating, "No one understands the googly bowled by Pawar in politics, even people close to him don't realise it. But I am sure he will not bowl a googly (political trick) at me." He further remarked, "One should learn from Pawar how to maintain relations in politics."

Reflecting on his tenure, Shinde said, "I have never resorted to making personal attacks in politics. Many allegations were made against me, but I responded with my work. When I got the opportunity to become Chief Minister, I realised that time was limited."

The event created a stir in political circles due to the presence of both Shinde and Pawar on the same stage.

The gesture of Pawar felicitating Shinde added to the intrigue, as Shinde is a staunch opponent of the Uddhav Thackeray-led Shiv Sena (UBT), which is in alliance with Pawar's party under the Maha Vikas Aghadi (MVA). The political repercussions of this event are expected to unfold in the coming days, with reactions anticipated from both the MVA and Mahayuti alliance parties.



A spiritual guide

'Hamare Pran Jugal' a book on spiritual, social values by Ajay Dhooy Bihari was launched in the presence of Pundrik Goswami Maharaj at YB Chavan Center - Vijay Gohil

Over seven Army jawans under scrutiny for ISI links

Ashish Singh

MUMBAI

More than seven Army jawans from Nashik's Deolali Camp are currently under scrutiny of the central intelligence apparatus in an alleged connection with an espionage case involving Pakistan's Inter-Services Intelligence (ISI). These jawans are suspected of either directly or indirectly sharing sensitive military information, including army movements, ammunition specifics and unit locations, with handlers across the border.

The questioning of these jawans continues based on the interrogation of Army jawan Sandeep Singh, who was recently arrested by the Punjab police for allegedly leaking classified military details to ISI operatives. Singh, who was stationed at Nashik's Deolali Camp, was apprehended last week while on leave as part of an intelligence-led operation. Another Army jawan, Rajbir Singh, linked to the ISI network, is currently absconding. During

REHABILITATION WORK | Two DyCMs will be ex-officio members of the amended body

Govt reconstitutes SDMA; adds some room for Shinde

Kalpesh Mhamunkar

MUMBAI



Three days after Maharashtra Deputy Chief Minister Eknath Shinde was excluded from the newly restructured State Disaster Management Authority (SDMA) while his deputy, Ajit Pawar, was included, the state cabinet on Tuesday approved an amendment to the Maharashtra Disaster Management Authority Rules, 2019, designating the chief minister and both deputy chief ministers as ex-officio members.

The exclusion of Shinde from the committee had sparked criticism, with accusations that Chief Minister Devendra Fadnavis had been making decisions that sidelined Shiv Sena ministers. The decision to exclude Shinde from the committee was seen as a reflection of growing tensions within the ruling alliance.

In response to the controversy, the Maharashtra Cabinet on Tuesday has granted the CM the authority to nominate both ministers and non-government members to the Disaster Management Committee.

According to the revised rules shared by the government, Rule 3 of the Maharashtra Disaster Management Authority now outlines the structure of the SDMA. Under the new amendment, the committee will be chaired by the chief minister, with nine members, including the deputy chief ministers and ministers nominated by the CM. Additionally, the CM has the discretion to appoint experienced and knowledgeable individuals as non-govt members to enhance disaster preparedness and

IN BRIEF

- 1 **Reconstituted disaster management body will comprise 10 members**
- 2 **The committee will be chaired by the chief minister, including the deputy chief ministers and ministers nominated by the CM**
- 3 **The CM has the discretion to appoint experienced and knowledgeable individuals as non-govt members**

response.

Previously, the committee included the chief minister, revenue minister, finance minister, home minister, relief and rehabilitation minister and the public health minister.

Since assuming the CM post, Fadnavis has made several decisions that have caused friction within the Shiv Sena faction led by Eknath Shinde. Critics allege that these decisions are intended to diminish Shinde's influence and undermine his faction's power. One of the most notable moves was the reallocation of key minis-

terial positions, with the BJP-led government allocating important posts, such as the guardian minister roles for Raigad and Nashik districts, to NCP and BJP representatives rather than Shinde's faction.

Further compounding ten-

sions, the Industries Minister Uday Samant recently issued letters to department officials, instructing them not to make any policy decisions without prior consultation.

Additionally, the CM appointed Sanjiv Sethi, a senior bureaucrat and the chief secretary of the transport department, to head the state transport authority. Fadnavis also issued a directive mandating that any appointment of personal secretaries and officers on special duty must be approved by the General Administration Department under his control.

As political tensions con-

tinue to rise, BJP leader Ganesh Naik has announced plans to hold a public meeting in Thane, a stronghold of Shinde, further intensifying the rift between the factions.

The amendment to the Maharashtra Disaster Management Authority Rules represents a shift in the balance of power within the state government, and the political landscape in Maharashtra remains increasingly volatile.

The amendment to the Maharashtra Disaster Management Authority Rules represents a shift in the balance of power within the state government, and the political landscape in Maharashtra remains increasingly volatile.

It has been alleged that Singh and Sharma met in Worli and allegedly discussed Hiran, whose explos-

ives-laden car was found outside industrialist Mukesh Ambani's home in February 2021. However, Singh claims that Hiran was not discussed and that their conversation was solely about gangster Ravi Pujari.

As per the prosecution

case, prior to the murder of Hiran on the night of March

The courts must adopt a reformative approach in cases involving young offenders, the Bombay High Court observed while granting bail to a 20-year-old man accused of sexually assaulting his cousin.

A single bench of Justice Milind Jadhav said that punishment in cases where the accused is a youth has to be inflicted for a reformative result rather than being punitive.

The court said every opportunity or risk should be taken constructively in cases involving young offenders so that they get a chance to become good citizens in society.

The bench on February 7 granted bail to a man accused of sexually assaulting his minor cousin on three occasions between April and May 2023.

His arrest follows the detention of Amritpal Singh from Punjab's Tarn Taran, who was allegedly a part of a larger network involved in espionage and drug smuggling.

Further interrogation of Amritpal Singh led Amritsar Rural police to Sandeep Singh. In connection with this case, two other individuals, Mandeep Singh (alias Maddy) and Madhav Sharma, were earlier arrested from Rajasthan. During their arrest, police recovered 500 grams of heroin, Rs10 lakh in suspected hawala money, and a 0.30 bore pistol, indicating a possible link between espionage and cross-border drug smuggling.

Investigations revealed that Singh, a resident of Sardulgarh in Patiala, had been in communication with suspected Pakistani agents for nearly two years and had been passing sensitive details to handlers across the border. Along with his associates, Singh was collecting information about several army camps across the country

Reformative approach needed in punishment'

PTI

MUMBAI

and transmitting it to ISI via WhatsApp.

Sandeep Singh joined the army in 2015. He has been serving at the Deolali Camp since June 2024, and his associate, Rajbir, was also stationed there. The Punjab police seized three mobile phones from Sandeep, which have been sent for forensic examination.

His arrest follows the detention of Amritpal Singh from Punjab's Tarn Taran, who was allegedly a part of a larger network involved in espionage and drug smuggling.

Further interrogation of Amritpal Singh led Amritsar Rural police to Sandeep Singh. In connection with this case, two other individuals, Mandeep Singh (alias Maddy) and Madhav Sharma, were earlier arrested from Rajasthan. During their arrest, police recovered 500 grams of heroin, Rs10 lakh in suspected hawala money, and a 0.30 bore pistol, indicating a possible link between espionage and cross-border drug smuggling.

When a bench of Chief Justice Alok Adarhe and Justice Bharati Dangre learnt that the petitioner was a former municipal representative, it questioned, "When you were a corporator, how many actions did you take against illegal constructions?" The court then ordered him to file an affidavit within two weeks.

The bench also remarked on the timing of the PIL and hinted at possible political motivations. "We understand the corporation is in an election mode, and you may be in a hurry," it said.

The plea came up for hearing amid long-pending elections to the BMC and 28 other municipal corporations in Maharashtra. The BMC's term ended in March 2022, and an administrator has run it for over two and a half years, with elections expected in 2025.

The PIL alleged that BMC officials included with

Ajit holds DPDC meet, Gogawale gives a miss

Prajakta Pol

MUMBAI

Shiv Sena minister Bharat Gogawale on Tuesday remained absent at the annual meeting of the Raigad District Planning and Development Committee (DPDC) chaired by Deputy Chief Minister Ajit Pawar. NCP leader and Women & Child Development Minister Aditi Tatkare was present at the meeting.

Local Sena MLAs Mahendra Dalvi and Mahendra Thorle too were not present. "We were not sent any official invitation. If this was an official meeting about Raigad's development, the district collector should have invited all the MLAs. We were not even provided with an online link to join," claimed Dalvi.

But an official in Ajit Pawar's office said that as Nashik and Raigad districts do not have guardian ministers at present, only ministers from the districts were invited. It was a pre-budget meeting and hence held in Finance Minister Pawar's office, he said.

Gogawale clarified the matter while speaking to the media. "I had been informed in advance that I would not be attending the meeting. I had a scheduled event in Raigad. Therefore, it was necessary for me to be there."

Shinde Sena flays CMO over appointments

Prajakta Pol

MUMBAI

Sources stated that the appointments have been delayed due to the screening process initiated by CMO

Marathi writer Raosaheb Rangrao Borade dies



PTI
CHHATRAPATI SAMBHAGINAGAR

Marathi writer and academic Raosaheb Rangrao Borade passed away due to a prolonged illness at a private hospital in Maharashtra's Chhatrapati Sambhajinagar on Tuesday, family sources said.

Borade (84) has penned more than 30 books and plays. He was born in Katgaon village of Latur district in 1940.

Borade served as the principal of Deogiri College in Chhatrapati Sambhajinagar. After his retirement, he was appointed president of the Maharashtra Raja Sahitya Sanskriti Mahamandal in 2000. The state government recently conferred the Vinda Karandikar Lifetime Achievement Award to Borade for his contribution to Marathi literature.

Submit ex-CP's statement in court: Ex-cop

MANSUKH HIRAN MURDER CASE

Charul Shah Joshi

MUMBAI

Former encounter specialist Pradeep Sharma, who is facing prosecution for his alleged role in the murder of Thane trader Mansukh Hiran, has approached the special NIA court, requesting directions for the agency to submit the statements of former city police commissioner Parambir Singh and ACP Avinash Dharmadhikari before the court.

It has been alleged that Singh and Sharma met in Worli and allegedly discussed Hiran, whose explos-



Pradeep Sharma



Parambir Singh

ives-laden car was found outside industrialist Mukesh Ambani's home in February 2021. However, Singh claims that Hiran was not discussed and that their conversation was solely about gangster Ravi Pujari.

As per the prosecution

case, prior to the murder of Hiran on the night of March

4, 2021, dismissed police officer Sachin Vaze had a meeting with Singh and Sharma on February 28, 2021 and March 2, 2021. It was alleged that the conspiracy to eliminate Hiran was hatched in those meetings.

Singh has in his statement denied the allegations and claimed, "I deny that there

was a meeting at my residence or in my office or that Sachin Vaze and Pradeep Sharma both came together to my residence at Malabar Hill. Pradeep Sharma had visited once in evening at my residence to discuss about his concerns in Ravi Pujari matter." Singh in his statement claimed Vaze visited him few times to his residence earlier regarding briefing about the discussions which he had during his visits to CM and HM in sensitive cases which he was handling.

With this, Sharma claims, "If these two statements are recorded by the NIA, it is that the duty of the prosecution to produce the same and not two produce half-baked evidence."

Bellasis bridge to be ready this year

The construction of the new cable-stayed Bellasis Railway over Bridge (ROB) between Mumbai Central and Grant Road is progressing ahead of schedule.

Contract extended until April 2026

Bridge will be open to traffic by Dec 2025

1893 Bridge, originally constructed

June 2024

Dismantled by railways in after being declared unfit following a thorough audit

The work on the Bellasis bridge is progressing as planned, and we are making efforts to open the bridge for traffic ahead of schedule. Approximately 12 structures obstructing the bridge route have already been removed, and the remaining 12 abandoned buildings will be cleared immediately

-Abhijeet Bangar

Additional Municipal Commissioner



₹110 crore Estimated cost

₹70 crore BMC's contribution

₹40 crore Railway's contribution

The new bridge

Span 380 meters

Six vehicular lanes

Have concrete foundation and a 6.5-meter clearance above the railway tracks

New bridge will improve connectivity between Nagpada and Tardeo

The BMC decided to construct a cable-stayed bridge to minimise piling work and streamline the construction process since the bridge is above railway tracks

Text: Shefali Parab-Pandit

Ex-corporator asked to file action against illegal bldgs

Urvi Mahajan

MUMBAI

you take against illegal constructions?" The court then ordered him to file an affidavit within two weeks.

The bench also remarked on the timing of the PIL and hinted at possible political motivations. "We understand the corporation is in an election mode, and you may be in a hurry," it said.

The plea came up for hearing amid long-pending elections to the BMC and 28 other municipal corporations in Maharashtra. The BMC's term ended in March 2022, and an administrator has run it for over two and a half years, with elections expected in 2025.

The PIL alleged that BMC officials included with

The UBT leader had filed a PIL against illegal construction in Mumbai seeking SIT probe into the alleged inaction of BMC officials

State to withhold benefits over Aadhaar validation

More than 10 lakh beneficiaries will not get money under two popular schemes until they complete validation

Ravikiran Deshmukh

MUMBAI

The government will not disburse Rs1,500 each to more than 10 lakh beneficiaries under the Sanjay Gandhi Niradhar Yojana and Shravan Bal Seva Pension Scheme for the months of January and February.

The decision comes after the government decided to disburse the money through

the direct benefit transfer (DBT) portal with Aadhaar validation. The DBT disbursal, initiated in December last year, brought 29.77 lakh beneficiaries on board the portal. But during the process of the Aadhaar validation the number of beneficiaries declined only 19.74 lakh.

The state has decided to disburse money to those whose Aadhaar validation has been completed. It means over 10

lakh beneficiaries will not get financial assistance for the two months. Issuing order for the release of funds, the state has allocated Rs610 crore for disbursal, holding the amount for the rest of the beneficiaries. For the 10 lakh beneficiaries, the state has asked district collectors to complete the process of validation on an urgent basis.

Both the schemes were the

most populist till the Ladki

Bahin Scheme was launched by the Mahayuti government in July last year. Both Sanjay Gandhi Niradhar and Shravan Bal Seva are the brainchild of Congress governments.

According to sources from the government, a significant number of beneficiaries may not exist or their names are proxies. It is because when the scrutiny of names to bring them on board the DBT portal was being made names of

hundreds of beneficiaries had to be dropped for want of valid proofs. During the process of Aadhaar validation, the data of many beneficiaries did not match, leaving a scope of doubt for non-existence of them or someone else claiming the benefits by proxy. The state finance department led by Ajit Pawar, during a review meeting, held a few months ago, had asked the social justice and special assistance

department for the scrutiny and the Aadhaar validation to ascertain the exact number of beneficiaries.

The state finance department is currently reviewing a number of populist schemes and asking for scrutiny as a huge amount was being spent on them. The financial crisis might have forced the Mahayuti government to such an exercise, quipped an official.

Landmark, Sobha sign ₹423cr deal

FPJ News Service

MUMBAI

Landmark Developers and Sobha Ltd have jointly acquired a 2.1-acre land parcel at Jerbai Wadia Road, Parel, for Rs423.38 crore.

The deal, registered on January 23, 2025, marks a key step in the redevelopment and expansion of premium residential and commercial spaces in the prime central Mumbai locality.

According to property registration documents, the total agreement value for the land stands at Rs2,12,05,58,000, with a stamp duty payment of Rs10.60 crore. The sale was executed in partnership, with both developers securing distinct shares in the project's free-sale component.

Landmark Developers has acquired 10,953 square metres of the free-sale component, valued at Rs212.05 crore while Sobha Ltd has secured 21,621.24sqm, amounting to Rs211.32 crore.

With Parel emerging as a residential and commercial hub, the acquisition is expected to contribute to the area's real estate development, potentially offering luxury housing, retail spaces, and commercial offices.

Man held over threat to blow up police stn

Megha Kuchik

MUMBAI

The Bandra Railway Police on Tuesday travelled to Goa and arrested a man accused of threatening to blow up the Chembur Police Station.

On Monday at 4pm, a hoax call was received on the Bandra Railway Police stations landline from a mobile phone, threatening that the Chembur station would be blown up.

According to the police, the caller's number was traced to Goa. The accused, a 40-year-old labourer, had been drunk when he made the call. He hails from Kolhapur and has been living in Goa with his family for the past four years. After receiving the call, the bomb detection squad launched a search operation at Chembur station but found nothing.

On Monday, an FIR was registered by the Bandra GRP. The case was filed under sections 217, 353, and 351(4) of the Bharatiya Nyaya Sahita.

Cheating exam centres face govt wrath



Students appear for HSC exams at Bhavan's College near Gamdevi. Chief Minister Devendra

Fadnavis has issued orders to all collectors and police officers in the state to take strong action against inci-

dents of mass copying in the 10th and 12th exams. He has instructed that the recognition of such examination

centres be permanently revoked, and teachers and staff who assist in cheating dismissed from service.

Wet lease workers to protest on Feb 25

Kamal Mishra

MUMBAI

Thousands of drivers and conductors employed on wet lease buses of the Brihanmumbai Electric Supply & Transport (BEST) undertaking are set to stage a protest on February 25, 2025, demanding equal pay and benefits similar to those of permanent BEST employees.

Workers engaged with private contractors such as

They are demanding equal pay and benefits similar to those of permanent BEST employees

Daga Group, Mateshwari Urban Transport Solutions Pvt Ltd, BVG India Ltd, and others claim that they perform the same duties as

BEST's permanent staff yet face wage disparities and lack of job security. They are demanding the implementation of the "equal pay for equal work" principle, citing the continuous and essential nature of their jobs.

To press their demands,

workers will march to Azad Maidan on Tuesday, February 25, at 12.30pm. A delegation will also submit a memorandum to Deputy Chief Minister Eknath

Shinde and the commissioner of BMC," a union leader said.

Confirming the development, union leader Shashank Rao stated that most workers will likely join the protest after completing their shifts, ensuring that bus services remain unaffected.

Currently, BEST operates nearly 3,000 buses, with two-thirds supplied by private contractors on a wet lease basis.

BMC urged to focus on Colaba roads

FPJ News Service

MUMBAI

The residents of Colaba, led by former BJP corporator Makarand Narwekar, have urged the BMC to prioritise road works. They want roads in poor condition to be taken up first for cement concrete (CC) work, rather than mess with roads still in good shape.

The residents want four roads – Henry Marg, Tilak Marg, Garden Road, and Walton Road – excluded from the CC project in the A-ward, as these roads are in a satisfactory condition and do not require resurfacing.

In a letter to civic chief Bhushan Gagrani, Narwekar raised concerns about the ongoing road works in the city, highlighting the growing discontent among residents.

"Citizens across Mumbai are demanding that the BMC should focus on repairing roads in poor condition, rather than unnecessarily digging up well-maintained roads," he stated. Narwekar specifically mentioned the opposition from residents of Mount Mary Road in Bandra and D Road in Marine Drive regarding the proposed concreting.

Narwekar reminded Gagrani of the assurances made during the budget press conference, where it was stated that the BMC would review road projects upon receiving written feedback.

"Strongly urge you to form a high-level committee to address these concerns and thoroughly review the proposed list of CC roads," he said.

MUMBAI AIRPORT | Affidavit highlights risks posed by high-rises exceeding height limits

Collector says sorry to HC for flight path obstructions

Urvi Mahajani

MUMBAI

The Mumbai Suburban District Collector submitted an affidavit to the Bombay High Court on Monday, offering an unconditional apology for not fully removing obstructions from the flight path of aircraft at Mumbai Airport.

- Collector submitted affidavit offering unconditional apology for not fully removing obstructions from the flight path of aircraft at Mumbai Airport
- However, affidavit stated that significant progress had been made in compliance with court directives
- Affidavit was in reply to a 2019 PIL highlighting safety risks posed by high-rise buildings near the airport exceeding height restrictions

and Justice Bharti Dangre said it will hear the plea on March 11.

The affidavit noted that one housing society had partially complied with demolition notices, while others had removed obstructions like water tanks, antennas and staircases. However, portions of concrete structures still exceed height limits.

Some buildings plan to demolish the excess within 30 days, while others have sought an additional month or appealed demolition orders to the Directorate General of Civil Aviation.

Joint inspections were conducted on February 7 and 8, 2025, with MIAL overseeing the process.

Authorities are coordinating with the Slum Rehabilitation Authority and the BMC to ensure compliance. On

February 7, the collector's office issued fresh notices to owners of the remaining seven structures, directing them to remove obstructions within 15 days or face coercive action. The affidavit seeks eight weeks from the court to complete the necessary enforcement.

SBM bank

CIN: U65999MH2017FLC293229

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Unaudited Financial Results for the quarter and nine months ended December 31, 2024

(₹ in Lakhs)

Sr no.	Particulars	Quarter Ended				Nine Month Ended	Year Ended		
		31-Dec-2024		31-Dec-2023					
		Unaudited	Unaudited	Unaudited	Audited				
1	Total Income from Operations	23,883	21,790	68,306	93,951				
2	Net Profit / (Loss) for the period (before Tax, Exceptional and/or Extraordinary items)	(153)	(1,958)	(7,493)	(3,991)				
3	Net Profit / (Loss) for the period before Tax (after Exceptional and/or Extraordinary items)	(153)	(1,958)	(7,493)	(3,991)				
4	Net Profit / (Loss) for the period after Tax (after Exceptional and/or Extraordinary items)	(153)	(1,958)	(7,493)	(4,325)				
5	Total Comprehensive Income for the period [Comprising Profit / (Loss) for the period (after tax) and Other Comprehensive Income (after tax)]	(153)	(1,958)	(7,493)	(4,325)				
6	Paid up Equity Share Capital	100,114	82,363	100,114	92,138				
7	Reserves (excluding Revaluation Reserves)				(15,173)				
8	Securities Premium Account				3,558				
9	Net worth	74,101	66,484	74,101	73,988				
10	Paid up Debt Capital / Outstanding Debt*	61,585	77,217	61,585	72,684				
11	Outstanding Redeemable Preference shares	-	-	-	-				
12	Debt Equity Ratio*	0.77	1.08	0.77	0.91				
13	Earnings Per Share (Face Value of ₹10/- each) (Not annualized)								
1.	Basic :	(0.02)	(0.24)	(0.77)	(0.52)				
2.	Diluted :	(0.02)	(0.24)	(0.77)	(0.52)				

* Debt represents total borrowings; Equity represents total of share capital and reserves.

Note:

- These results for the quarter and nine months ended December 31, 2024 have been reviewed by statutory auditors – Gokhale and Sathe, Chartered Accountants who have issued an unmodified opinion thereon. The results for the prior periods were audited by K. S. Aiyar & Co., Chartered Accountants, on which they had issued an unmodified opinion.
- The above is an extract of the detailed format of quarterly / half yearly / annual financial results filed with the Stock Exchanges under Regulation 52 of the LODR Regulations. The full format of the quarterly / half yearly / annual financial results are available on the websites of the listed entity (<https://www.sbmbank.co.in/aboutus/investor-corner.php>)

Mumbai
February 11, 2025

epaper.freepressjournal.in

For SBM Bank (India) Ltd.
Mr. Ashish Vijayakar

Managing Director & Chief Executive Officer

APPOINTMENT OF PROJECT MANAGEMENT CONSULTANT (PMC)
Topiwala Centre Premises Co-operative Society Ltd.
• CTS No. - 746/7
• Survey No. - 104 A/2 (part)
• Plot Area - 4152 Sq. Mtr.
Off. S.V. Road, Goregaon (west), Mumbai 400 104, having Basement, Ground Floor to 10th floor Society invites expression of interest together with profile and details of Project Management Consultant (PMC) well experienced on similar project and assisting it in process of obtaining feasibility report & Structural stability report detailed survey process. Minimum 7 years experience in this field and in adverse litigation from any society handled in the past.
The society reserves the right to accept or reject any or all offers without assigning any reason. Expression of interest with sealed quotes may be sent to The Secretary, Topiwala Centre Premises Co-operative Society Ltd. On the address 404, Topiwala Centre, Goregaon (W), Mumbai 400104 and timing Between 3 pm to 5 pm before 15-20 days from date of issue of this circular.
Topiwala Centre Premises Co-operative Society Ltd.
Sd/-
Secretary (Mob.: 9967170190)

ALLAHABADIA ROW | Case filed for transmission of obscene material in e-form; FIR against at least 30 people connected with show; police visit Allahabadia's residence in Andheri

From judges to participants, all in crosshairs of cyber police

Megha Kuchik
MUMBAI

Amid the row over social media personality Ranveer Allahabadia's controversial comment on YouTube show 'India's Got Latent', the state cyber police on Tuesday registered an FIR against 30 to 40 individuals, who have participated right from the first episode till sixth. They have been booked for creating and publishing obscene content. Yashasvi Yadav, Inspector-General of the state cyber police, confirmed that a case has been registered.

An offence has been filed under section 67 (transmission of obscene material in electronic form) of the Information Technology Act and relevant sections of Bharatiya Nyaya Sanhita. It names all those involved in the show right from the first episode, including Allahabadia, the host, artists, participants and judges.

On Tuesday, the police summoned Allahabadia and Samay Raina, the comedian who hosted the show. A team also visited the former's residence at the **Bay View building (in pic) near Seven Bungalows**, Andheri West, to record statements. An officer from the Khar police station said, "We are inquiring the matter and will file the case accordingly." However, when asked specifically about recording Allahabadia's statement, the officer did not provide a clear response.

According to sources, the Mumbai police have recorded the statement of YouTuber Aashish Chanchlani, who was present at the show. The authorities



Saman Ansari

have also contacted Raina, who is out of India, and Allahabadia's manager. He can appear anytime to give his statement. The Khar police will also contact BookMyShow for details of the audience members who attended the show.

Meanwhile, the controversial episode of India's Got Latent has been removed. Reportedly, YouTube blocked the episode in India following a government order. Several social media users shared screenshots showing that the video had been pulled down

from the platform.

"Video unavailable. This content is not available in this country domain due to a legal complaint from the government," read the message on the screen. Senior Advisor at the ministry of information and broadcasting, Kanchan Gupta, took to her X account on Tuesday, informing, "The episode on YouTube with obscene and perverse comments by Allahabadia has been blocked following Government of India orders."

Naresh Mhaske, a Member of Parliament from Shiv Sena

Freedom of speech is not freedom to insult. It is high time for strict laws on social media and the OTT platforms

—MP Naresh Mhaske

STORM BREWS

Meanwhile, the Assam police on Monday registered a case against Allahabadia, Samay Raina, and content creators Ashish Chanchlani, Jaspreet Singh and Apoorva Makija for allegedly making a vulgar comment and broadcasting it on YouTube. Assam Chief Minister announced the same on X.

(Shinde), raised the matter in the Parliament. "Freedom of speech is not freedom to insult. It is high time for strict laws on social media and the OTT platforms," he asserted.

The storm erupted after a video clip surfaced, in which Allahabadia is seen making remarks on India's Got Latent platform. Deemed crass and vulgar, his words sparked massive outrage.

The comment has faced criticism from various quarters, including political, social, legal and women's rights organisations.

Allahabadia has over 16 million followers across social media platforms. He even issued a video apology where he called his comment a "lapse in judgement" but the issue has refused to die down.

State, national women panels call for action

Pranali Lotlikar
MUMBAI

The Maharashtra State Commission for Women (MSCW), led by Chairperson Rupali Chakankar, has taken cognisance of a complaint filed by advocates Ashish Raj and Pankaj Mishra against obscene comments made during the India's Got Latent' show.

In a letter to the Mumbai police, the MSCW stated that the show's content creators – Ranveer Allahabadia, Samay Raina and others – allegedly disrespected women through their content. It further alleged that the show, which aired on an online platform, contained obscene material and that the creators used abusive and vulgar language, thereby attempting to outrage the modesty of women.

The MSCW has urged the police to register a case against the accused under stringent provisions of Bharatiya Nyaya Sanhita along with relevant sections of the Information Technology (IT) Act and the Indecent Representation of Women (Prohibition) Act, 1986.

Meanwhile, the National Commission for Women (NCW) has summoned Allahabadia, Raina, and others over "derogatory and racist" remarks. The hearing is scheduled for February 17 at the NCW office in New Delhi.

Colaba residents to challenge SC stay on eviction of hawkers

FPJ News Service
MUMBAI

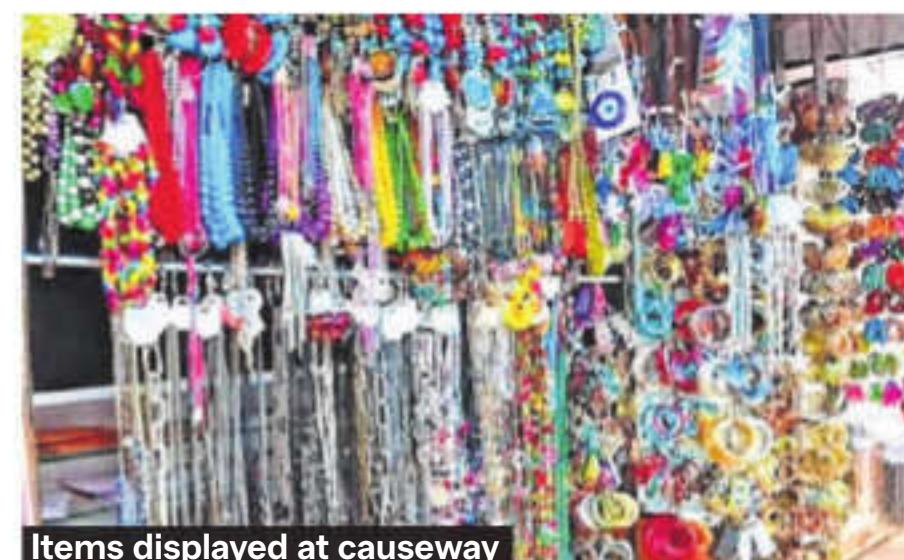
The Colaba residents will file an intervention application to challenge a stay by the Supreme Court on the eviction of 253 hawkers from the Colaba Causeway.

The apex court had ordered the stay on January 27 after the hawkers, represented by the Colaba Causeway Tourism Hawkers Stall Union, filed a Special Leave Petition against the dismissal of their contempt petition by the Bombay High Court on December 12, 2024.

The hawkers had argued that the HC order dismissing their petition against their eviction by the BMC was "ex facie erroneous and cryptic" and passed without considering that the Street Vendors (Protection of Livelihood and Regulation of Street Vendors) Act, 2014, implemented by the central government in May 2014, was not notified by the state government.

The hawkers said that the eviction raids by municipal teams violate their fundamental right to livelihood. They said that they are in the process of filing the intervention application against the stay, which they said was passed without hearing them out.

"Pavements are meant for people to walk. Unfortunately, our footpaths have become shopping markets because of increased hawking activities. With due respect to the right of all street vendors to earn a



Items displayed at causeway

2.3 km
Length of Causeway

253
Official figure of stall owners

Actual count may be higher, feel locals

March 3
Hearing

Choudhary, a resident of Colaba who represents the Clean Heritage Colaba Residents Association, said that they are in the process of

livelihood, there has to be some reasonable restriction upon such right. Street vendors cannot, by any stretch of the imagination, claim a right to put up stalls on pavements and obstruct free ingress and egress of pedestrians," Chaudhary said.

He added that the HC has passed commendable orders in this regard and Colaba residents feel it is necessary for them to place the views of pedestrians and citizens in general, and that of Colaba residents in particular, before the apex court.

"Therefore, given that the hawkers have moved the Supreme Court, we shall file our intervention in the apex court and seek an audience so that local residents are also heard while deciding this issue which affects the rights of citizens to free use of pavements," Chaudhary said.

The matter is listed for further hearing on March 3.

Trusted artisan fled with ₹1.3cr gold, says jeweller

Poonam Apraj
MUMBAI

Mir Arif Gulam.

The L T Marg police are hunting for a goldsmith who allegedly fled with more than 1 kg gold, worth Rs 1.30 crore, which was given to him by a jeweller for making mangalsutras. A case of fraud and embezzlement has been registered against the accused,

Between January 8 and 30, Mamade claimed that he handed over 1,497 grams of pure gold to Gulam for crafting mangalsutras. The goldsmith assured that the jeweller would be ready within 10 to 15 days.

However, the accused allegedly failed to deliver the gold or mangalsutras even after the deadline. When

Mamade attempted to contact him, his phone was found switched off, said the complainant. Subsequently, the jeweller approached the police.

Investigators suspect that Gulam may have fled to his hometown in West Bengal. A special police team has been assigned to locate and arrest the suspect, said the police.

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SATYAMEVA JAYATE

EDUCATION REVAMP | Intention behind temporary appointments to address staffing shortages; guest lecturers paid ₹800 per session for theoretical classes and ₹400 per session for practical classes

No contractuels; timely pay for guest lecturers

FPJ News Service
MUMBAI

The Maharashtra Education Department has decided to cancel the contractual appointments of teachers working in schools with less than 10 students, following the launch of the second phase of teacher recruitment on 21 January. This phase of recruitment, which had been delayed due to last year's state assembly elections, aims to fill vacancies with qualified, permanent teachers.

The government had initially introduced contractual appointments as a temporary measure to ensure students' education was not disrupted while regular recruitment was pending. In September last year, the state had planned to appoint contractual teachers in schools with 20 or fewer students. However, after facing strong opposition, the policy was revised to apply only to schools with 10 or less students. Officials clarified that the intention behind these temporary appointments was to address immediate staffing shortages until a more permanent solution could be implemented.

With the recruitment process now in motion, the government has reassessed the need for contractual teachers. A government resolution (GR) issued on the matter states that with the availability of eligible candidates through the 2022 Teacher Eligibility and Aptitude Test, regular teacher appointments will soon be completed. As a result, contractual teachers currently in service will be allowed to continue only until their contract expires or until a permanent teacher is appointed to their



position, whichever happens first. The GR also specifies that no further reappointments will be granted beyond this period.

Timely payment for guest lecturers

On Tuesday, the Directorate of Technical Education was instructed to ensure that guest lecturers working on an hourly basis in government polytechnic colleges receive their honorarium on time. The directive was issued by Higher and Technical Education Minister, Chandrakant Patil, during a review meeting held at the state secretariat.

The meeting was convened to discuss various demands raised by guest lecturers employed in government polytechnic institutions. It was attended by former minister and MLA Sanjay Bansode, MLA Abhimanyu Pawar, Additional Chief Secretary of the Higher and Technical Education Department B Venugopal Reddy, Director of Technical Education Dr Vinod Mohitkar, Director of the Maharashtra State Board of Technical Education Dr Pramod Naik, and other senior officials.

Patil acknowledged the cru-

cial role played by guest lecturers alongside permanent faculty members in government polytechnic colleges. He noted that guest lecturers are currently paid ₹800 per session for theoretical classes and ₹400 per session for practical classes. He urged college administrations to implement a system that ensures these lecturers receive their honorarium regularly every month.

The minister also highlighted concerns arising from the shortage of teaching staff in government polytechnics following a court-imposed stay on the appointment of hourly-paid lecturers. With rising student enrolment and the introduction of new courses, the

₹5 crore in salary arrears for special educators

The state has sanctioned the disbursement of ₹5.19 crore in pending salary arrears for 16 special education teachers, following prolonged delays in payment under the Inclusive Education for Disabled at Secondary Stage (IEDSS) scheme.

The decision comes in compliance with multiple Bombay High Court directives, particularly in contempt petitions, which mandated the payment of arrears to eligible educators. The court had ruled that the salaries of special educators appointed under the scheme must be disbursed without further delay.

The sanctioned amount will cover the educators' salaries from their date of appointment until the completion of their tenure in November 2023. The Director of Education (Primary), Maharashtra State, has been tasked with verifying and ensuring the accurate calculation of pending salaries before disbursing the funds directly into the teachers' bank accounts. Moreover, the funds will be allocated from the 2024-25 financial year budget under the Samagra Shiksha Abhiyan.

This move is expected to bring long-awaited relief to the affected educators, who have been awaiting salary payments despite fulfilling their teaching responsibilities under the IEDSS scheme.

IN BRIEF

- 1 Second phase of recruitment started on January 21
- 2 Meeting convened to discuss various demands raised by guest lecturers
- 3 Amount to cover salaries from date of appointment

Cop caught while taking ₹5k bribe

FPJ News Service
MUMBAI

The Mumbai Unit of the Anti-Corruption Bureau has caught a police constable from the Economic Offences Wing's CB Control red-handed for allegedly demanding and accepting a bribe from a tobacco seller to allow him to run his business smoothly. According to the ACB, the complainant has a retail business of tobacco and betel nuts. To continue his work, the accused constable Vishal Yadav, demanded ₹5,000 as a good luck amount and ₹10,000 per month bribe. Accordingly, the complainant paid ₹5,000 good luck amount to the accused. On February 7, Yadav contacted the complainant and the seller contacted ACB who subsequently caught the erring police officer.

Rly engineer, 3 others booked in graft case

FPJ News Service
MUMBAI

Mumbai wakes up to hazy skies; AQI in 'poor' category



City woke up to hazy skies on Tuesday due to dust particles in midair

CAUSE OF POOR AQI	CONCERN AND WARNINGS
BMC attributes Deonar and Malad's poor AQI to garbage burning in slums Temperature drop and forecast Weekend outlook: Mercury expected to rise again	Authorities issue repeated warnings against garbage burning. AQI fluctuations continue, affecting air quality in pockets of Mumbai

Discussions, creative showcases at Jai Hind College's TEDx event

FPJ News Service
MUMBAI

photographer and visual storyteller Ganesh Vanre, mental health expert Riri Trivedi, Mafatal Industries' managing director and vice chairman Priyavrata Mafatal, wealth manager Kirtan Shah, chef Vikas Bagul, and Olympian shooter Suma Shirur.

While Kedia provided insights into smart investment strategies, Trivedi shed light on trauma healing. The other speakers also shared insights from their respective fields, contributing to a broader dialogue on innovation and transformation.

The event also featured performances by artists such as singer Zanai Bhosle and the team behind the newly released album Sajna, including independent artists Ravorat, Vilen, MC HEAM, Ansh4sure, Burrah, and Vasu. A standout moment was a performance by Illuminati, the dance group that won India's Got Talent Season 1, which received a standing ovation.

TEDxJai Hind College 2025 provided a platform for discussions bridging academic concepts with real-world applications, aligning with TEDx's ethos of sharing impactful ideas.

Conference on global discrimination

FPJ News Service
MUMBAI

His Holiness Spiritual Sovereign Jainacharya Yugbhushan Suri, a revered Jainacharya and an erudite scholar of politics, history, and social sciences, the 79th successor of Tirthankar Mahavir, will lead a first-of-its-kind conference on the Root Cause of Discrimination in the Current World Order at Tata Institute of Social Sciences (TISS). At a time when discrimination continues to fracture societies and economies worldwide, the event seeks to cut through illusionary narratives and uncover the true origins of global inequality – a perspective rarely explored in mainstream discourse.

This is the first instance of a spiritual sovereign of the Jain religion engaging directly with scholars and thought leaders on issues of governance, economic disparity, and structural injustice. Despite global activism and policy efforts, discrimination persists – often misinterpreted or misrepresented.



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Nutraceuticals sustainability

Vitafoods India 2025, held between February 5 and 7 in Mumbai, concluded successfully, highlighting trends in the nutraceutical industry with a strong emphasis on sustainability. The event attracted over 8,000 visitors, underscoring its role as a premier networking and knowledge-sharing platform for the nutraceutical ecosystem.

Plans to ease admission for int'l students

The Maharashtra government is exploring ways to streamline the admission process for international students by introducing a 'single window system' that would integrate application submission, document verification, fee processing, and other educational formalities.

Training and concerns of teachers

The State Council of Educational Research and Training (SCERT) has launched a capacity-building training programme for teachers across Maharashtra at the taluka level. However, concerns have been raised as the training coincides with the ongoing Class 10 and 12 board examinations.

NEET PG 2024 aspirants in a limbo

Despite the ongoing uncertainty surrounding Maharashtra's Round 3 counselling for National Eligibility cum Entrance Test (NEET) postgraduate (PG) 2024, the Medical Counselling Committee (MCC) on Tuesday confirmed that it will proceed with the Stray Vacancy Round for All India Quota (AIQ) seats.

॥ या देवी सर्वभूतेषु मातृस्पैषं संस्थिता । नमस्तस्यै नमस्तस्यै नमस्तस्यै नमो नमः ॥

SNEHANJALI SABHA | PRAYER MEET

स्नेहांजलि



With hearts full of love and reverence, we celebrate the divine journey of Rajyogini Brahmakumari Dr. Nalini Didi Ji (Didi Maa), a beacon of purity, wisdom, and selfless service, she touched countless lives, guiding them on the path of peace and spiritual awakening. Her Presence was a Blessing, her Life an Inspiration, and her Legacy an Eternal Light for all seekers. As she ascends to her angelic stage, we come together to honour her Life of Purity, Service, and Unconditional Love.

Join us as we come together in Prayers and Meditation, embracing the wisdom she shared and the path she illuminated.

13 FEBRUARY 2025 5 PM TO 7 PM

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Brahma Kumari Shaku Didi | Brahma Kumari Vishnu Behen | Rajyogi BK Nikunj ji
The Entire Divine Family of Ghatkopar Subzone, Mumbai

Critical Minerals:

Exemption from Basic Customs Duty on Cobalt Powder and waste and scrap of lead, zinc, lithium-ion battery and 12 critical minerals.

This move aims to boost the availability of raw materials vital for key industries, thereby supporting the growth of sustainable manufacturing processes.

Electronics:

In line with our 'Make in India' policy, and to rectify the inverted duty structure, the Basic Customs Duty on Interactive Flat Panel Display (IFPD) is increased from 10% to 20%. Also duty on open cells and other components used in the manufacture of interactive flat panel display module is reduced to 5%. Further, for the manufacture of open cells of LED/LCD TVs, Basic Customs Duty on parts of open cells has been reduced to zero.

Shipping:

Basic Customs Duty exemption on raw materials, components, and consumables for ship manufacturing extended for another decade, including for shipbreaking.

Telecommunication:

Basic Customs Duty reduced from 20% to 10% on carrier grade Ethernet switches to make it at par with non carrier grade Ethernet switches in order to prevent classification disputes.

Lithium-Ion Batteries:

35 additional capital goods for manufacture of lithium ion battery of electrically operated vehicles and 28 additional capital goods for manufacture of lithium ion battery of mobile phones exempted from Basic Customs Duty. This exemption will aid in enhancing domestic manufacturing capacity and support the green energy transition.

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'Secure release of fishermen from Pak jails'

Megha Parmar
PALGHAR

Peace activist Jatin Desai said that the jailed fishermen's kin have not received ₹300 per month as promised

Senior journalist and peace activist Jatin Desai has urged state fisheries minister Nitesh Rane to take action for the release of 18 tribal fishermen from Palghar district who inadvertently crossed into Pakistani territory while fishing. Despite proving their Indian nationality, these fishermen have remained in Pakistani custody for the past 30 months. Their families are suffering severe hardships, including hunger.

The 18 fishermen, hailing from the Dahanu and Talasari areas of Palghar district, completed their sentence in 2022. According to an agreement between India and Pakistan, individuals whose nationality is proven should be released to their home countries. However, despite verification, Pakistan has not yet released these fishermen. They were expected to be freed within a month after completing their sentences.

In line with Gujarat's policy, the Maharashtra government had agreed to provide Rs300 per day as financial assistance to families of fishermen in Pakistani jails. This assistance was announced through an order issued on August 2, 2023. However, due to an error in the order, Desai claims that no family has yet received any assistance.

Furthermore, Desai has called for similar financial aid to be given to the families of fishermen who were released in May-June 2023. He also urged the state government to continuously follow up with the central government to ensure that the 18 fishermen are brought home.

Initially, 30 fishermen from Maharashtra were imprisoned in Pakistan. Of these, 11 were released in two phases, while one fisherman, Vinod Kol from Dahanu, died in custody. Recently, a fisherman from Gujarat also died due to health complications, despite having completed his sentence.

At least 26 Indian fishermen have died in Pakistan custody in 10 years after being apprehended for allegedly violating the country's territorial waters.

MBMC nets ₹80L fine from habitual litter mongers



Suresh Golani
MIRA BHAYANDAR

The sanitation department attached to the Mira Bhayandar Municipal Corporation (MBMC) has collected fines to the tune of Rs79.92 lakh from litter mongers and those found using banned single use plastic material in the past 10 months.

The offenders include those found spitting, urinating, defecating and littering in public places and street-side shops, eateries and establishments like upscale shopping malls who were caught giving goods to customers in plastic. Additionally, fines amounting Rs40,000 were slapped and offences registered against ten dumper owners for illegally disposing of construction debris in public spaces and restricted areas.

While the civic administration has 100 sanitary supervisors (mukadam) to keep an eye on the litter mongers and single-use plastic consumers,

FINES

- MBMC imposes a fine of Rs100 for spitting, urinating, defecating and littering garbage in public places.
- Garage and furniture shop owners are fined Rs500 and Rs300, respectively for improper waste disposal.
- Burning garbage in public places and selling banned plastic items also invite a similar action.

four anti-debris and flying squads have been deployed to check suspected vehicles loaded with construction waste.

The squad claims to have checked 426 vehicles in the last couple of months. Developers also come under the ambit of a penalty amounting Rs5,000 for spilling construction material on the roads during transportation in trucks and dumpers.

Alert CR workers awarded for spotting deadly rail fractures

Kamal Mishra
MUMBAI

Three Central Railway's (CR) Mumbai division employees have been felicitated for their prompt action in detecting a rail fracture, thereby averting a potential mishap. Arun Kumar, a master craftsman was among those honoured for spotting a rail fracture between Mankhurd and Vashi on January 14. His swift reporting of the issue helped prevent a possible accident.

Rajan Singh, a pointsman, noticed a rail fracture on the main line near Pen on January 4, while working on load release at the yard. He

REASONABLE DOUBT | The couple's other daughter too denied accompanying mother

Mom acquitted of child's murder as her family recants

Pranali Lotlikar
THANE

The Thane principal district and sessions court has acquitted a 31-year-old woman accused of killing her 10-month-old deaf and mute daughter and later disposing of her body in the Kalwa creek. The court, presided over by principal judge SB Agarwal, ruled that the prosecution failed to establish a complete chain of circumstances, leaving room for reasonable doubt and supporting the innocence of the accused.

The case dates back to May 2018, when the woman was traveling to her matrimonial home with her ailing daughter. According to the prosecution, the woman, allegedly frustrated with her child's condition, throttled her. She then took a rickshaw to Kalwa bridge, waited until dusk, and disposed of the body in the creek.

A month after the incident, the woman's husband filed a complaint at the police station, accusing her of killing their daughter and destruc-

STORY IN BRIEF

1 Deaf-mute 10-month-old girl was throttled and body disposed of in Kalwa creek.

2 The husband gave a statement against the woman a month after the incident and later turned hostile.

3 The court gave the woman benefit of doubt as the prosecution failed to establish the sequence of events.

tion of evidence. During the trial, key prosecution witnesses, including the husband and the couple's other daughter, turned hostile, significantly weakening the case.

The court observed, "Although the witness (husband) turned hostile, what is apparent from his evidence is that the victim was deaf, mute, and bedridden... There is no

clarity in his testimony. Similarly, the deceased child's sibling deposed that she did not accompany her mother on the day of the incident and that only her mother went out with the infant. She also stated that she did not know what happened to them and only knew that her mother returned without the child. She denied telling the police that her mother had killed the child."

The court ruled that apart from the husband's and daughter's statements – neither fully supported the prosecution – there was no material evidence against the woman. The court further held that even the "last seen together" theory could not be conclusively established.

"No doubt, grave suspicion can be pointed towards the accused, but it is a well-established legal principle that suspicion alone cannot replace conviction or serve as proof of a crime beyond a reasonable doubt; especially in the absence of corpus delicti (body of the crime)." the court stated.



Cornerstone of humanism

Deendayal Upadhyaya Chowk was inaugurated on Tuesday by Chief Minister Devendra Fadnavis at Tata Garden, Bhulabhai Desai Road, in the presence of state minister Mangal Prabhat Lodha. – Vijay Gohil

Marginal rise in fatal accidents in Thane

NK Gupta
THANE

The Thane city police recorded a total of 922 accidents last year, with 23% cases of deaths and 91% injuries. In numbers, 251 deaths occurred and 840 incidents with serious injuries were reported within the jurisdiction of the Police Commissionerate. In 2023, 940 accidents were recorded, with 200 deaths and 865 incidents with injuries. As per available data, there was a rise of 15 fatal accidents in 2024 as compared to the previous year.

Despite several awareness campaigns regarding traffic and road safety by social organisations and the traffic police, many motorists speed and do not follow the rules under the Motor Vehicles Act.

In the Narpoli police jurisdiction, 96 cases were reported, with 42 deaths and 61 injuries. Police sources said that heavy vehicles travel from Thane, Kasheli, and Kalher towards Bhiwandi and Dapode villages, as well as Mankoli villages where warehouses are located. They said these stretches are the most dangerous.

In the jurisdiction of the Manpada police, 70 accidents occurred, resulting in 17 deaths and 59 injuries in 2024. Due to heavy urbanisation on Kalyan-Manpada Road, the number of motorcycles have increased, and most riders engage in speeding. Under the Kapurbawadi

Warp & weft: Vidarbha saris have an edge

FPJ News Service

MUMBAI

To preserve and promote India's traditional crafts, students of the National Institute of Fashion Technology (NIFT), Mumbai, conducted an in-depth research and documentation project on Patti Kinar sarees in Dhapewada village, Vidarbha. The team is now trying to collaborate with the state handloom corporation for product development. Programme mentor Prof Sandeep Kidile said that this craft stands as a symbol of Vidarbha's skilled weaving community.

Full report on freepressjournal.in

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Tender Document Cost: Rs. 2,00/- Cash (N.R.) Contact: 9653392456/9820230171	

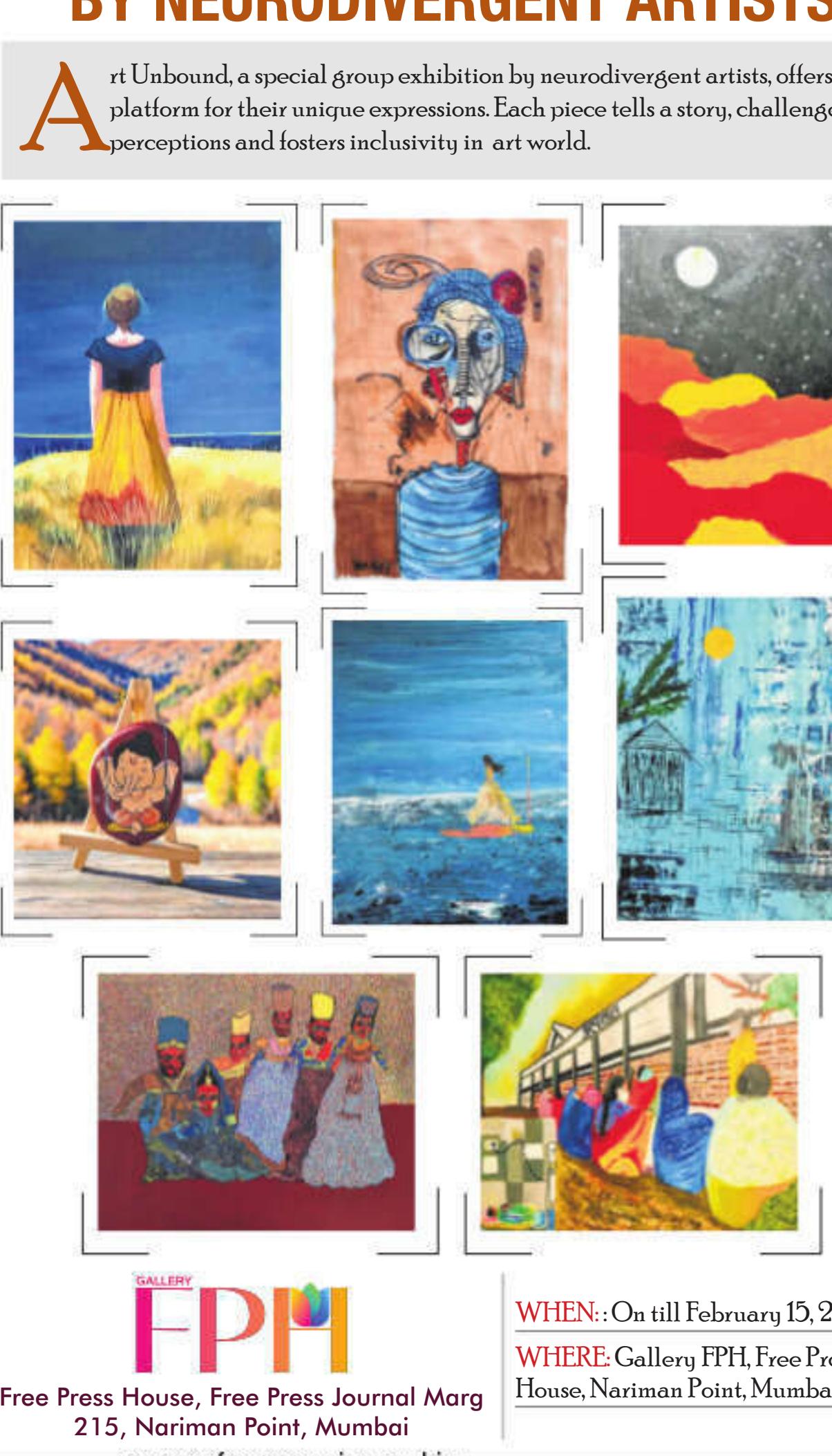
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Sr. No.	Activity		Period
(i)	Site inspection, review of documents, clarifications, if any, and review of terms and conditions of the Bid Project	From 12 th February, 2025 to 16 th February, 2025. By appointment only	
(ii)	Period for submission of bids	From 15 th February, 2025 to 19 th February, 2025 until 17:00 Hours (5:00 p.m.)	
(iii)	Opening of bids	On 19 th February, 2025 at 1600 Hours (6:00 p.m.)	

PUBLIC NOTICE FOR CHANGE OF PREMISES	
All the customers of Bank of India, Mira Road branch and the public in general are hereby informed that our Mira Road branch presently situated at Ground Floor, Central Plaza Building, St. Xavier's High School Road, Shanti Park, Mira Road, Maharashtra-401107, is shifting to the new premises situated at Ground Floor and 1 st Floor, Skyline Co. op. Housing Society, Shanti Park, Near St. Xavier's High School Road, Mira Road(E), Maharashtra-401107 from Monday 24-02-2025.	
Customers and public in general are hereby requested to avail the banking services at the new premises from the above mentioned date.	
For any other details you may contact our branch on telephone nos. 8097060120.	
Place: Mumbai Date: 12-02-2025 Senior Manager, Mira Road Branch	

Tender Notice	
Vasantdada Patil Pratishthan's (VPP), Mumbai, invites sealed tenders in a Two-Bid system from eligible agencies/firms for leasing premises under a Lease and License agreement. The premises WITH CARPET AREA admeasuring 2227.37 sq.m. are on the Ground and First Floors of a new building under construction at CTS No. 126/1, Village Chembur, BSD, Mumbai-22.	
Tender documents are available at the Trust office at Vasantdada Patil Pratishthan's Educational Complex, Eastern Express Highway, Near Everard Nagar, Opposite Godrej Coliseum, Sion, Mumbai-400020 on all working days from 15.02.2025 to 20.02.2025, 5:00 pm. Submit sealed offers marked as "BID FOR LEAVE & LICENCE PREMISES" on or before 25.02.2025 up to 5:00 pm. The tenders will be opened on 26.02.2025 at 11:00 am. No Fax, Courier, or Email offers.	
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VIBRANT GROUP EXHIBITION BY NEURODIVERGENT ARTISTS



GALLERY
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WHEN: On till February 15, 2025

WHERE: Gallery FPH, Free Press

House, Nariman Point, Mumbai

Mobiles worth ₹9.45 L returned

The Navghar police recovered 55 lost or stolen mobile phones worth over Rs.9.45 lakh and returned them to their rightful owners. Alarmed by the rise in the number of complaints related to lost phones, senior police inspector Vijay Kadam under the instructions of DCP (Zone II) Pournima Chougule-Shringi deputed a special team to investigate the cases.

Alert CR workers awarded for spotting deadly rail fractures

Kamal Mishra
MUMBAI

immediately alerted the 'permanent way inspector' to get the problem rectified. Another employee, Deepak Kumar, an electric signal maintainer with

KIDNAP ALERT | Police continue to probe several unanswered questions regarding the high-voltage drama involving the politician's son

Mystery deepens over Tanaji Sawant's son's Bangkok trip

Staff Reporter

PUNE

A shroud of mystery prevails over what initially appeared to be a high-profile kidnapping case but later took an unexpected turn on Monday when it was revealed that Rishiraj Sawant (32), son of former Maharashtra minister and Eknath Shinde-led Shiv Sena's MLA Tanaji Sawant, had instead flown to Bangkok with friends.

The circumstances surrounding his sudden departure—and an anonymous call that sparked a police probe—raise several questions.

According to Joint Commissioner of Police Ranjan Kumar Sharma, Rishiraj and his friends had booked a chartered plane from Pune's Lohegaon airport for Bangkok on Monday at



4.30pm. However, an anonymous call to the police control room claimed Rishiraj had been kidnapped, triggering a swift response.

The police immediately registered a kidnapping case and tracked his whereabouts. His private aircraft had already reached the Andaman & Nicobar Islands when authorities intervened, redirecting it to Chennai before it finally landed back in Pune around 9 pm. Sharma informed the

"In this case, we had a case of kidnapping registered, accordingly, now after he arrived at Pune, we took detailed information about the incident from him. Since a case has been registered, they will be questioned," Sharma said.

Adding another layer to the intrigue, police sources revealed that Rishiraj had spent a staggering Rs78 lakh on his Bangkok trip.

Tanaji Sawant claimed the family was in the dark about his son's tour. "Rishiraj left without telling anyone. The driver said he went to the airport. We have no disputes, so why would he leave without informing us? I have no idea what prompted this decision," he said.

Probe continues

Investigators are now trying to determine why Rishiraj planned this trip so discreetly and whether there were any external pressures or undisclosed reasons behind his sudden departure.

"The investigation will reveal what were the reasons for Rishiraj to travel to Bangkok. Besides, why did he not tell his family about his visit? This information will come out after the investigation," Sharma added.

UNANSWERED QUESTIONS

- Was there any dispute between Tanaji Sawant and his son?
- How did the former minister manage to reroute the plane from Andaman & Nicobar to Chennai and then to PUNE?
- Did any Union minister assist in getting the plane rerouted?
- Why did Sawant file a kidnapping case when he knew his son was with friends?
- Why did the police act swiftly in this case, while cases involving ordinary citizens face delays?

SPPU worker seen polluting water

Staff Reporter

PUNE

Amid the rising cases of Guillain-Barré syndrome (GBS), a video of an employee contaminating drinking water has surfaced from Savitribai Phule Pune University (SPPU).

The employee was seen putting his feet into a drinking water cooler and drawing water to clean the floor.

This water from the same cooler is consumed by staff, students, and workers as well. The incident was reported at the Adarsh Canteen in SPPU.

Rahul Sasane, the state

president of the University Student Struggle Action Committee, complained that when the Health Department has ordered people to boil drinking water, worms and cockroaches are frequently found in the food prepared at the SPPU's canteen, mess and cafeteria.

Sasane said, "This matter is very serious, and suspension action should be taken against the concerned worker. The sanitation staff cannot touch the water cooler. The university has given the contract to clean and repair this cooler to a particular company."

2 in net for selling protected parrots

Indu Bhagat

PUNE

The Pune Forest Department, in coordination with the Customs Department, has taken strict action against the illegal sale of Alexandrine Parakeets, a protected species, leading to the arrest of two individuals involved in wildlife trafficking.

Acting on a tip-off, officials conducted an operation near Pune Railway Station on Feb 5 and nabbed an accused, identified as Sheikh Sarfaraz Sheikh Khadir. Further investigations led to the identification of another suspect, Sachin Sujit Rozoria, who was apprehended at Sangvi Phata on Feb 9. Upon confirmation of his involvement, he was arrested and presented before the Special Court in Shivajinagar, which granted a one-day remand.

On Monday, the Judicial Magistrate First Class (JMFC) Court in Pune remanded the accused to judicial custody until Feb 21. Following the court order, both individuals were transferred to Yerawada Central Prison.

The operation was conducted under the guidance of Assistant Conservator of



Forests Mangesh Tate and led by Forest Range Officer Suresh Barak. Several officials, including Wildlife Officer Vaibhav Babar, Pramod Raskar, and Forest Guards Kaluram Kad, Anil Rathod, Madhukar Godge, Okar Gund, Vinayak Tathe and Ramesh Shinde, played crucial roles in the crackdown.

A police official stated, "Following an investigation, the accused were found guilty under Sections 2, 39, 48(a), 49, 50, and 51 of the Wildlife (Protection) Act, 1972. A case was registered against them, and they were arrested."

The Pune Forest Department has urged the public to report any illegal wildlife trade or suspicious activities to help combat trafficking.

PTI

PUNE

A Pakistani currency note of Rs20 denomination has been found in a housing society in the Pimpri Chinchwad area of Maharashtra's Pune district, prompting police to launch a probe into the

matter, an official said.

The housing society is located in Bhukum area, 18 km from the National Defence Academy (NDA).

The Pakistani currency note was found outside a service lift in the housing society in Bhukum on Saturday, a police official

said on Monday.

"The office-bearers of the society later approached the police. A probe has been initiated and CCTV footage of the area is being checked," Pimpri Chinchwad police's Assistant Commissioner Vishal Hire said.

amounted to Rs4 lakh for eight proposals. However, later she agreed to Rs40,000 each for approval. She instructed the complainant to pay the amount to Marne. However, the complainant approached the ACB office. Acting on the tip, ACB officials laid a trap at the Shirur Sub-Divisional Office on Feb 10. Marne was caught red-handed while accepting Rs1.6 lakh as the first instalment for allocating plots to Temghar Dam-affected families.

According to police, the duo had demanded Rs4 lakh in total to approve land allocation proposals of eight individuals whose land was acquired for the construction of the Temghar Dam. Regarding the matter, a 39-year-old victim had informed the police. The victim had been allotted agricultural land and plots for

housing in Vitthalwadi, Shirur taluka, as compensation for his land loss. However, the proposal for land allocation for the rest of the family members was under the control of Badade.

As per the information, initially, Badade demanded Rs50,000 per proposal, which

Ex-MLA Tingre demands BRTS removal

Staff Reporter

PUNE

Nationalist Congress Party (NCP) leader and former Vadgaon Sheri MLA Sunil Tingre on Tuesday demanded the removal of Bus Rapid Transport System (BRTS) lanes on Nagar Road in Pune.

Taking to X (formerly Twitter), Tingre said he had been continuously demanding the removal of BRTS lanes, which are causing traffic congestion and frequent accidents in the city. "After raising my voice in the state legislature to remove the BRTS lanes and after the order of Deputy Chief Minister Ajit Pawar, the BRTS lane from Yerawada to Somnath Nagar Chowk was

successfully removed. However, the BRTS lane from Somnath Nagar Chowk to Kharadi is still in place. A series of accidents continues on it," he added.

Tingre said a major traffic jam occurred after a tanker entered the BRTS lane on Monday night. "Due to this, the citizens of Chandan Nagar, Kharadi and Vadgaon Sheri areas who were going to work

in the morning suffered," he added.

"The NCP demands that this partial and life-threatening BRTS lane be removed as soon as possible to prevent further accidents, traffic congestion, and the suffering of citizens. Otherwise, the municipal corporation and police administration should take note that a public movement will be launched against it," Tingre further said.

BRTS, a dedicated lane in the middle of the road for public transport buses, has failed to live up to its hype. Designed to alleviate traffic congestion and reduce conflict between buses and other vehicles, it has succeeded in neither. The Pune Municipal

PMPML to scrap 350, add 1,600 buses in '25

Ankit Shukla

PUNE

The Pune Mahanagar Parivahan Mahamandal Ltd (PMPML) administration has decided to scrap 350 buses this year in a phase-wise manner. The number of buses will decrease following the decision. However, authorities have assured that new buses will be purchased.

According to the Pune Municipal Corporation's (PMC) official plan, more than 3,500 buses are needed to service the city's population. However, PMPML currently has only 1,800 buses, which is insufficient for the city's passenger needs.

Speaking to The Free Press Journal, PMPML's Joint Managing Director Nitin Narvekar said, "The decision has been taken for the convenience of the passengers. We are planning to add 1,600 to 1,700 new buses to the PMPML fleet. Some of these buses will be leased while others will be self-owned."



PMPML stats

381	20,112
Bus routes	Scheduled rounds

Daily commuters: Around 13 lakh

Apni PMPML app downloads: More than 6 lakh

Daily revenue generation through the app: ₹20L

new buses so that passengers will not face inconvenience," he added. Meanwhile, Deputy Chief Minister Ajit Pawar has announced that the government will provide Rs500 crore to purchase 1,000 new CNG buses. Pune Metropolitan Region Development Authority (PMRDA) will provide Rs250 crore, PMC will provide Rs150 crore, and Pimpri-Chinchwad Municipal Corporation (PCMC) will provide Rs100 crore.

ACB nab two for accepting bribe

Ankit Shukla

PUNE

A head clerk in the Shirur Sub-Divisional Office in Pune and a middleman were caught red-handed on Monday by the Anti-Corruption Bureau (ACB) while accepting a bribe of Rs1.6 lakh as the first instalment for allocating plots to Temghar Dam-affected families.

According to police, the duo had demanded Rs4 lakh in total to approve land allocation proposals of eight individuals whose land was acquired for the construction of the Temghar Dam. Regarding the matter, a 39-year-old victim had informed the police. The victim had been allotted agricultural land and plots for

housing in Vitthalwadi, Shirur taluka, as compensation for his land loss. However, the proposal for land allocation for the rest of the family members was under the control of Badade. As per the information, initially, Badade demanded Rs50,000 per proposal, which

6 trekkers injured in bee attack

PTI

PUNE

Six friends from the Pune district on a trekking trip suffered injuries when a swarm of honey bees attacked them in the adjoining Satara district in western Maharashtra on Monday, police said.

The incident took place when they were trekking in the Pandavgad area of Wai taluka in the morning, they said. The trekkers were friends and hail from Indapur tehsil of Pune district, according to the police. "It is suspected the group members had applied a strong perfume which led to the attack by honey bees. Three of six trekkers suffered serious bee stings. All of them were rescued by a local trekking group and police, and admitted to a Wai-based hospital," said a police officer from the Wai police station.

All are stated to be out of danger, he added. Prashant Dongare, a member of the Shiv Sahyadri Trekking and Rescue Group, said on receiving information about the bee attack, they promptly reached the spot, brought the injured down from the hilly terrain and admitted them to hospital.

HSC exams start

Class 12 (HSC) students appeared satisfied when they exited their exam halls on Tuesday having completed their first board exam paper, English.

— Photo: Anand Chaitanya

Rs20 Pak currency note found

PTI

PUNE

A Pakistani currency note of Rs20 denomination has been found in a housing society in the Pimpri Chinchwad area of Maharashtra's Pune district, prompting police to launch a probe into the

matter, an official said.

"The office-bearers of the society later approached the police. A probe has been initiated and CCTV footage of the area is being checked," Pimpri Chinchwad police's Assistant Commissioner Vishal Hire said.

amounted to Rs4 lakh for eight proposals. However, later she agreed to Rs40,000 each for approval. She instructed the complainant to pay the amount to Marne. However, the complainant approached the ACB office. Acting on the tip, ACB officials laid a trap at the Shirur Sub-Divisional Office on Feb 10. Marne was caught red-handed while accepting Rs1.6 lakh as the first instalment for allocating plots to Temghar Dam-affected families.

The NCP demands that this partial and life-threatening BRTS lane be removed as soon as possible to prevent further accidents, traffic congestion, and the suffering of citizens. Otherwise, the municipal corporation and police administration should take note that a public movement will be launched against it," Tingre further said.

BRTS, a dedicated lane in the middle of the road for public transport buses, has failed to live up to its hype. Designed to alleviate traffic congestion and reduce conflict between buses and other vehicles, it has succeeded in neither. The Pune Municipal

Corporation (PMC) dismantled the BRTS lanes on Nagar Road and other locations to ease traffic flow.

However, in Pimpri Chinchwad, PCMC Commissioner Shekhar Singh said the BRTS lanes won't be dismantled. "There is no question of doing away with BRTS lanes. We will never remove them," the PCMC chief said. In fact, he said all efforts were being made to strengthen BRTS and the entire public transport system. "There should be more buses on the road, more routes, and fewer private vehicles. We should encourage public buses and discourage private vehicles from coming onto the roads," Singh added.

Signia launches its BestSound centre

Staff Reporter

PUNE

Signia, a leading brand under the WS Audiology group and a global innovator in hearing aid technology opened its newest BestSound Centre in Pune. This launch, in partnership with Aavii Hearing Solutions, marks another milestone in Signia's commitment to revolutionising hearing care in India.

This state-of-the-art BestSound Centre aims to address the growing need for advanced hearing solutions in Pune, a city known for its cultural richness and rapid development. Offering a comprehensive range of services, the centre provides cutting-edge hearing aid technologies, personalised audiological consultations and continuous support tailored to the unique needs of Pune's community.

The inauguration of the BestSound Centre in Pune

underscores our unwavering dedication to providing innovative hearing solutions across India. Hearing loss is the most common sensory deficit in humans today, yet there is a stigma surrounding it that we don't address enough. Untreated hearing loss has social, physical and psychological consequences. With this new store, we aim to provide an inclusive experience that challenges assumptions about hearing aids and empowers the people of Pune to take action," said Avinash Pawar, CEO and managing director, WS Audiology India.

Vishal Shah, CEO, Aavii Hearing Solutions, added, "Partnering with Signia is a proud moment for us. With over 14 years of expertise in audiology and speech therapy, our centre is dedicated to offering holistic diagnostic and rehabilitation services. This collaboration allows us to bring world-class hearing solutions to the people of Pune."

Maharashtra's first

MIT-ADT University receives SAI recognition

Staff Reporter

PUNE

MIT Art, Design & Technology (MIT-ADT) University has been granted recognition by the Sports Authority of India (SAI) as a Khelo India Residential Training Centre for rowing. This makes MIT-ADT the first university in the state to receive this prestigious SAI approval for the sport.

The university's sports complex has world-class facilities. The Dr Vishwanath

Karad MIT Sports Academy provides specialised training in rowing, boxing, and swimming under the guidance of national-level coaches. Consequently, the rowing academy under Khelo India will produce aspiring rowers in Pune and surrounding regions with a

Sikh delegation demands polling in Gurudwara**FPJ News Network**

NANDED

A delegation of the Sikh community has demanded to cancel the amended section 11 (government's power to appoint Gurudwara board chairman) of the Takh Sach-khand Shri Huzoor Avchala Sahib Act 1956 and conduct the election of the board democratically.

A memorandum in this regard has been submitted to Deputy Chief Minister Ek Nath Shinde recently. Shinde showed a positive response to the demand and assured the delegation that a positive decision would be taken in this regard soon.

Shinde was in Nanded recently on his thanks-giving tour when the delegation of the Sikh Community met him. In the memorandum, it is mentioned that sections 6 and 11 of the Gurudwara board were revised and the government got the power to appoint the chairman. Hence, the election of the chairman was not conducted for a long time.

The government, while amending the sections, had not taken the say of the local Sikh community into consideration.

MLA Hemant Patil, former pradhan of Gurudwara Laddusingh Mahajan, former secretary Bhogendrasingh Ghadisaj, Manpreet Singh Kunjivale, Gurmit Singh Mahajan, Balwant Singh Gadiwale, Interjeet Singh Sandhu, Gurcharan Singh Ghadisaj, Indarjeet Singh Gadganga, Jeet Singh Dukarnar, Sher Singh Tabewale, Mahendra Singh Langari, Narayan Singh Tabewale, Avtar Singh Pahredar, Jaspal Singh Siddh, Dilip Singh Ragi, Gurmeet Singh Dafedar, Rajendra Singh Damana, Kirpal Singh Hajuriya, Hardeep Singh Hajuriya and others were present.

EXAM HOURS | Strict prohibitory orders to remain in force until March 18**XII board examinations start****FPJ News Network**

CHHATRAPATI SAMBHAJINAGAR

The class 12 board examinations conducted by the Maharashtra State Board of Secondary and Higher Secondary Education (MSBSHSE) have started in the district on Tuesday. The district collector visited various exam centres in the morning and inspected the facilities available for the students. The class 12 board examinations will be conducted between Feb 12 and Mar 18. In all, 63,978 candidates appeared for the examination in 161 centres across the district.

In Chhatrapati Sambhajinagar rural, in all, 8,086 students will appear in 20 centres, Chhatrapati Sambhajinagar city – 14,255 students in 33 centres, Gangapur taluka – 6,400 students in 14 centres, Kannad – 6,012 students in 19 centres, Khuldabad – 4,625 students in 12 centres, Paithan – 5,802 students in 16 centres, Sillod – 6,053 students in 17



centres, Soyegaon – 3,114 students in 8 centres, Vaijapur – 5,301 students in 11 centres and Phulambri – 4,330 students in 11 centres.

District Collector Dilip Swami visited Deogiri College

and other centres in the morning. In Deogiri College, 2,800 students appeared for the examination. He inspected the facilities including the security, facilities for keeping the bags of the students,

drinking water and sitting arrangements. He reviewed the police deployment situation outside the centre and issued directives to the centre chief, invigilators and other officers. Meanwhile, prohibitory

orders have been imposed around the exam centre area covering the ambit of 100 metres during the examination period. Accordingly, none, except the examinee students, or officers appointed for conducting the examinations, can enter the 100-metre radius of the centres during the examination hours. Five or more persons are prohibited from gathering. The photocopy shops, public telephone booths, fax centres, mobile, wireless sets, transistors, radio, calculators, laptops, etc, have been banned in the 100-metre periphery of the centres during the exams. The prohibitory order will remain in force until Mar 18.

Flying squads, including class one officers, have been established to keep a watch on the exam activities. Each squad will have four members, including one woman. Similarly, each centre will have a stationary team including a woman.

Work with positive approach: Minister Sanjay Shirsat to officers**FPJ News Network**

CHHATRAPATI SAMBHAJINAGAR



"The district is getting huge industrial investment and the new industries should be given ample facilities by the administration. Hence, the officers should work with a positive approach," Maharashtra's Social Justice and district's Guardian Minister Sanjay Shirsat advised officers. He was addressing the review meeting of all the administrative machinery held at the Smart City office on Monday. District Collector Dilip Swami, Municipal Commissioner G Sankanth, ZP CEO Vikas Meena, Smart City CEO Jagdish Miniyar, CP Praeven Pawar, SP Vijaykumar Ra-

thod, Resident Deputy District Collector Vinod Kholkar, District Planning Officer Bharat Wayal, Rural Development Project Director Ashok Sirse and other officers were present.

Shirsat reviewed work related to the minor minerals, Matoshri Panad Raste Yojana, land measurement in the juris-

diction of the municipal corporation, ZP projects, progress of the work of ZP building, employment guarantee scheme, Swach Bharat Mission, health schemes and police schemes.

Shirsat praised the police department for rescuing a boy from kidnappers within a few hours in the city a few days

back. He directed that the revenue officers should take the help of the police while executing any action against the sand mafia.

A Jan-Samvad Yatra will be started in each taluka in the district soon, for which the administration should make proper planning. The officers, if facing any problems while working should inform the concerned authority about it immediately.

The administration should make all the facilities available for working in the offices and fields. The officers should look that the public beneficiary works should be completed in the stipulated time frame, he directed.

The police have arrested the thieves of an inter-state gang, who used to tamper with ATMs and withdraw money from them. The thieves were traced due to the alertness of a 20-year-old youth, who had gone to withdraw money from the ATM.

A case has been registered against the accused with the City Chowk police.

The arrested have been identified as Sanjay Shivavtar Sahu (19) and Aman Singh Ramakant Singh Thakur (20), both residents of Uttar Pradesh, while their accomplice Pintu managed to escape, the police said.

January end, with arrears of Rs59.39 crore in the Chhatrapati Sambhajinagar urban circle and Rs59.58 crore in the rural circle.

He said apart from this, outstanding bills of Rs12.5 crore were recorded in the neighbouring Jalna circle, which is also a part of the zone.

The official said as part of the crackdown against defaulters, power supply was disconnected temporarily to 7,655 consumers in the Chhatrapati Sambhajinagar zone for the last 45 days.

The official said dues stood at more than Rs231 crore as of

Mob thrash burglars**FPJ News Network**

CHHATRAPATI SAMBHAJINAGAR

spot and took the accused into custody. The incident occurred on Sunday night.

According to the complainant Fajjan Shah Salim Shah (22), a resident of Saeeda Colony, his mother called him and informed him that two persons had entered their house wearing burqa. Knowing this, he immediately rushed home on his motorcycle. He found two men fleeing on a motorcycle. The nearby residents nabbed them and reportedly thrashed them. The mob started beating them severely, suspecting the duo as members of a gang stealing children in the locality. On receiving the information, a police team rushed to the

nashik**JALGAON | The district performs well; utilised 100% of allocated funds within deadlines in the past five years****Ajit Pawar assures 'D Plus' zone for Industrial Area****Vijay Pathak**

JALGAON

Deputy Chief Minister and Finance Minister Ajit Pawar has assured support for granting Jalgaon's industrial estate 'D Plus' zone status, a move that would provide businesses in the district with additional incentives. The demand was raised by Guardian Minister Gulabrao Patil during the state-level meeting of the District Annual Plan 2025-26, citing the lack of concessions available to industries in the existing 'D-zone'.

Pawar also indicated that efforts would be made to increase Jalgaon's district allocation beyond the sanctioned Rs574.59 crore after discussions with Chief Minister Devendra Fadnavis. He stated that the funds had been distributed after assessing all districts, but an increase for Jalgaon would be considered.



Jalgaon has consistently utilised 100% of its allocated funds within deadlines over the past five years and leads the state in development expenditure. However, its per capita funding remains below the state average. Given this, Pawar assured that the demand for an additional Rs200

crore would be reviewed.

Guardian Minister Patil also

sought Rs150 crore for the "Guardian Minister Public Facility Development Programme" and requested an increase in police vehicle procurement within the Finance Department's set limits. Water Resources Minister Girish Ma-

hajan supported the call for additional funds.

Another key demand discussed was the long-pending proposal to expand the municipal boundaries of Jalgaon and Bhusawal, which both Patil and district officials urged the government to approve. Pawar expressed support for the proposal and acknowledged its importance for the region's growth.

District Collector Ayush Prasad presented the annual plan, detailing completed and ongoing projects. He highlighted key provisions for health, public infrastructure, and citizen-centric administration, while also presenting an evaluation of existing schemes and their social impact.

Pawar praised Prasad's approach, commending the district's innovative and practical development initiatives.

NMC to crack whip for tax**Staff Reporter**

NASHIK

The Abhay Scheme for house tax arrears, implemented by the Nashik Municipal Corporation (NMC) over the past four months, ended on Jan 31. However, despite the initiative, a large amount of arrears remains unpaid. As a result, the municipal administration has decided to launch a strict recovery campaign before the end of March, including the issuance of direct notices and seizure actions against defaulters.

The property tax arrears of NMC have continued to rise sharply, now reaching approximately Rs600 crore. The Rs600 crore in arrears includes penalties, and while the property tax recovery target for the current financial year was set at Rs255 crore, only Rs210 crore has been collected so far. The Abhay Scheme helped push collections past Rs200 crore, but the department now faces the challenge of recovering the remaining Rs45 crore by the end of March. Consequently, warrants are being issued and delivered to defaulters' residences.

The district administration

Staff Reporter

NASHIK

The Maharashtra State Board's HSC exams kicked off on Tuesday, with 78,123 students from the Nashik district taking the first paper. A palpable sense of anticipation and a bit of last-minute scramble marked the start of the exams as students hurried to locate their designated exam centres and seating arrangements. Across 125 centres, students poured in, many arriving well in advance of the scheduled time, while others dashed to ensure they weren't late.

The district administration

HSC examinations start amid student hustle

Pics: Tejal Ghorpade



has implemented stringent measures to prevent cheating, including the threat of permanent cancellation for any centre found allowing malpractice. Flying squads will conduct surprise inspections to maintain the integrity of the examination process.

An awareness campaign previously run by the education department served as a reminder to students and schools to avoid any unfair practices.

The student distribution across streams in Nashik is as follows: Science (40,528 students), Arts (24,179 students), Commerce (11,815 students), Vocational (1,512 students), and

Technical Science (89 students). This year, nine new centres have been added, bringing the total to 125, spread across 478 colleges. Security has also been bolstered with the deployment of 27 security guards.

The exams will continue until Mar 18. Authorities have urged students to focus on their studies and refrain from any attempts at cheating, warning that strict action will be taken against those found indulging in unfair practices.

The student distribution across streams in Nashik is as follows: Science (40,528 students), Arts (24,179 students), Commerce (11,815 students), Vocational (1,512 students), and

DC interacts with teachers on ASER**Vijay Pathak**

JALGAON

District Collector Ayush Prasad has urged teachers to focus on self-analysis and capacity-building to improve the quality of education in Jalgaon. Addressing a workshop on educational quality development, he stressed the need for teachers to work proactively to elevate the district's ranking, as the latest ASER report has highlighted its lagging educational performance.

Speaking at a two-hour interactive session with around 500 teachers at GH Raisoni College, Prasad emphasised that quality education can only be achieved if teachers adapt



their teaching methods based on students' needs. He also called for dedicated efforts to bring Jalgaon into the state's top districts in education. He provided specific recom-

mendations for mathematics and language instruction. For mathematics, he advised a structured five-step approach: number recognition, mathematical operations, question

classification, verification, and practice. For language learning, he suggested progressing through letter recognition, word reading, sentence reading, discussion, and communication exercises.

Chief Executive Officer Ankit, DET principal Anil Zope, Secondary Education Officer Kalpana Chavan, and Primary Education Officer Vikas Patil were also present at the workshop, along with several educationists.

Prasad reiterated that teachers play a pivotal role in shaping students' futures and that "teaching with dedication and personal involvement will drive Jalgaon towards educational excellence."

The matter began when a fake administrative approval

letter was circulated on social media concerning a government-funded project. Based on this letter, Dindori MP Bhaskar Bhagre wrote to the Executive Engineers of Construction 3 on Dec 2, 2024, directing them to initiate the tender process.

Following this, the Deputy Engineers of Niphad submitted the work estimate to the Executive Engineers, and the tender process moved forward. The file passed through multiple desks, including those of the Chief Accounts and Finance Officer (five tables), Construction 3 (four tables), and the General Administration Department (four tables). However, upon

further scrutiny, the Office of Construction 3 sought guidance from the District Collector's Office due to doubts regarding the administrative approval.

Subsequently, it was revealed that the administrative approval was forged. The Tourism Department clarified on Jan 22, and the District Collector's Office confirmed on Jan 23, that the letter was invalid and no action should be taken. As a result, the tender process was cancelled.

Despite this revelation, the District Council administration suspended employees from the Construction 3 department, leading to widespread criticism and shock among officials.

Selective action: Notice to six, action against two

The administration initially issued show cause notices to six employees, who responded with detailed explanations. However, despite the technical branch reporting the matter to the Collector's Office and the Ministry, only two employees faced disciplinary action. Allegations have surfaced that these employees were sacrificed to protect higher officials.

Senior officials and political figures believe this controversy is rooted in internal disputes within the Nashik Zilla Parishad.

**SMFG INDIA CREDIT COMPANY LIMITED
(Formerly Fullerton India Credit Company Limited)**

Corporate Office: 10th Floor, Office No. 101,102 & 103, 2 North Avenue, Malabar Kunja Complex, Bandra (E), Mumbai - 400051
SALE NOTICE FOR SALE OF IMMOVABLE PROPERTIES
E-Auction Sale Notice of 15 days for Sale of Immovable Asset(s) under the Securitisation and Reconstruction of Financial Assets and Enforcement of Security Interest Act, 2002 read with proviso to rule 8 and of the Security Interest (Enforcement) Rules, 2002. Notice is hereby given to the public in general and in particular to the Borrower(s) and Guarantor(s) that the below described immovable properties mortgaged/charged to the Secured Creditor, the possession of which has been taken by the Authorised Officer of SMFG India Credit Company Limited (Formerly Fullerton India Credit Company Limited) ("SMFG India Credit"), will be sold on "As is where it is", "As is what it is", and "Whatever there is" on the date and time mentioned herein below, for recovery of the dues mentioned herein below and further interest and other expenses thereon till the date of realization, due to SMFG India Credit /Secured Creditor from the Borrowers and Guarantor(s) mentioned herein below. The reserve price, Earnest Money Deposit (EMD) and last date of EMD deposit is also mentioned herein below:

Borrower(s) / Guarantor(s) / LAN Account	Demand Notice Date, Amount & Type of Possession	Reserve Price, EMD & Last Date of Submission of EMD	Date and time of E-Auction
1. PAWAN SHAILENDRA DUBEY 2. MEERA DUBEY	6th August, 2024, Rs. 42,49,949/- [Rupees Forty-Two Lakhs Forty-Nine Thousand Nine Hundred Forty-Nine Only] due on 5th November, 2024. PHYSICAL POSSESSION	Reserve Price: Rs. 48,60,000/- (Rupees Forty-Eight Lakhs Sixty Thousand Only) EMD: Rs. 4,86,000/- (Rupees Four Lakhs Eighty-Six Thousand Only)	Date: 04.03.2025 Time: 11:00 am to 01:00 pm (with unlimited extensions of 5 minute each)
		Last date of EMD Deposit: 03.03.2025	

Description of the Immovable property : Owner: - Pawan Shailendra Dubey & Meera Dubey. Property Description:- All That Piece And Parcel Of Residential Flat No.604, On The 6th Floor Wing "A" Admeasuring 703 Sq.Fts. Carpet Area, In The Building Known As "Ekhnath Enclave". Standing And Constructed On A Piece And Parcel Of Land Converted Into Non-Agricultural Use Assessment Bearing Survey No. 5, Hissa No. 2 Situated At Tisqaon, Within The Limits Of The Kalyan Dombivali Municipal Corporation, Kalyan And Sub Registration District Kalyan And Registration District Thane And Bounded As Follows:- East: Shantah Colony, West: Kashish Darshan, South: Chwah & North: Road

For detailed terms and conditions of the sale, please contact 1) Francis Rozario: 8655424523, 2) Mr. Amol Sambhus +91 99798 89076 & 3) Mr. Milind Masurkar: +91970251435 - refer to the link provided in SMFG India Credit /Secured Creditor's website i.e. www.smfgindia.com.

SD/-, Authorised Officer-
Date: 12/02/2025. Place: Mumbai
SMFG India Credit Company Limited (Formerly Fullerton India Credit Company Limited)

**Government Of Goa
PUBLIC WORKS DEPARTMENT
DIVISION VIII (BLDG-SOUTH), FATORDA,
MARGAO-GOA**

E-TENDER NOTICE No.: PWD/DIV.8(B.S)/ASW/2001/
30/2024-2025 Dated : 11-02-2025
(E-TENDER & E-PAYMENT MODE ONLY)

1 Last date of online submission of tender - 25/02/2025 upto 11.00 A.M.
2 Opening of online Tenders - 28/02/2025 after 10.00 A.M.
For more details please contact Office of The Executive Engineer, Works Division VIII (Bldgs-South), PWD, Fatorda, Margao - Goa.
Website : <https://eprocure.goa.gov.in>
DI/ADVT/1948/2025

**सेन्ट बैंक होम फायनेंस लिमिटेड
Cent Bank Home Finance Limited**

सेन्ट बैंक होम फायनेंस लिमिटेड
Subsidiary of Central Bank of India

**APPENDIX IV
[Rule 8(1)]
(POSSESSION NOTICE)
For immovable property**
Whereas, The undersigned being the authorized officer of the CENT BANK HOME FINANCE LTD., Nashik Branch, Under the Securitisation and Reconstruction of Financial Assets and Enforcement of Security Interest Act, 2002 and in exercise of powers conferred under section 13(12) read with rule 3 of the Security Interest (Enforcement) Rule 3, 2002 issued demand notice Upon the Borrowers/ guarantors mentioned below to repay the amount to CENT BANK HOME FINANCE LTD., Nashik within 60 days from the date of receipt of the said notice. The Borrowers having failed to repay the amount, notice is hereby given to the borrower and the public in general that undersigned has taken possession of the property described herein below in exercise of powers conferred on me under section 13(4) of the said Act read with rule 8 of the said rules on the date mentioned against the account. The borrowers/ guarantors in particular and the public in general is hereby cautioned not to deal with the property and any dealing with the property will be subject to the charge of the CENT BANK HOME FINANCE LTD., Nashik for the amount and interest thereon w.e.f. NPA Date Given Below

Name & of the Borrower, Co-Borrower, Guarantor & LAN No.	Description of the Property	Date of NPA Demand Notice Possession	Amount in Demand Notice (₹)
Mr. Yogesh Bandu Devkar & Mrs. Sangita Kashinath Padol Alias Mrs. Sangita Yogesh Devkar LAN : 0140401000024	Flat No. 6, 1st Floor, "Sai Pride", Plot No. 23 & 24, S.No. 9251/1+2+2A+2B+2C, Dwarka Nagar, Near Water Tank, Saradwadi Road, Simar Shivir, Nashik-422113. Area of property- Carpet Area- 553.00 Sq. Ft. (51.39 Sq.Mtrs) Boundaries- East- Plot No. 30 & 31, West- Flat No. 4 & 8, North- Flat No. 5, South- Plot No. 25.	08.11.2024 25.11.2024 06.02.2025 * Interest & Expenses & All other charges. (Symbolic)	19,11,926/-

Place : Nashik, Date: 11.02.2025
Authorized Officer, Cent Bank Home Finance Ltd., Nashik
Branch : Office No. F-10, 1st Floor, Suyojit Sankul, Near Rajiv Gandhi Bhawan, Near Tilakwadi Signal, Tilakwadi, Sharapur Road, Nashik- 422002, Ph. No. 0253-6649224, 8149094047, website: www.cbhfl.com

NYKAA

FSN E-COMMERCE VENTURES LIMITED

CIN: L52600MH2012PLC230136

Regd. Office: 104, Vasan Udyog Bhavan, Sun Mill compound, Tulsi Pipe Road, Lower Parel, Mumbai - 400013. Email ID: investor-relation@nykaa.com

**EXTRACT OF CONSOLIDATED UNAUDITED FINANCIAL RESULTS
FOR THE QUARTER AND NINE MONTHS ENDED DECEMBER 31, 2024**

Sr. No.	Particulars	Quarter ended			Nine months ended			Year ended	
		December 31, 2024 (Unaudited)	September 30, 2024 (Unaudited)	December 31, 2023 (Unaudited)	December 31, 2024 (Unaudited)	December 31, 2023 (Unaudited)	March 31, 2024 (Audited)		
1	Total Income	2,272.74	1,880.19	1,796.38	5,906.37	4,740.53	6,415.56		
2	Profit before tax	44.56	21.26	26.49	87.90	49.47	69.02		
3	Profit after tax	26.97	13.44	18.23	54.65	33.98	43.71		
4	Share in loss of associate	(0.56)	(0.47)	(0.78)	(1.63)	(3.30)	(3.97)		
5	Profit for the period	26.41	12.97	17.45	53.02	30.68	39.74		
6	Total Comprehensive Income	26.28	10.95	17.41	50.87	30.34	40.18		
7	Paid-up equity share capital Face value (In ₹)	1.00	1.00	1.00	1.00	1.00	1.00		
8	Other Equity as shown in the Audited Balance sheet of previous year							976.63	
9	Earnings per equity share of face value of ₹ 1/- each (not annualised)								
	Basic (In ₹)	0.09	0.04	0.06	0.16	0.09	0.11		
	Diluted (In ₹)	0.09	0.04	0.06	0.16	0.09	0.11		

Notes:

1 The above is an extract of the detailed format of financial results filed with the Stock Exchanges under Regulation 33 of the SEBI (Listing Obligations and Disclosure Requirements) Regulations, 2015. The full format of the financial results are available on the Stock Exchange websites (www.bseindia.com and www.nseindia.com) and on Company's website (www.nykaa.com).

2 Financial results of FSN E-Commerce Ventures Limited (standalone):

Sr. No.	Particulars	Quarter ended			Nine months ended			Year ended	
		December 31, 2024 (Unaudited)	September 30, 2024 (Unaudited)	December 31, 2023 (Unaudited)*	December 31, 2024 (Unaudited)	December 31, 2023 (Unaudited)*	March 31, 2024 (Audited)*		
1	Total Income	160.15	149.22	125.31	451.37	333.31	497.16		
2	Profit before tax	31.48	21.79	23.04	77.17	40.96	93.92		
3	Profit after tax	24.46	16.16	18.84	82.80	34.69	121.02		

* Restated (Refer Note 2 of the Standalone Financial Results)

3 The above financial results have been reviewed and recommended by the Audit Committee and have been approved and taken on record by the Board of Directors at its meeting held on February 10, 2025.

4 The review as required under Regulation 33 of the SEBI (Listing Obligations and Disclosure Requirements) Regulations, 2015 has been completed by the statutory auditors of the company for the quarter and nine months ended December 31, 2024.

5 The above is an extract of the detailed format of financial results filed with the Stock Exchanges under Regulation 33 of SEBI (Listing Obligations and Disclosure Requirements) Regulations, 2015. The full format of the quarter and nine months ended December 31, 2024 are available on the Company's website at [https://www.nykaa.com/media/wysiwyg/2025/IR/Outcome-of-Board-Meeting-on-Financial-Results-Q3-FY25.pdf](http://www.nykaa.com/media/wysiwyg/2025/IR/Outcome-of-Board-Meeting-on-Financial-Results-Q3-FY25.pdf) as well as on the Website of the National Stock Exchange of India Limited and BSE Limited at www.nseindia.com and www.bseindia.com. The same can be accessed by scanning the QR code provided below.

For and on Behalf of Board of Directors of
FSN E-Commerce Ventures Limited

Falguni Nayak

Executive Chairperson, CEO and Managing Director

Adfactors 620/25



Place: Mumbai

Date: February 10, 2025

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TRIBHOVANDAS BHIMJI ZAVERI
SHRIKANT ZAVERI GROUP

(₹ In Lakhs)

Sr. No.	Particulars	Standalone						Consolidated					
Quarter ended			Nine Months Ended		Year ended	Quarter ended			Nine Months Ended		Year ended		
31-Dec-24	30-Sep-24	31-Dec-23	31-Dec-24	31-Dec-23	31-Mar-24	31-Dec-24	30-Sep-24	31-Dec-23					

Briefs

NEW DELHI SEBI allows brokers to participate in govt securities market

Sebi on Tuesday permitted registered stock brokers to access the negotiated dealing system-order matching platform for trading in government securities under a separate business unit. The move came after the Reserve Bank of India (RBI) in a notification on February 7, permitted access of Sebi-registered non-bank brokers to access the Negotiated Dealing System-Order Matching (NDS-OM). "In order to facilitate Sebi-registered stock brokers to participate in Government Securities (G-Secs) market in the NDS-OM, it has been decided that they may do so under a Separate Business Unit (SBU) of the stock broking entity itself," the regulator said in a circular.

Meanwhile, Wadia group firm National Peroxide on Tuesday settled with Sebi a case pertaining to the alleged violation of disclosure lapses after paying Rs 9.4 lakh in settlement amount.

NEW DELHI 'US sanctions not to hit India oil trade'

A new wave of US sanctions against the Russian oil sector is unlikely to impact the Kremlin's oil trade with India, Russia's First Deputy Energy Minister Pavel Sorokin said, terming the sanctions as "illegal". Last month, the US slapped new sanctions against Russia's energy trade. The sanctions targeted Russian oil producers Gazprom Neft and Surgutneftegas as well as 183 vessels that have shipped Russian oil.

MUMBAI Ad revenue growth to slow down in 2025

Ad revenue growth is estimated to slow down to 7 per cent in 2025 from the 8.8 per cent attained in 2024, a leading media agency said on Tuesday. WPP entity GroupM pegged the Indian advertising revenues across all media formats to grow at 7 per cent to Rs 1,64,137 crore in 2025, from Rs 1,53,407 crore in 2024. India will be the ninth biggest advertising market globally in a list that has the US, China, and the UK as the top-three countries.

NEW DELHI Govt to focus on 20 nations, certain sectors to boost exports

The government has identified 20 countries such as Australia, Brazil, China, and France, and six focus sectors each in commodities and services to further increase India's exports, Parliament was informed on Tuesday. In a written reply to the Lok Sabha, Minister of State for Commerce and Industry Jitin Prasada said a meeting with the officers of the commercial wings of Indian Missions in these 20 countries was organised last month to enhance exports.

NEW DELHI Deal activity off to a strong start in 2025

India's deal activity started the year on a strong note with 217 agreements worth \$9 billion in January, a report showed on Tuesday. M&A and PE deals witnessed a 19 per cent increase in volumes over December 2024, according to Grant Thornton Bharat Dealtracker.

Investors' wealth erodes by ₹9L cr on FII selling, trade tariff worries

Sensex plummets 1,018 points, Nifty loses 309 points

FPJ News Service

MUMBAI

- Investors become poorer by ₹16.97 lakh cr in 5 days
- RBI's rate cut failed to boost market sentiment
- Domestic economic growth concerns, persistent selling by FIIs dampen market sentiment
- Ongoing uncertainty surrounding US trade policies
- Banks cannot reduce rates on existing deposits as they have to pay contact rate of interest till the maturity. Rate cut on deposits is applicable only for fresh deposits or on renewal of existing deposits when they mature.
- The year-end for banks are fast approaching and they are tied up with balance sheet concerns

they lost Rs 9 lakh crore.

Reflecting the bearish trend, the BSE Sensex plummeted 1,018.20 points or 1.32 per cent to close at 76,293.60. During the day, it lost 1,281.21 points or 1.65 per cent to 76,030.59.

The NSE Nifty fell 309.80 points to 23,071.80 with 44 of its constituents closing lower and six with gains. Realty, industrials, consumer discretionary and capital goods sector shares were major losers as the US confirmed fresh 25 per cent

duties on all steel and aluminium imports. It is encouraging that the European Union leaders have vowed a 'firm' response to US tariffs, cooling fears of trade war.

The significant trend in the ongoing bearish phase of the market is the outperformance of largecaps over the broader market. This outperformance is likely to continue and the relentless selling by FIIs in large-caps has made their valuations fair while the valuations

of mid and small-caps continue to be excessive. FIIs will certainly turn buyers in India; but that will happen only when the dollar index turns weak. We know that it will happen, but don't know when. What investors have to do now is to buy quality large-caps in banking, IT, autos, pharma and capital goods and wait patiently.

"When FIIs turn buyers in India, which is inevitable, they will be buying the large-caps which they are selling now. For investors with patience, this is a good opportunity. Trump's latest decision to impose 25% tariffs on steel and aluminium will impact countries like Mexico, Brazil, South Korea and Vietnam more. Metal prices will remain soft for long," Dr. V K Vijayakumar, chief investment strategist, Geojit Financial Services said.

"The ongoing uncertainty surrounding US trade policies and tariffs, coupled with domestic economic growth concerns and persistent selling by FIIs, is dampening market sentiment. The mid- and small-cap stocks experienced significant declines due to demand concerns and higher valuations. Although the RBI's intervention provided some recovery for the rupee from yesterday's record low, it remains under pressure and is likely to keep the market volatile in the near term. Investors are anticipating the PM's visit to the US for any potential relief in trade uncertainty, while the US inflation data later on Tuesday was also a key focus," according to Vinod Nair, Head of Research at Geojit Financial Services.

R. Madhusoodanan, former SBI official and senior financial market expert said, "It's true that the RBI's 25 bps cut in the repo rate for the first time in nearly five years did not create the expected impact on stock market sentiments. When the cost of borrowing of banks comes down, ideally the benefit should go to the customers.

► **Continued on | P12**

Govt using almost entire borrowings in FY'26 towards capex: Sitharaman

PTI

NEW DELHI



The government is using almost the entire borrowing in 2025-26 towards financing capital expenditure, Finance Minister Nirmala Sitharaman said on Tuesday.

She said the effective capital expenditure in FY'26 is Rs 15.48 lakh crore, which is 4.3 per cent of GDP.

The fiscal deficit target is 4.4 per cent of the GDP for next fiscal. "It indicates that the government is using almost the entire borrowed resources for financing effective capital expenditure. So the borrowings are not going for revenue expenditure or committed expenditure, or any of those kinds.

"It's going only for creating capital assets. So, in effect, the government intends to use about 99 per cent of borrowed

sources to finance effective capital expenditure in the upcoming year," she said in the Lok Sabha.

Replying to a discussion on General Budget 2025-26, Sitharaman said the Budget has come in a time of immense uncertainties, changes in the global macro-economic environment, stagnating global growth and sticky inflation.

Sitharaman said inflation trend, particularly food, appears to be moderating.

On the weakening of rupee against US dollar, the minister said various global and domestic factors are influencing the value of rupee against the US dollar.

'GDP growth witnessing speedy rebound'

Finance Minister Nirmala Sitharaman on Tuesday said that the Indian economy is seeing a "speedy rebound" from 5.4 per cent growth clocked in the second quarter of the current fiscal, and the government shall take measures to ensure that India remains the world's fastest-growing economy.

Speaking about GDP growth, Sitharaman said in the three years prior to 2024-25, the country's GDP growth rate averaged about 8 per cent.

The Indian economy is projected to grow at 6.4 per cent in the current fiscal -- the lowest pace in four years.

FM dispels concern of rise in GST rate, says there is not even one such item

PTI

NEW DELHI



Finance Minister Nirmala Sitharaman on Tuesday dispelled concerns over a rise in Goods and Services Tax (GST), saying that there is not even one item on which the rate has been increased after the implementation of GST regime.

Intervening during Question Hour in Rajya Sabha, Sitharaman stated that GST rates have been brought down and the average GST rate has come down to 11.3 per cent from 15.8 per cent (at the time of GST implementation).

"That is the level of rate of reduction in the GST Council. Therefore I appeal to all the members here, kindly spare some time, meet your respective finance ministers in the states as to what kind of work

is going," she said.

She also explained that in the GST Council, finance ministers from state governments sit together and take a call.

"To the credit of every finance minister in the GST Council, I must say that they have gone into detail item by item to see where rate reduction can happen. Every finance minister from every state is doing his best so that GST can become simpler," she said.

She pointed out that if the GST Council has taken a bit longer than what all of us would decide, it is because work is going on there.

Digitisation does not mean deregulation: CEA



There is a "misconception" among the administration around deregulation, wherein digitisation is confused with deregulation, Chief Economic Advisor V Anantha Nageswaran said on Tuesday.

Speaking at an event organised by alternative investment industry's lobby grouping IVCA here, Nageswaran stressed that what is essential is to do away with needless regulations, whether they are to be complied with online or offline.

"There is a misconception

that the moment a government department across the country...they put something on the digital platform, they think it is deregulation. But that is not deregulation, you just made it online rather than offline," Nageswaran said.

"Digitisation per se is not deregulation," the CEA, whose Economic Survey presented recently focused on the need to deregulate to help expand GDP growth, added.

Any country which has attained developed status has to look at small businesses and unclogging challenges like regulations which can help ensure that such enterprises do not waste bandwidth on compliance.

India has to depend on domestic economy to drive much of the growth going forward, the academic-turned-policymaker said, explaining that globalisation is not expected to deliver gains the same way it did in the past.

"There is a misconception

India opens biggest oil, gas block bid round

PTI

NEW DELHI

Creditors recover ₹3.58L cr through resolution plans under insolvency law

PTI

NEW DELHI

India on Tuesday opened its largest oil and gas bid round, offering 25 blocks covering 1.91 lakh square kilometers mostly in offshore area, as the government looks to boost domestic production to cut imports and help energy security.

Petroleum

Minister Hardeep Singh Puri launched the 10th bid round under the Open Acreage Licensing Policy (OALP) at the India Energy Week (IEW) here.

OALP-X round will feature

25 blocks spread over 1.91,986

square kilometers in 13 sedimentary basins. 13 of the blocks are in the offshore area.

In the previous nine rounds,

3.78 lakh sq km area was

offered.

The last bid round, OALP-

IX, was the largest before the

current bid round.

"As per information provided by Insolvency and Bankruptcy Board of India, till 31st December 2024, 1,119 cases have yielded resolution plans. In these cases, the realisable value for the creditors has been Rs 3.58 lakh crore," he said in a written reply.

Final reports have been submitted in 1,274 cases, in which the creditors have realised Rs 0.13 lakh crore, the minister added. According to him, information in respect of amount waived/ forgone in pursuance to the settlement is not maintained.

"Realisation under the Insolvency and Bankruptcy Code (IBC) process is market driven and is inter-alia dependent on the quality of assets at the time of resolution.

Therefore no cap on resolution amount is envisaged.

"Further, data related to realisation by banks under the IBC process is not maintained," Malhotra said.

At the time of suspension of trading in the scrip, i.e., on December 30, 2013, the share price of the company was Rs 15 per share. Accordingly, the shares transferred in off-market to the NRI were worth not less than Rs 154.32 crore calculated at the last available share price of Rs 15. Shockingly, it was noted that the aforesaid off-market transfer took place only at Rs 75 (then US\$1) as per the share transfer agreement provided by NSDL.

Further, it was also noted that on September 27, 2024 when share price of LSIL touched a high of Rs 267.50, the shares of the NRI that were purchased for US\$1 were worth Rs 2,752 (or 10,28,62,050/ Rs 267.50 per share) or US\$328.60 million (US\$-INR conversion rate 83.75).

The company also consistently reported losses, except for the quarter December 2024, wherein the company reported a profit, on account of 'other income'. Further, it was also observed that as against negligible revenues reported by LSIL, its balance sheet comprised of huge amounts of trade receivables, its debtor days increased from 118 days in FY11 to 58,416 days in FY24 and its cash from operating activities was either NIL or negative from FY16 to FY24. However, despite such poor health of the financials of LSIL, its market capitalisation peaked to Rs 22,700 crore on September 27, 2024, highlighting the stark disconnect between the market capitalization and the fundamentals of the company. As the financials of LSIL did not seem to explain the dramatic rise in the scrip price, corporate announcements made by LSIL were also analysed by the regulator during the period from July 23, 2024 to February 04, 2025.

In its announcement, the company had claimed that it would be venturing into 'AI Tech' industry and approval for change of name of the company as 'AI Tech Limited' on October 7, 2024. The trading pattern of the entities involved was found to be suspicious as they placed daily buy orders at 09:00:00 am at upper circuit limits, when there were no sell orders in the scrip which resulted in increase of share price. The regulator analysed the bank statements of JPP and observed that soon after selling his shares, he remitted following funds to Dubai.

Individuals, institutions involved in price rigging under SEBI's microscope

Regulator bans LSIL, promoter, 4 others from securities markets

Palazhi Ashok Kumar

MUMBAI

The Securities and Exchange Board of India (SEBI) is expected to unearth new bad surprises soon as its ongoing investigations focus on fraudulent activities, misleading corporate announcements, and stock price manipulation such as price rigging.

Reliable sources on condition of anonymity on Tuesday said the market regulator has reportedly launched an investigation into several individuals, listed companies, promoters, market intermediaries, new influencers, and other institutions on unlawful gains, involving a 'strategic modes operandi', principally by artificially inflating share prices despite negligible revenues and poor financial conditions. Investigations have also been launched into the operations of many private groups as part of the regulator's ongoing examination and surveillance procedures.

- LSIL and its promoter devised a scheme in which the former director transferred a 12.12% stake (nominally valued at ₹10.28 crore) of the company to a Dubai-based NRI for just US\$1.
- Utilized an opportunity to dump shares of LSIL, made windfall gains
- Misleading announcements to lure investors
- Involved in triggering a sharp spike and fall in price
- Traders allegedly placed large buy orders to artificially inflate prices, and later dumped shares
- Stock's price movement appeared inconsistent with the company's financials
- Investigations focus on fraudulent activities, stock price manipulation of listed companies

Meanwhile, SEBI on Tuesday banned Himachal Pradesh-based LS Industries Ltd (LSIL), its promoter Profound Finance and four others from the securities markets till further orders following allegations of fraudulent activities and stock price manipulation.

"The company and its promoter devised a scheme in which ex-director of the company, Suet Meng Chay, first transferred 12.12% of the company for just US\$1 to Jahangir Panikkarveettill Perumbarambatu (JPP), a Dubai-based NRI. JPP, then entities namely Multiplier Share & Stock Advisors Pvt Ltd., Setu Securities Pvt. Ltd., Paresh Dhirajlal Shah and Ruchire Goyal caused the sudden spike and fall in the share price of the company," Ashwani Bhatia, whole time member at SEBI said in the interim order.

"Based on a report titled "Mystery of a zero revenue company with Rs 5,500 crore market valuation" published on February 3, 2025, SEBI has been investigating the LSIL case, and as the price movement in the scrip did not appear consistent with the reported financials of the company, the matter was taken up for examination to ascertain whether there was any violation of the provisions of securities laws.

As far as the price movement in LSIL scrip is concerned, SEBI observed that post revocation of suspension of trading in the scrip, the share price moved from Rs 22.50 to a high of Rs 267.50 between July 23, 2024 and September 27, 2024, i.e., an increase of 108%, almost 11 times within a short span of 2 months. Thereafter, the share price started falling and touched a low of Rs 42.39 on November 21, 2024, a fall of 84.15% from its high. The price again started increasing and within one month rose to Rs 136.87 on December 23, 2024, i.e.,

Briefs

Briefs

Vedanta OKs raising ₹3K cr via NCDs

Vedanta Ltd on Tuesday said its Committee of Directors has approved raising up to Rs 3,000 crore through issuance of non-convertible debentures (NCDs). The committee approved issuance of 3 lakh unsecured, rated, listed, redeemable NCDs of face value of Rs 1 lakh each on a private placement basis, as per a regulatory filing by Vedanta. The issue will be listed on the BSE.

EH PAT rises 21.26% to ₹278.83 cr in Q3

Hospitality major EH Ltd on Tuesday reported a 21.26 per cent rise in consolidated net profit to Rs 278.83 crore in the third quarter ended December 31, 2024, on the back of strong revenue growth. The company, which owns and operates hotels and resorts under the Oberoi and Trident brands, had posted a consolidated net profit of Rs 229.94 crore in the same quarter last fiscal, EH Ltd said in a regulatory filing.

SAIL posts 66% fall in profit to ₹142 cr in Q3

State-owned SAIL on Tuesday reported over 66 per cent decline in consolidated net profit to Rs 141.89 crore for the December quarter, on account of increased expenses. It posted Rs 422.92 crore profit for the year-ago period, the company said in an exchange filing. The company's total income, however, rose to Rs 24,723.43 crore from Rs 23,492.33 crore in the same quarter a year ago.

Berger Paints India Q3 PAT slips 1.4%

Berger Paints India Ltd on Tuesday reported a 1.4 per cent decline in consolidated net profit to Rs 295.97 crore in the December 2024 quarter, impacted by price cuts, muted urban demand and slowdown in a few key markets. The company had posted a consolidated net profit of Rs 300.16 crore in the third quarter last fiscal, Berger Paints India Ltd said in a regulatory filing.

AGL reports net sales of ₹360 cr in Q3

Asian Granito India (AGL) has reported a dip of 2.96 per cent in its consolidated net sales in Q3 FY25 which stood at Rs 360 crore as against net sales of Rs 371 crore in Q3 FY24. Exports for the Q3 FY25 was reported at Rs 79 crore, rise of 22% year-on-year as compared to export of Rs 60 crore in Q3 FY24 mainly on account of quartz export.

Easebuzz gets RBI nod to operate as online payment aggregator

Payment solutions provider Easebuzz has received final authorisation from the Reserve Bank to operate as an online payment aggregator (PA), according to a release. The nod allows the company to continue operating as an authorised payments platform and help process online payments for Indian businesses across sectors, including e-commerce, travel and tourism, education and real estate.

PM woos investors in energy sector

PTI

NEW DELHI



are saying that 21st century is India's century. Bharat is not only driving its own growth but driving global growth." India's energy ambitions, he said, are based on five pillars.

"We have resources which we are harnessing. We are encouraging our brilliant minds to innovate. Thirdly, we have economic strength and politically stability," he said.

Also, he said, India has strategic geography which makes energy trade easier and more attractive.

Besides, India is committed towards global sustainability and this is aiding new possibilities in the country's energy sector, the prime minister said.

He further said, "All experts

possibilities in India".

"There are many possibilities of investment in these sectors," Modi said addressing the India Energy Week 2025 (IEW'25) virtually.

"You are not just a part of India energy week, you are an important part of India's energy ambitions," Modi told investors.

Besides, India is committed

towards global sustainability and this is aiding new possibilities in the country's energy sector, the prime minister said.

Net direct tax kitty swells 15% to ₹17.78 lakh crore till Feb 10

PTI

NEW DELHI



Net direct tax collection grew 14.69 per cent to over Rs 17.78 lakh crore so far this fiscal, government data showed on Tuesday.

As per the data released by the Central Board of Direct Taxes (CBDT), mop up from net non-corporate taxes, which include mainly personal income tax, grew 21 per cent year-on-year to about Rs 9.48 lakh crore.

Net corporate tax collection rose more than 6 per cent to over Rs 7.78 lakh crore between April 1, 2024, and February 10, 2025.

Net collections from secur-

lity transaction tax (STT) jumped 65 per cent to Rs 49,201 crore so far this fiscal.

Refunds worth more than Rs 4.10 lakh crore were issued during the period, a 42.63 per cent increase against the year-ago period.

Gross direct tax mop up till February 10 grew 19.06 per cent to more than Rs 21.88

lakh crore.

In the revised estimates (RE) for the current fiscal, the government has pegged income tax collections at Rs 12.57 lakh crore, up from the budget estimate of Rs 11.87 lakh crore.

The collection from STT is pegged at Rs 55,000 crore in this fiscal in RE, higher than the budget estimate (BE) of Rs 37,000 crore.

Corporate tax collection target was revised lower at Rs 9.80 lakh crore, down from the budget target of Rs 10.20 lakh crore.

In total, the RE pegs direct tax collections at Rs 22.37 lakh crore, higher from Rs 22.07 lakh crore in BE.

ies transaction tax (STT) jumped 65 per cent to Rs 49,201 crore so far this fiscal.

Refunds worth more than Rs 4.10 lakh crore were issued during the period, a 42.63 per cent increase against the year-ago period.

Gross direct tax mop up till February 10 grew 19.06 per cent to more than Rs 21.88

lakh crore.

In the revised estimates (RE) for the current fiscal, the government has pegged income tax collections at Rs 12.57 lakh crore, up from the budget estimate of Rs 11.87 lakh crore.

The collection from STT is pegged at Rs 55,000 crore in this fiscal in RE, higher than the budget estimate (BE) of Rs 37,000 crore.

Corporate tax collection target was revised lower at Rs 9.80 lakh crore, down from the budget target of Rs 10.20 lakh crore.

In total, the RE pegs direct tax collections at Rs 22.37 lakh crore, higher from Rs 22.07 lakh crore in BE.

New I-T bill likely to be introduced in LS on Thursday

PTI

NEW DELHI

The new Income Tax Bill will be introduced in the Lok Sabha on Thursday, sources said. They said the government is keen on detailed consultations on the bill and it is likely to be sent to a Select Committee for further examination. The Union Cabinet last week cleared the new Income Tax bill.

Sitharaman had indicated earlier that the bill will be sent to a parliamentary committee for scrutiny. "The process is the committee gives its recommendations, it comes back, and then the government, through the Cabinet, takes a call whether these amendments are to be taken in," she had said.

In July 2024 Budget, the government had proposed a comprehensive review of the Income-tax Act, 1961. The purpose was to make the Act concise and lucid and reduce disputes and litigation.

"Over the past 10 years, our Government has implemented several reforms for convenience of tax payers, such as (1) faceless assessment, (2) taxpayers charter, (3) faster returns, (4) almost 99% returns being on selfassessment, and (5) Vivad se Vishwas scheme. Continuing these efforts, I reaffirm the commitment of the tax department to 'trust first, scrutinize later. I also propose to introduce the new income-tax bill next week," Nirmala Sitharaman said in the budget speech.

The 10-year benchmark

Voda Idea's Q3 loss narrows to ₹6,609.3 crore as ARPU rises

PTI

NEW DELHI

Telecom operator Vodafone Idea on Tuesday reported narrowing of losses at Rs 6,609.3 crore for the December quarter.

The revenue from operations stood at Rs 11,117.3 crore during the quarter, over 4 per cent higher than the corresponding period last year.

On a consolidated basis, the loss for the quarter was at Rs 6,609.3 crore as against Rs 6,985.9 crore in the year-ago period. Customer ARPU (average revenue per user) -- a key metric for all telcos -- for the third quarter of the current fiscal year stood at Rs 173, up from Rs 166 in the July-September period.

Concurrently, the phased rollout of 5G services is underway, targeting key geographies, he noted. "We are pleased to report highest quarterly cash EBITDA since merger of Rs 24.5 billion (Rs 2,450 crore), reg-

istering a YOY growth of about 15 per cent. With our intensifying investments, we anticipate further improvement in both operational and financial performance," he said.

With the recent equity infusion of Rs 19.1 billion (Rs 1,910 crore) from one of the promoters, the telco now secured approximately Rs 260 billion in fresh equity capital over the past 10 months, he said. "In parallel, we continue to engage with lenders for debt financing, aligning with our planned network expansion investment of Rs 500-550 billion over a three-year period. The government's decision on the bank guarantee waiver underscores its ongoing support for the telecom sector -- a critical pillar of Digital India's future," Moondra said.

On a sequential basis, this translated into a growth of 4.7 per cent. Vodafone Idea CEO Akshaya Moondra said the company is driving investments and the velocity of capex deployment is set to accelerate in the coming quarters.

Concurrently, the phased rollout of 5G services is underway, targeting key geographies, he noted. "We are pleased to report highest quarterly cash EBITDA since merger of Rs 24.5 billion (Rs 2,450 crore), reg-

Gilts up as RBI doubles OMO buys for Thursday

Informist

MUMBAI

Prices of government bonds ended higher Tuesday driven by the RBI's decision to double the notified amount for gilts purchases for its open market operations auction on Thursday, dealers said. On Monday, PSBs were the top net buyers, purchasing gilts worth INR 35.73 billion, when the yield on the 2024 gilt had risen to almost 6.73%. At the OMO auction Thursday, RBI will buy five bonds - the 7.17%, 2030 gilt, the 7.18% 2033 gilt, the 7.10% 2034 gilt, the 7.54% 2036 gilt, and the 7.18% 2037 gilt.

The 10-year benchmark

GoMechanic lines up ₹100 cr investment

PTI

NEW DELHI

Car services and repair platform GoMechanic on Tuesday said it is lining up Rs 100 crore investment over the next two years to set up around 1,000 two-wheeler service stations.

With two-wheelers comprising over 75 per cent of India's total vehicle sales, this strategic expansion aims to bring affordable and standardised servicing to millions of riders nationwide, the company said in a statement.

Addressing a press conference on the sidelines of Aero India 2025 in Bengaluru, HAL Chairman and Managing Director D K Sunil said the company has received orders worth Rs 55,000 crore in the

OPEC providing market stability needed for investments: Secy Gen

PTI

NEW DELHI



continue to rise, thanks to countries like India where demand is growing.

"The world has spent USD 10 trillion in so-called transitions in the last 25 years. And where are we today -- renewable is only 4-5 per cent (of global energy demand). OPEC is not against renewable energy. But we are all about taking a balanced approach," he said.

Balanced approach means taking a long-term view of the energy mix and not being bracketed in one fuel versus the other, he said, adding that OPEC is acting as the stabiliser.

"Oil is paramount to providing energy security to the

Nuclear power to be part of energy discussions, says Puri

Nuclear power will be part of all energy discussions as its commercialisation has not happened yet, largely in the Indian context, even though the country signed a treaty with the US, Union Oil Minister Hardeep Singh Puri said on Tuesday.

This assumes significance in view of Prime Minister Narendra Modi's visit to the US later this week where he will meet US President Donald Trump and have discussion on a series of subjects, including energy.

Earlier on Monday during a presser on India Energy Week 2025, which began here on Tuesday, Puri had said, "I will be surprised if sourcing of energy from the US does not figure in the discussions (of PM and Trump)."

Puri had also stated that with President (Trump) saying he wants to see global energy prices coming down, he wants more and more energy to come to the market. For countries like India it is a positive development, he said.

RBI's rate cut failed to boost market sentiment...

Continued from page 12

Lending Rate, he said. Banks also have to manage their interest rate risks and liquidity risks while doing so. Banks cannot reduce the rates on the existing deposits as banks have to pay the contacted rate of interest till the maturity irrespective of slashing the deposit rates. This means rate cut on deposits is applicable only for the fresh deposits or on renewal of the existing deposits when they mature.

"Banks are confronted with multiple issues such as extend of reduction, applicability (existing loans or new loans). Besides these factors, banks also have to look into the deposit rates, operating costs, opportunity cost on their statutory requirements like Statutory Liquidity Ratio and Cash Reserve Ratio while arriving at the Marginal Cost of

serves as the hub for Mahindra's ambition to remain the market leader in the electric three-wheeler space, he said. The company has filed 60 patent applications, 54 trademarks, and 16 design registrations from the state.

"Our last-mile mobility business is deeply rooted in Karnataka, with its R&D, product development, and manufacturing units based here," he added.

Mahindra Lifespaces, the group's real estate arm, is currently developing projects worth over Rs 5,000 crore in Bengaluru and plans to invest an additional Rs 6,000 crore in the near future.

Mahindra Group plans to invest nearly ₹40,000 cr in K'taka: Anand Mahindra

PTI

NEW DELHI

Karnataka in the coming years," Anand Mahindra said.

He noted that Karnataka

plays a vital role in the group's renewable energy portfolio. Mahindra Susten intends to invest Rs 35,000 crore to develop over five gigawatts of solar and hybrid projects over the next few years.

Speaking at the inaugural session of the Invest Karnataka-2025 summit, he said the Mahindra Group has no hesitation in investing in long-term businesses such as renewable energy, aerospace, hospitality, and real estate in Karnataka.

Anand Mahindra said, "It gives me great pleasure to state here today that the Mahindra Group is planning close to Rs 40,000 crore of investment in

land aggregation."

He also stated that Mahindra

Defence Services and

Mahindra Aerospace are

exploring strategic expansion opportunities in the state, with investments of several hundred crores planned.

As a key step in the group's mission to electrify India's last-mile industry, Karnataka

Aequus forms JV with Brazil's Tramontina for ₹80-cr cookware plant

PTI

MUMBAI

Domestic contract manufacturer Aequus on Tuesday said it will be investing Rs 80 crore to set up a cookware products-making facility in Karnataka along with Brazilian firm Tramontina.

The two entities have formed a 50:50 joint venture to produce cookware and other consumer products for customers in India and abroad, according to a statement. The manufacturing facility will be located at the Hubballi Durable Goods Cluster (HDC) and the only manufacturing facility outside of the Americas for Tram



Selling pressure dampens mkt sentiment



Motilal Oswaal Team

MUMBAI

Nifty index opened on a flattish note but witnessed selling pressure from the first tick itself followed by some consolidation till midday. After that, in the later part of the session, selling was intensified pushing Nifty below 23000 zones. Bears dominated the entire session as the index closed with a loss of over 300 points. It formed a Bearish Belt Hold kind of candle on daily frame and forming lower high - lower low from last five trading session. Now till it holds below 23200 zones, weakness could be seen towards 22950 then 22800 zones whereas hurdles are placed at 23200 then 23333 zones.

On option front, Maximum Call OI is at 24000 then 23800 strike while Maximum Put OI is at 22500 then 22700 strike. Call writing is seen at 23300 then 23400 strike while Put writing is seen at 22700 then 22500 strike. Option data suggests a broader trading range in between 22500 to 23500 zones while an immediate range between 22900 to 23300 levels.

S&P BSE Sensex opened on a flattish note and witnessed selling pressure from the opening tick. The index remained under sustained pressure throughout the session, with every minor rebound being sold into. It closed with a sharp decline of over 1000 points, reflecting underlying weakness. On the daily chart, Sensex formed a bearish candle, signalling sell on rise sentiment in the market. Now till it holds below 76600 weakness could be seen

towards 76000 then 75800 zones whereas hurdles are placed at 76600 then 77000 zones.

Bank Nifty Index opened on a negative note and remained under selling pressure throughout the session as Index corrected towards 49200 zones. It formed a Bearish candle on daily scale and forming lower highs from last few sessions. Index failed to hold above its 20 DEMA and closed with losses of more than 550 points. Now till it holds below 49750 zones weakness could be seen towards 49000 then 48750 levels while on the upside hurdle is seen at 49750 then 50000 zones.

S&P BSE Sensex remained under sustained pressure throughout the session on Tuesday, recording a fall of over 1000 points as it formed a bearish candle. Until the index holds below 76,600, weakness could be seen towards 76,000 then 75,800 zones whereas hurdles are placed at 76,600 then 77,000 zones

Nifty future closed negative with losses of 1.36% at 23139 levels. Positive setup seen in Grasim, Bharti Airtel and Adani Enterprise while weakness in Policy Bazar, BSE, Eicher Motors, Apollo Hospitals, NCC, KEI Industries, HFCL, PEL, VBL, PFC, MCX, Zomato and Gujarat Gas.

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DATA SOURCE: CAPITALINE

Hot stocks

Company Name	2/10/2025	7 DSMA	21 DSMA	50DSMA	250 DSMA	BSE 1 Year High Price	Pulse	Score
DLF	731.10	755.44	739.48	795.16	839.77	967.00	100	
Godrej Agrovet	734.20	762.01	733.56	742.95	683.87	877.85	100	
Syngene Intl.	736.20	741.96	779.79	832.74	789.93	960.00	100	
St Bk of India	736.85	756.95	757.51	792.46	803.60	912.10	100	
Adani Energy Sol	740.60	755.52	771.97	783.40	973.13	1347.90	100	
Avanti Feeds	741.45	726.43	687.16	655.61	600.98	791.10	100	
Anupam Rasayan	747.65	719.76	695.14	714.96	780.72	977.95	100	
Shyam Metalics	760.70	774.77	770.53	782.48	732.95	956.05	100	
Medplus Health	773.15	784.00	761.19	808.88	709.42	876.75	100	
IRC T C	773.50	781.60	777.14	792.06	916.37	1148.30	100	
One 97	775.30	783.64	814.87	900.57	595.10	1063.00	100	
Indian Hotels Co	776.80	802.77	787.52	822.54	666.68	894.15	100	
Welspun Corp	777.30	747.16	756.81	775.83	657.02	835.00	100	
Intellect Design	790.65	810.04	852.55	872.75	943.30	1198.80	100	
SBI Cards	798.25	818.57	777.34	788.12	725.95	846.55	100	
Aegis Logistics	800.70	764.49	744.83	787.99	708.20	1035.70	100	
JK Lakshmi Cem.	806.65	812.39	804.87	820.57	821.45	975.00	100	
Life Insurance	808.75	829.68	832.28	877.36	977.12	1221.50	100	
EID Parry	818.85	838.10	827.87	871.81	754.37	997.60	100	
K E C Intl.	824.80	820.80	864.23	1038.11	887.05	1312.00	100	
Garware Tech.	826.45	828.16	802.63	862.75	768.93	985.16	100	
Century Plyboard	829.55	844.10	808.58	800.20	747.59	938.60	100	
Westlife Food	831.10	841.24	769.96	790.91	811.46	959.50	100	
Sheela Foam	836.40	867.74	905.70	937.50	935.99	1119.10	100	
Jindal Steel	840.40	814.13	859.47	908.59	934.56	1097.10	100	
ICICI Securities	841.65	838.49	824.18	844.64	800.43	921.45	100	
Aether Industri.	850.40	844.00	838.24	863.09	866.86	1066.30	100	
Godrej Industrie	853.00	888.13	893.13	1013.52	943.36	1313.95	100	
Just Dial	853.05	861.81	887.57	977.15	1048.02	1394.95	100	
Tejas Networks	857.30	872.55	958.87	1116.15	1135.01	1495.10	100	
PNB Housing	867.05	886.30	878.05	888.11	840.42	1201.45	100	
Alembic Pharma	885.45	897.98	950.64	1014.01	1038.71	1296.15	100	
K P R Mill Ltd	891.75	918.21	934.90	988.50	884.42	1192.60	100	
The Ramco Ceme	893.30	894.53	893.99	949.56	856.53	1059.80	100	
Zensar Tech.	904.75	912.57	833.90	799.27	702.04	985.00	100	
Tata Chemicals	908.95	933.91	953.94	1014.84	1065.42	1349.70	100	

Upwardly & Downwardly Cos

Company Name	2/4/2025	2/11/2025	Days	Gain/Loss %	Per Day Average
Symphony	1427.60	1138.65	5	-20.24	-57.79
Sobha	1390.40	1141.05	5	-17.93	-49.87
Godrej Propert.	2390.85	2026.55	5	-15.24	-72.86
Delhivery	329.45	284.35	5	-13.69	-9.02
Chalet Hotels	797.45	696.90	5	-12.61	-20.11

Top percentage gainers

Company Name	2/10/2025	2/11/2025	% chg
Happiest Minds	665.55	717.00	7.73
CRISIL	5097.90	5346.15	4.87
Timken India	2687.70	2811.90	4.62
Chola Financial	1451.40	1512.50	4.21
C.E. Info System	1650.00	1683.45	2.03
I D F C	113.20	115.10	1.68
Oil India	405.20	411.95	1.67
Firstsour.Solu.	351.75	357.25	1.56
Adani Power	491.30	498.15	1.39
Adani Enterp.	2290.75	2322.10	1.37
BASF India	4275.80	4333.80	1.36
EPL Ltd	246.40	249.55	1.28
Gujarat Fluoroch	3734.90	3778.15	1.16
Sun TV Network	605.50	611.25	1.09
Grasim Inds	2470.75	2492.35	0.87
TOI Express	726.10	732.40	0.87
Star Cement	203.00	204.40	0.69
Trent	777.30	777.60	0.04

Top percentage losers

Company Name	2/10/2025	2/11/2025	% chg
Uno Mindra	1073.60	987.85	-7.79
Godfrey Phillips	5577.65	5130.70	-8.07
Piramal Pharma	221.10	204.35	-7.58

corporate gallery

Flight by COAS and CAS in Indigenous Tejas Marks a New Era of Synergy and Self-Reliance



In a moment of immense pride and historical significance, the Chief of Army Staff (COAS), General Upendra Dwivedi, and the Chief of Air Staff (CAS), Air Marshal AP Singh, took to the skies together today in the indigenous Light Combat Aircraft (LCA) Tejas. This unprecedented flight not only marks a personal milestone for the two Chiefs, who are coursemates, but also underscores the growing synergy and integration between the Indian Army and the Indian Air Force (IAF). The flight is a powerful demonstration of India's advancing defence capabilities, particularly in the realm of self-reliance. The Tejas, developed entirely within India, is a shining example of the nation's commitment to Aatmanirbharata (self-reliance) in defence. The successful operation of this home-grown aircraft signifies the significant strides India has made in the field of indigenous defence aviation.

AeroIndia 2025: Strengthening the Army Air Defence with Indigenous Solutions

AeroIndia 2025, the premier airshow and aviation exhibition, continues to serve as a critical platform for showcasing India's advancements in defence technology. Among the highlights of this year's event was the participation of



Lieutenant General NS Raja Subramani, Vice Chief of the Army Staff (VCOAS), who visited several industry stalls to gain insights into the innovative solutions being developed for the Indian Armed Forces, particularly in the domain of Army Air Defence. During his visit, Lt Gen Raja Subramani was briefed on the cutting-edge **Vehicle Mounted Counter Storm Drone System***, an advanced weapon system currently being developed by the Army Air Defence. This system, designed to counter the evolving threat of drone warfare, aligns with India's **Atmanirbhar Bharat** vision. The system is equipped with an array of sensors, including radar and a day-night camera, and is designed to intercept and neutralize drone swarms using precision-guided munitions, enhancing the safety and operational capabilities of the armed forces. "India's focus on indigenization in the defence sector is paving the way for a more self-reliant and resilient military. The development of systems such as the Vehicle Mounted Counter Storm Drone System reflects our commitment to creating indigenous solutions that address the unique operational challenges faced by our forces," said Lt Gen Raja Subramani during his visit.

REC to provide Rs 2,147-cr term loan to set up 1,000 MW Pakal Dul hydro project



February 11, 2025, at CVPPL's Corporate Office in Jammu (J&K) in the presence of Ramesh Mukhiya, Managing Director, CVPPL, and Bhupesh Chandolia, Chief Project Manager (CPM), REC Ltd, Regional Office Jammu, along with other senior officials from both organisations. This strategic collaboration marks a significant milestone in the pursuit of sustainable energy development in the Jammu & Kashmir region. The Pakal Dul Hydro Electric Project is expected to play a pivotal role in harnessing renewable energy resources, contributing to the region's energy security, and supporting India's clean energy transition.

State-owned REC Ltd on Tuesday said it has inked a pact to provide a term loan of Rs 2,147.50 crore to Chenab Valley Power Project Ltd for setting up a 1,000 MW greenfield Pakal Dul hydro power project. The project is being developed on the Marusadar river, located in the Kishtwar district of Jammu & Kashmir, a statement said. According to the statement, REC Ltd has signed an agreement with Chenab Valley Power Project Ltd (CVPPL) to provide a term loan of Rs 2,147.50 crore. The loan will be utilised for the development and construction of the greenfield Pakal Dul Hydro Electric Project, a 1,000-MW capacity hydroelectric project with a total estimated cost of Rs 12,669.67 crore. The formal signing ceremony took place on

The formal signing ceremony took place on February 11, 2025, at CVPPL's Corporate Office in Jammu (J&K) in the presence of Ramesh Mukhiya, Managing Director, CVPPL, and Bhupesh Chandolia, Chief Project Manager (CPM), REC Ltd, Regional Office Jammu, along with other senior officials from both organisations. This strategic collaboration marks a significant milestone in the pursuit of sustainable energy development in the Jammu & Kashmir region. The Pakal Dul Hydro Electric Project is expected to play a pivotal role in harnessing renewable energy resources, contributing to the region's energy security, and supporting India's clean energy transition.

Rajsee Ethnic Essential Launched



In Ambala two friends, Radhika Cheema and Sargam Chawla, launched the Rajsee Brand on Sunday at Pooja Complex. The store, Rajsee Ethnic Essential, offers traditional wedding clothes for both brides and grooms, tailored to their preferences. At the launch, popular Punjabi singer Jasbir Jassi and Radhika Cheema's brother, business tycoon Sanjeev Juneja, were also present. The brand's directors, Radhika Cheema and Sargam Chawla, shared that the brand is especially started for brides and grooms. They have turned their 20 years of friendship into this brand. Radhika mentioned that she has always had an interest in art and creativity, while Sargam has experience in clothing, which led them to start the Rajsee brand. She further explained that Rajsee is going to offer a variety of ethnic outfits for every bride according to her preferences. Radhika shared that their goal is to expand their store nationwide, with plans to eventually start its franchises across India. Sargam added that every bridal outfit will adhere to traditional customs and rituals. There will be a special variety for weddings, and garments will be customized based on the bride's desires.

Mysuru Division awarded the Overall Efficiency Shield of South Western Railway



Mysuru Division awarded the Overall Efficiency Shield of South Western Railway along with multiple departmental shields for the Financial Year 2023-24 during the Vishisht Rail Seva Puraskar ceremony at the Zonal level held in Hubballi on Monday 10th February 2025. Mysuru Division, which achieved a historic milestone by recording its highest-ever revenue of Rs 1,451.9 crores in the Financial Year 2023-24, has been declared the joint winner of the Overall Efficiency Shield for the same period. Additionally, several departments within the division have also been honored with Efficiency Shields. The Overall Efficiency Shield was presented by Arvind Srivastava, General Manager of South Western Railway, Hubballi, to Shilpi Agarwal, Divisional Railway Manager of Mysuru Division, during the Vishisht Rail Seva Puraskar celebrations held on 10th February 2025 in Hubballi. In addition to sharing the Overall Efficiency Shield with Bengaluru Division, Mysuru Division secured Efficiency Shields for its Accounts, Commercial, Medical, and Operating Departments. The division also clinched the Inter-Divisional Safety Shield and Electrical traction distribution. Furthermore, the rake of Train Nos. 16217 and 16218 (Mysuru-Shirdi Sainagar-Mysuru) was recognized as the Best Maintained Rake across South Western Railway.

whispersinthecorridors

Dr Suresh Mehrotra



IAS Ayush Prasad's Dream to Make Jalgaon (Maharashtra) a \$25 Billion Economy



IAS Ayush Prasad is a 2015 batch officer of Maharashtra cadre and is currently posted as the collector of Jalgaon, Maharashtra. Known for his impactful approach, Prasad has an ambitious vision of transforming the district into a key economic hub and become a \$25 billion economy in next four years. "We want to push our economy forward and ensure that Jalgaon grows very, very fast," he stated. To achieve this a dedicated District Project and Program Management Unit has been established to oversee development projects and provide structured support to businesses, particularly in the SME sector. Additionally, Prasad's strategy focuses on identifying sunrise sectors, attracting investments, and driving growth in agriculture, agritech, industry and services sector. "The goal is to tap into all sectors, engage all stakeholders, and unlock the massive potential. By coordinating these sectors, we aim to create tangible results," he said. In agriculture, eight large irrigation projects are underway bringing 1.54 hectares under irrigation. "This is crucial because it will significantly boost agricultural productivity," he explained. Along with this, micro improvements in farming are promoted. Using cotton as an example, Prasad highlighted the benefits of intercropping. "It can boost productivity by 15-20%, reduce fertilizer dependency, and improve both the yield and quality of cotton." Another major initiative under his leadership is the construction of 2,020 farm ponds arranged in clusters and connected through a pipe line network for year-round irrigation. Beyond irrigation, these ponds will also be used for aquaculture and vegetable farming. "With this, each farm pond can generate a net income of Rs 5.25 lakh per year," he shared. Additionally, his vision extends to integrating fisheries, poultry and farming into the growing pet food industry, further adding value to agricultural produce. In agritech, Jalgaon is a major banana producer but banana stem waste is often overlooked and thrown away. Prasad saw it as an opportunity. "We plan to crush the banana stem, extract the sap for use as a local fertilizer, and utilize the fiber," he said. The initiative is also designed to empower SHGs and women by encouraging them to craft products from banana fibre. "You can create multiple products out of banana fiber, and we aim to build an entire ecosystem around it." The district's industrial sector is being strengthened through recycling initiatives, by supporting waste plastic recycling units with certifications and infrastructure to boost exports.

Congress' guarantees failed to woo voters

In Delhi assembly elections, the Congress party has miserably failed to woo the voters through poll guarantees. This is the fourth time when the party failed to impress voters. The maximum guarantees campaign started in Chhattisgarh, Rajasthan 2023, and in Haryana and Maharashtra last year.



S S Meenakshi Sundaram empanelled as Joint Secretary in Gol

S S Meenakshi Sundaram has been empanelled for holding the post of Joint Secretary or equivalent in the Government of India. Sundaram is a 2004 batch IAS officer of Assam-Meghalaya cadre.

Ms Archana Singh empanelled as Joint Secretary in Gol

Ms Archana Singh has been empanelled for holding the post of Joint Secretary or equivalent in the Government of India. She is a 2008 batch IAS officer of Rajasthan cadre.

Sushma Chauhan empanelled as Joint Secy in Gol

Sushma Chauhan has been empanelled for holding Joint Secretary level postings in the Government of India. She is a 2009 batch IAS officer of AGMUT cadre.

Tanvi Garg empanelled as Joint Secretary in Gol

Tanvi Garg has been empanelled for holding Joint Secretary level postings in the Government of India. Garg is a 2009 batch IAS officer of AGMUT cadre.

9 CSS officers empanelled as Jt Secretaries in Gol

As many as nine officers of SSGSL 2019 batch of Central Secretariat Service (CSS) have been empanelled for holding Joint Secretary level postings in the Government of India. They are: Anurag Rohatgi, F Deborah Initha, Phool C Prasad, Sudershan Mendiratta, Pradeep Kumar Roy, Shiv Ram Meena, Naresh Kumar Wadhwa, Meenu Batra and Sunil Kumar Ranjan.

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RWF celebrates 69th Railway Week



69th Railway Week was celebrated at Rail Wheel Factory on 11/02/2025. This day is to celebrate our achievements of the past year and to honour some of the outstanding performers in various departments. Chandra Vir Raman, General Manager, Rail Wheel Factory, who was Chief Guest of the function, honored the performers with Vishisht Rail Seva and Rail Seva certificates. Chandra Vir Raman, GM later addressed the gathering and appreciated the untiring efforts of the employees for their efforts to see that RWF is always the forefront in contributing to Indian Railways' efforts to carrying freight as well as passengers. Highlights of General Manager's Address for the day is as follows:

In the current financial year, wheel shop has manufactured 1,70,608 wheels, 74,979 axles and 83,975 wheelsets to cater maintenance works at railway workshops and wagon builders. RWF's innovative idea is to use released Aluminum wires instead of aluminum stars in electric arc furnace has saved expenditure and has also contributed to reduction in rejection percentage of wheels. The programme concluded after a colourful cultural programme by students of Kendriya Vidyalaya, RWF.

Briefs

JABALPUR/MAIHAR
9 killed in 2 MP road accidents

Nine persons returning from Maha Kumbh mela in Prayagraj were killed and seven others injured in two road accidents in Madhya Pradesh's Jabalpur and Maihar districts on Tuesday morning, officials said. In Jabalpur, a truck carrying cement collided with a mini-bus at around 8.30 am near Sihora town, killing seven occupants of the passenger vehicle returning to Telangana. In Maihar, two persons were killed and five others injured when an unidentified vehicle hit their SUV near Kanchanpur village on National Highway no. 30 at around 4 am, Nadan Dehat police station in-charge KN Banjare said. The SUV was returning to Indore from the Maha Kumbh in Prayagraj, he said.

BHUBANESWAR
Bhakta Das is Cong chief in Odisha



The Congress on Tuesday appointed senior leader and former Union Minister Bhakta Charan Das as the new president of the Odisha Pradesh Congress Committee (OPCC). In a press release, the All India Congress Committee (AICC) announced that Congress president Mallikarjun Kharge had appointed Das to the position with immediate effect.

—AP Kanungo

JAMMU
Two soldiers killed in J&K blast

Two soldiers including an officer were killed on Tuesday in an improvised explosive device (IED) blast during patrolling near the Line of Control (LoC) fence in J&K's Akhnoor sector. A Defence Ministry Spokesman said that the suspected improvised explosive device blast was reported in Lalaia in the Akhnoor sector during a fence patrol resulting in two fatalities. He added that a captain rank officer is also among the two martyred soldiers.

PATNA
Congress MLA asks her party to go solo in poll

A day after Congress MP Tariq Anwar contended that party leadership should clarify whether it wanted to do coalition politics or go it alone in the assembly elections in Bihar, party MLA Pratima Kumari demanded that the party should contest all 243-seats. Congress MLA from Rajapakar in Vaishali district said that the party should go it alone in the assembly election.

—Dheeraj Kumar

CYBER CRIME | Over 19 lakh accounts where fraudsters park swindled funds detected, says Shah

AI to weed out mule accounts

PTI

NEW DELHI



Union Home Minister Amit Shah arrives for the Budget session of Parliament, in New Delhi, on Tuesday

transactions worth Rs 2,038 crore have been prevented.

Shah said efforts are underway to use Artificial Intelligence (AI) for identifying mule accounts, in coordination with the Reserve Bank of India (RBI) and all banks to establish a system for their detection, an official statement said.

The home minister said the government will ensure the closure of mule accounts before they even become operational. A mule account is a bank account used by crimi-

nals to move stolen money.

He said a total of 1,43,000 FIRs have been registered on the I4C portal, which has been used by more than 19 crore people.

In light of financial cyber fraud, the '1930' helpline provides a one-point solution offering various services, such as blocking cards, Shah said.

He said the government has also ensured that people are made aware of Prime Minister Narendra Modi's mantra 'STOP-THINK-TAKE ACTION'. France has been the main beneficiary of India's move to reduce its dependence on Russia for defence imports. As much as 33 per cent of India's defence imports are now from France. No wonder President Macron refers to Modi as "my friend." Coumar Ananda, president of the Chambers of Commerce and Industry France-India, said trade between India and France has

DEFENCE ORDERS DEFINE INDIA'S FRANCE MOMENT



BY invitation
Roshan Bourget
PARIS



France has been the main beneficiary of India's move to reduce its dependence on Russia for defence imports

Though Prime Minister Modi is primarily in Paris as the co-host of the AI Summit, the under-stated thrust of his visit is to further deepen the strategic partnership between the two countries.

India is important to France principally because it is one of its biggest arms buyers. Earlier, Russia was the principal supplier of arms to New Delhi. But, a variety of factors, including the Russia-Ukraine war, Western sanctions and the increasing proximity between Moscow and Beijing has forced New Delhi to rethink about Russia as a main arms supplier.

According to a Stockholm International Peace Research Institute study, India's defence imports from Russia dropped to 36 percent in 2019-23. France has been the main

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risen from USD 15 billion to USD 20 billion. He calls it "the India moment in France."

With a firm eye on the huge defence purchases, President Macron has been systematically cultivating Modi. The purchase of 36 Rafale fighter aircraft in fly away condition and the construction of six Scorpene submarines in collaboration with the Naval Group of France laid the foundation for a massive defence collaboration. These deals apart, India is also expected to procure 26 naval variant of Rafale jets and three Scorpene submarines. French aerospace major Safran and DRDO are already collaborating on the manufacture engines for India's fifth generation fighter jet.

The Cadarache facility is the largest energy research centre in Europe hosting 19 basic nuclear installations (BNIs) and a secret BNI. It is expected to create its first plasma this year.

The other nuclear installations at Cadarache include the Tore Supra Tokamak and the Jules Horowitz reactor. Macron can justly take credit for taking Indo-French ties to a new high.

'TMC to fight solo in 2026 Bengal polls'

PTI

KOLKATA

Banerjee's remarks evoked a strong reaction from the West Bengal Congress unit, which said such "unnecessary panics" were a result of panic in several parties that seem to have understood the mistake of ignoring Congress after the Delhi polls.

It was found in the Delhi assembly elections that division of votes between AAP and the Congress led to the victory of the BJP in several seats. In the wake of the recent Delhi Assembly bypoll results, in which the AAP faced huge setbacks, the winner BJP has drawn parallels with West Bengal, claiming that Banerjee's welfare schemes may not translate into electoral gains.

Referring to the loss of AAP, BJP leaders, including Leader of Opposition in Punjab Assembly, Partap Singh Bajwa, on the issue, Mann said: "Let them say what they want to." He added that the numbers were still stacked in AAP's favour: "We have 92 MLAs and we have risen from the ground up. We have toil hard with our blood to make this party."

Stating that the party "respects the mandate of the people of Delhi," he said it has

No power tussle in party, says Punjab CM

Gaurav Vivek Bhatnagar
NEW DELHI



decided to now make Punjab a model that can be presented before the whole country.

Ahead of the AAP meeting, the BJP and Congress had also alleged that Kejriwal, after losing the Delhi CM's post, would now eye Mann's position in Punjab. Senior BJP leader and newly-elected Delhi MLA Manjinder Singh Sisra had claimed that "after losing the Delhi elections, Arvind Kejriwal has called a meeting of Punjab MLAs in Delhi" and "reports suggest that he is trying to remove Bhagwant Mann from the CM post by branding him as incompetent."

The Congress had also

expressed doubts about the continuity of the AAP government in Punjab and Bajwa had claimed on Sunday that 30 AAP MLAs were in touch with his party and were prepared to jump ship.

Stating that Mann may follow in the footsteps of Maharashtra's former CM Eknath Shinde, he had said that while "AAP's Delhi leadership will try and tighten its control on Punjab, Mann will not tolerate it. A leadership battle will ensue over controlling the government in Punjab, and this will lead to a split."

Reacting to Bajwa's remarks, Mann said, "I will ask Bajwa how many MLAs he has in Delhi? The law and order situation in Punjab is better than in most states. If it were not so, then why would industries come there? Being a border state, we have to make more efforts and we are doing that."

BJP trying to make PM visit a pre-poll outreach programme

Dheeraj Kumar
PATNA

BJP has put its preparations for Prime Minister Narendra Modi's visit to Bhagalpur on February 24 in full gear by reaching out to people from all sections of society in view of Bihar assembly elections due in October-November this year.

Apart from ministers from Bihar, union ministers have been engaged for making preparations for PM's visit to conduct the programme on a mega scale so that it could set the tone for the assembly elections. They are visiting areas assigned to them and mobilising people to attend Modi's event. Prime Minister Modi will participate in 'Kisan Samman Ni�i' programme. During the event, he will transfer money to the accounts of farmers from across the country.

BJP has deputed the party's office bearers, ministers, MPs and MLAs to make Modi's visit to Bihar an occasion to set the narrative of development before polls. Leaders from BJP's allies - JD(U) and LJP(RV) - are also making efforts to ensure good turnout of people at the event. It will also create an impression among people about how well NDA is working as a cohesive unit, particularly at the ground level, remarked a political analyst.

Meanwhile, Bihar legislature's month-long budget session will commence from February 28 as the NDA government would present its last budget before the state goes to the polls.

The budget session will conclude on March 28, according to a notification issued by the state parliamentary affairs department. On the first day, Bihar governor Arif Mohammed Khan will address the joint session of both houses of the state legislature.

The government will also present the state economic survey on the first day of the session.

BJP Haryana chief serves notice on Vij over remarks against CM

Rajesh Moudgil

CHANDIGARH



Haryana BJP president Mohan Lal Badoli on Monday issued a show-cause notice to the state energy, transport and labour minister Anil Vij for publicly speaking against him and chief minister Nayab Saini.

Vij, 71, a seven-time MLA from Ambala Cantt, who is the senior most legislator in the state, in a scathing remark against Saini, had a few days ago said that he (Saini) would come to know about people's problems only if he got down from his helicopter (udan khatola).

He had also threatened to sit on fast-unto-death over alleged non-compliance of his orders by the authorities.

TMC MP bats for 'machh bhaat'

Aritra Singha

KOLKATA

with Ashish Talyal during the assembly elections are also seen with the BJP's opposing candidate Chitra Sarwara. What is this relationship called? Talyal is still Nayab Saini's best friend, so the question arises who made him oppose the BJP candidate?

Chitra, a former Aam Aadmi Party (AAP) leader, had fought against Vij as an independent candidate and finished second in the Haryana assembly election held in October, 2024.

Pertinently, it was one of several swipes Vij had taken at Saini during the past about a fortnight.

His remarks came at a time when the Saini-government was celebrating 100 days in office.

A couple of days back, TMC's Ansans MP Shatrughan Sinha said that non-veg should be banned across the country.

Traffic curbs in Prayagraj ahead of Maghi Purnima

Biswajeet Banerjee

PRAYAGRAJ

In anticipation of the massive influx of devotees for Maghi Purnima, one of the six significant bathing days at the Maha Kumbh, Prayagraj authorities have implemented stringent traffic restrictions. With crores of pilgrims expected to take a holy dip at the Sangam, officials have imposed movement curbs across the city to prevent overcrowding. The measures follow a tragic stampede on January 29, which claimed at least 30 lives.

The fairground has been declared a no-vehicle zone since 4 AM on Tuesday, aiming to control the rising crowd. From 5 PM onward, these restrictions will extend across the entire city, with des-

ignated parking areas allocated for pilgrims arriving from outside. The traffic curbs will remain in place until the orderly dispersal of devotees on Wednesday. Essential and emergency services have been exempted from these restrictions.

The regulations will also apply to Kalpavasi, who traditionally reside near the Sangam for a fixed duration.

On Monday night, Uttar Pradesh Chief Minister Yogi Adityanath held a meeting with police and civic officials to evaluate the preparations for Maghi Purnima. Emphasizing the need for a well-coordinated traffic and crowd management plan, he instructed authorities to utilize the full parking capacity of over 5 lakh vehicles.

India ranks 96 in Corruption Perceptions Index 2024

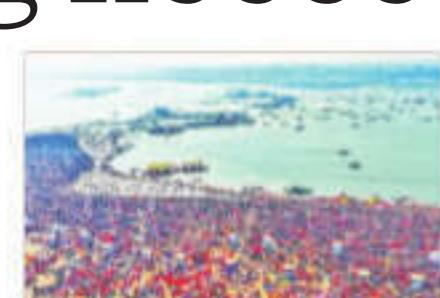
PTI

NEW DELHI

India ranked 96 out of 180 countries in the Corruption Perceptions Index (CPI) for 2024 as its overall score dropped a point to 38, according to a Transparency International report released on Tuesday.

The index, which ranks 180 countries and territories by their perceived levels of public sector corruption according to experts and business people, uses a scale of zero to 100, where "zero" is highly corrupt and "100" is very clean. In 2024, India's overall score was 38 while it was 39 in 2023 and 40 in 2022.

Pilgrims being fleeced as costs soar



Just to get to the Sangam," said a visibly upset Geeta Devi from Madhubani, Bihar.

The ordeal doesn't end at the river. Pilgrims arriving by car or bus are facing another financial hurdle — transport from the parking bays to

mela ground. With no regulated local transport, opportunistic youth are charging Rs 500 for a ride covering barely 2 kilometres.

"I could have walked if I wasn't carrying my luggage," said Somnath Sanyal, a Prayagraj resident. "But Rs 500 for such a short ride? It feels like we are being looted at every step before we even reach the Kumbh!"

Even basic necessities like food and tea have seen a steep price hike. "A simple meal that should cost Rs 50 is being sold for Rs 150," complained Sunita Yadav, a school teacher from Jhansi. "And tea? Rs 30 for a cup of water with a hint of milk. If this isn't loot, what is?"

Babies born at the holy confluence

Biswajeet Banerjee

PRAYAGRAJ

As the sacred Maha Kumbh unfolds at the Sangam, the festival of faith has gifted a special blessing to several families—a newborn child. Over the course of the grand congregation, 12 babies have been delivered at the Central Hospital in the Maha Kumbh area, their names forever tying them to this once-in-a-lifetime spiritual experience.

The latest addition, a baby boy, was born on Sunday night at the hospital. According to Dr. Manoj Kaushik, Chief Medical Superintendent, all 12 deliveries were normal. The parents, who had travelled to Prayagraj for the pilgrimage, chose names that symbolized the sacredness of their journey, including Basant, Basanti, Ganga, Jamuna, and even Kumbh itself.

In one remarkable instance, a woman from Gwalior, Madhya Pradesh, went into labour on Sunday and was rushed to the hospital, hospital staff suggested 'Kumbh-2', but Deepak remained firm in his decision: "No matter what, I will call him Kumbh, for he was born in this sacred Maha Kumbh." Neha Singh from Sarai Chandi, Phulpur, went into labour on Sunday and was rushed to the hospital, hospital staff suggested 'Kumbh-2', but Deepak remained firm in his decision: "No matter what, I will call him Kumbh, for he was born in this sacred Maha Kumbh."

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Briefs**'47% decline in Naxal violence'**

Chhattisgarh has seen a reduction of 47% in incidents of Naxal violence and a decline of 64% in deaths of civilians and security personnel resulting from such violence during 2024 as compared to 2010, the government informed the Lok Sabha on Tuesday. In response to a question, Minister of State for Home Affairs Nitin Rai said the state recorded 267 cases of Left Wing Extremism violence in 2024 as compared against 499 reported in 2010.

Odisha tribal girl gang-raped

A 14-year-old tribal girl was allegedly raped by four youths in Odisha's Koraput district, police said on Tuesday. The incident took place on Saturday night when the girl visited a 'Jatra' or village theatre with her friends. As she came out of the venue to relieve herself, the four accused abducted her and took her to a nearby hillock, where they took turns to rape her, a police officer said.

NEET aspirant dies by suicide

Yet another NEET aspirant has died by suicide in Kota, raising the city's student suicide toll to seven this year. The deceased, identified as 18-year-old Ankush Meena, was found hanging from the ceiling fan in his PG accommodation in the Pratap Nagar area of Dadabari locality. A resident of Sawai Madhopur, Ankush had been living in Kota for the past two years while preparing for the NEET medical entrance exam.

POLITICAL UNREST | Some Manipur BJP legislators claim that the decision will be taken only by the party high command

Parleys on among party leaders to find new CM

Agencies

IMPHAL

Following the resignation of Chief Minister N Biren Singh, Manipur is facing a leadership vacuum.

BJP Northeast in-charge Sambit Patra and state party president A Sharda Devi met with Governor Ajay Kumar Bhalla on Tuesday, along with other party leaders, to discuss the selection of a new Chief Minister.

However, BJP MLAs Sapam Keba and K Ibomcha indicated that the decision rests solely with the party high command, leaving the process shrouded in uncertainty. Patra has been holding closed-door meetings with

MLAs and other officials, reportedly focusing on restoring peace in the strife-torn state, though the issue of the new CM has been "hardly deliberated upon," according to sources.

Adding to the political turmoil, Governor Bhalla's order rescheduling a previously scheduled assembly session has been met with strong criticism. Congress state president Keisham Meghachandra declared the order "illegal and unconstitutional," raising concerns about a potential constitutional crisis.

Meghachandra further warned of the possibility of President's Rule or suspended animation in the state. The Communist Party of India

(CPI) Manipur State Council echoed these concerns, stating that reinstating Biren Singh would worsen the situation and demanding fresh elections.

The political maneuvering unfolds against the backdrop of relentless ethnic violence between the Meitei and Kuki communities, which has claimed over 250 lives and displaced thousands since May 2023. The ongoing conflict casts a long shadow over the state, exacerbating existing tensions and hindering efforts to restore normalcy.

In a disturbing development, senior journalist Yambem Laba was allegedly abducted from his home early Tuesday morning by armed

men. Laba's family reported that the abduction occurred after he made comments in a media discussion about the political situation and the resignation of the Chief Minister.

He was later released after issuing a public apology to a proscribed outfit, the UNLF-P, for calling them a "surrendered group."

This incident has sparked outrage and raised serious concerns about the safety of journalists and the freedom of the press in Manipur amidst the ongoing crisis. The combined effect of the political instability, the ongoing ethnic violence, and the attack on a journalist creates a volatile and precarious situation for the state of Manipur.

USAID funds will balkanise India: Dubey

New Delhi: Bharatiya Janata Party MP Nishikant Dubey on Tuesday alleged that United States Agency for International Development (USAID) was involved in funding elements, who in the guise of journalism, are trying to ally with foreign powers to destabilize and "balkanise" India.

Speaking to ANI, Dubey said he will speak in the Parliament about how the USAID allegedly fund these politicians, and journalists. Stating that the Trump administration is investigating the matter, Dubey said the Indian government will also probe it and "expose everything."

Recently, US President Donald Trump criticised USAID, claiming that the agency's handling of funds is "fraudulent and unexplainable" and said that the agency should "close down."

—Agencies

**Decide on Azam's plea, orders SC**

New Delhi: The Supreme Court on Tuesday asked a sessions court to adjudicate Samajwadi Party (SP) leader Mohammad Abdullah Azam Khan's appeal against his conviction in a case involving assault of a public servant. A bench of Justices MM Sundresh and Rajesh Bindal passed an interim order requesting the District Court to make an endeavour to dispose off Khan's appeal in six months. The Court also clarified that the sessions court would treat Khan as a juvenile accused while handling his appeal after senior advocate Kapil Sibal, representing him, requested that the findings of the juvenile court were in his client's favour. Khan moved Allahabad High Court challenging his conviction. After the Court dismissed his plea to stay his conviction in April 2023, he approached the SC.

—Agencies

From Front Page**IAF chief...**

Sitting in the cockpit of an aircraft, he further expressed frustration over HAL's delays in delivering the much-anticipated Tejas MkIAs.

"HAL is our company, we have all worked there. But I find that HAL is just not in mission mode. I was promised that by February, 11 Tejas MkIAs would be ready. Not a single one is."

HAL, responsible for the long-delayed Tejas Light Combat Aircraft (LCA), attempted damage control on Monday, posting on X about the aircraft's performance at the show.

However, the IAF chief's blunt remarks overshadowed HAL's display. His sharpest critique came when he dismissed the showcased aircraft as not truly being the promised MkIAs variant.

"The aircraft you flew, calling it MkIAs—it's not MkIAs. A software change or a cosmetic update doesn't make it one. It's a MkIAs when the weapons and capabilities are there... Mazaa nahi aa raha hai (It's not exciting.)"

The unexpected leak has put HAL under intense scrutiny, highlighting ongoing concerns over the state-owned manufacturer's ability to meet military demands.

Road rage...

The accused was presented before the Panvel court by Kharughar police on Tuesday afternoon.

Both the accused, residents of Nagpada, were traced to the Bandra-Kurla Complex, where police managed to nab Rehan; however, Faizan managed to give them the slip. "There was a rumour about the Navi Mumbai police wanting to 'encounter' the accused and because of this fear the duo was on the run. They were hiding in Sindhudurg and finally, when they came back to Mumbai, we tracked them down to BKC," an officer privy to the investigations said.

Both the accused worked as delivery boys. The arrested accused was the pillion rider while the one who hit the techie with his helmet, is still at large. Rehan Shaikh was nabbed on the basis of technical evidence that police had gathered, based on CCTV footage and informers.

IT professional Shivkumar Roshanlal Sharma, 45, was attacked around 8:30pm, on February 3, following a fight over overtaking. "After analysing the CCTV footage and recording the statements of eyewitnesses, we have found

that on the day of the incident, Sharma overtook the accused twice. He, along with the accused, stopped between Belpada and Utsav Chowk and started arguing, which led to a fight, in the course of which Sharma assaulted one of the accused, following which the accused took off his helmet and hit Sharma on his head, multiple times," said one of the officers privy to the investigation.

Hubby liable...

Bombay Stock Exchange (BSE) Byelaws, 1957 reports Bar and Bench.

At the heart of the dispute was a trading account opened by the wife with a registered stockbroker. When the account incurred a significant debit balance, the broker sought to recover the amount from both the husband and wife, arguing that they had agreed to operate their accounts jointly and share liability for losses. The broker contended that the husband had given oral instructions to transfer funds from his credit balance to his wife's account to offset losses, a move that proved costly after a stock market crash deepened the deficit.

The husband, however, contested the claim, arguing that he had been wrongfully included in the arbitration and that SEBI guidelines required written authorisation for such fund transfers. The arbitral tribunal, weighing

the couple's financial dealings and the husband's involvement in managing both accounts, ruled in favor of the broker, holding both spouses jointly liable.

The ruling was challenged in the Bombay High Court, where a single judge dismissed the appeal. However, in a subsequent, a Division Bench overturned the tribunal's decision, reasoning that the husband's liability stemmed from a private understanding and that oral agreements could not override official trading records or SEBI regulations. It held that the arbitral tribunal lacked jurisdiction and erred in law.

Criticizing the High Court for re-evaluating evidence beyond the scope of a appeal, the Supreme Court upheld the arbitral award, making both the husband and wife liable to pay the broker ₹1,18,48,06/- along with 9% annual interest from 01.05.2001 until repayment.

Trump drops...

"Let's rip the waste out of our great nation's budget, even if it's a penny at a time." Trump actually understated the cost—each penny costs over 3 cents to produce. However, eliminating the penny presents a new problem: an increased reliance on nickels, which are even more expensive to produce. The US Treasury Department loses significantly more money on each nickel than on a penny, reports CNN.

From Front Page**PM WANTS AI...**

"Some fear that machines might become more intelligent than humans, but no one holds the key to our collective future and shared destiny other than us humans," he remarked.

His statement underscored his belief in human agency and the need for ethical, people-centric technology.

Modi emphasized that AI is not merely another technological advancement; it is "writing the code for humanity" in the 21st century. He pointed out AI's transformative potential across various sectors, including governance, economy, security, health, education, and agriculture. According to Modi, AI can accelerate progress towards the United Nations' Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) by enhancing the efficiency and accessibility of essential services.

He urged nations to collaborate in building a governance framework that upholds shared values, manages risks, and fosters innovation. "AI is developing at an unprecedented scale and speed, and there is a deep interdependence across borders. We need collective global efforts to establish governance and standards that build trust," Modi explained.

The Prime Minister also showcased India's notable achievements in digital innovation, citing the nation's Digital Public Infrastructure (DPI), which serves over 1.4 billion people at minimal cost, as a model of open and accessible technology. India's robust data governance framework, built around the Data Empowerment and Protection Architecture, has democratized digital commerce and empowered citizens with data. This model forms the foundation of India's National AI Mission.

Modi highlighted India's proactive approach to AI, mentioning the country's development of its own Large Language Model (LLM), tailored to its diverse linguistic and cultural landscape. India's public-private partnership model is pooling resources like computing power, ensuring that startups and researchers have affordable access to necessary technology. "Today, India leads in AI adoption and techno-legal solutions on data privacy. We are developing AI applications for the public good," he said.

Modi also addressed AI's environmental impact, calling for sustainable practices that not only rely on clean energy but also ensure efficiency in data use and resource management. Drawing a parallel with the human brain, which performs complex tasks using minimal power, he argued that AI systems should aim for similar efficiency.

Trump pauses...

Nobody wants to do business because they don't want to feel like every time they pick up a phone, they're going to jail," he said.

A White House official told CNBC, "A pause in enforcement will help us better understand how

to streamline the FCPA to make sure it's in line with economic interests and national security."

A White House fact sheet stated that all current and past uses of the anti-corruption law will also be reviewed by justice department officials.

"U.S. companies are harmed by FCPA over-enforcement because they are prohibited from engaging in practices common among international competitors, creating an uneven playing field," the White House said.

Congressmen plea: In a move that seems coincidental, as many as six US Congressmen have written to the newly appointed Attorney General of the United States against "questionable" decisions made by the US Department of Justice such as the indictment against the Adani Group in an alleged bribery scam, which "jeopardises the relationship with close ally India".

Adani was charged by US prosecutors for allegedly being part of a scheme to pay over USD 250 million (about Rs 2,100 crore) bribe to Indian officials in exchange of favourable terms for solar power contracts.

This was concealed from the US banks and investors from whom the Adani group raised billions of dollars for the project, the prosecutors alleged. The Adani group, however, has denied the charges. The DoJ also brought a criminal indictment.

"Some of these decisions involved selectively pursuing and abandoning cases, often acting against America's interests at home and abroad, jeopardizing relationships with close allies like India," the Congressmen said in the joint letter.

India, they said, has been an important ally of the United States for decades. This relationship has flourished beyond politics, trade, and economics by evolving into a continuous socio-cultural exchange between the world's two largest democracies.

"This historical partnership and continuous dialogue between friends, however, was put at risk due to some unwise decisions by the Biden administration," they said.

"One such decision involves a questionable pursuit of a case against the Adani group, an Indian company whose executives are situated in India. This case rests on the allegation that preparations were made by members of this company in India to bribe Indian officials, also exclusively located in India."

"Instead of deferring the case to the appropriate Indian authorities, the Biden DoJ decided to push forward and indict the company's executives without any real injury to US interests being present," they wrote.

HC nod to Adani...

direct current (HVDC) link between two of its transmission substations.

The project involves an 80-kilometre stretch, of which 30km would be overhead transmission lines and the remaining 50km would be through underground cable in a mangrove zone. The HVDC lines would pass through Mumbai, Thane and Palghar district. As per the plea, only one kilometre of the HVDC passes through mangroves.

While permitting the cutting of mangroves, the bench said a balance must be struck between the need for sustainable development and the requirement to maintain the environment. "The

HVDC project would enable additional power to be supplied to Mumbai and suburbs and shall meet the ever-increasing energy demands of the city," the court said.

It added: "Considering the public importance of the proposed project, which shall benefit the electricity consumers in the city of Mumbai and its suburbs and which will lead to a potential growth, we deem it appropriate to confer the desired permission."

The HC, in 2018, had ordered a total freeze on the destruction of mangroves across the state and stipulated that permission had to be sought from the HC each time an authority wished to fell mangroves for any public project.

The court also noted that as per the transmission licence, Adani was required to commission the project by March 2025 and had received all the necessary statutory permissions to cut the mangroves.

US & UK not...

"Excessive regulation... could kill a transformative sector just as it's taking off," he warned, urging Europe to embrace "optimism rather than trepidation" in its approach to AI development.

His comments stood in stark contrast to the calls for global cooperation and regulation made by other leaders at the summit, including Indian Prime Minister Narendra Modi.

French President Emmanuel Macron, who spoke after Vance, appeared to rebuff the US vice president's stance. Macron asserted that global rules were "the foundation, alongside innovation and acceleration, of what will allow AI to arrive and endure." His remarks underscored the divide between the US's laissez-faire approach and the European push for robust international frameworks to govern AI.

The joint statement signed by 60 nations also highlighted the need for AI to be "sustainable for people and the planet," reflecting growing concerns about the environmental and societal impacts of the technology. However, the absence of the US and UK from the list of signatories raised questions about the feasibility of achieving global consensus on AI governance.

Vance's warning to China was particularly pointed. He accused Beijing of leveraging AI to tighten its authoritarian control, a charge that has been echoed by critics of the Chinese government's use of surveillance and data-driven technologies. His remarks underscored the geopolitical tensions surrounding AI development, with the US and China vying for dominance in the sector.

The summit highlighted the delicate balance between fostering innovation and ensuring ethical, responsible AI development. While Vance championed a hands-off approach to regulation, other leaders stressed the need for international collaboration to address the risks posed by AI, including bias, misinformation, and threats to privacy and security.

As the discussions concluded, it became clear that the path to global AI governance would be fraught with challenges. The divergent views of the US, Europe, and China underscored the complexity of navigating the ethical, economic, and geopolitical dimensions of AI.

For now, the world remains divided on how best to harness the transformative potential of AI.

Advocate Prashant Bhushan appearing for ADR submitted that ECI's SOPs on EVM verifications are

while safeguarding against its risks. As Macron aptly noted, the future of AI will depend on finding a balance between innovation and regulation—a task that will require unprecedented global cooperation.

Major fire at...

As per Mumbai Fire Brigade sources, the manufacturing and retail wooden furniture units at the Oshiwara furniture market were unauthorised and BMC ward officers will assess the situation after the fire is extinguished. The designated officer at K West ward who was present on the spot said, "The fire was massive and in the furniture market. We cannot confirm at this point if the units were unauthorised. Inspection will be carried out after the situation is under control and appropriate action will be taken."

Deputy Fire Officer Ravindra Bhosale said, "It is difficult to pinpoint the cause of the fire. However, the blaze escalated as the market had canteens or small kitchens which had stored gas cylinders, which exploded. The cause of the fire can be determined only after investigation. The fire was confined to wooden materials, pasting chemicals, electricals etc., causing smog." Bhosale also said that an investigation into whether all the units were authorised would be conducted by the ward office.

The Oshiwara furniture market in Juhu west is an L-shaped market, consisting of small units manufacturing furniture, and can be accessed from S V Road and Relief Road. Local resident and activist Dhaval Shah said, "Fires at the Oshiwara furniture market are not new. Every couple of years, there is a fire in the market, primarily due to non-compliance with safety standards. Despite repeated fire incidents, authorities have failed to take actions."

Preserve EVM...

"We didn't want such a detailed process that you reload something... do not erase the data, do not reload the data— all you need to do is somebody should come and verify, they have to examine."

The relevant part B states : (2) That the burnt memory semi-controller in 5%

Conversion of fields to be banned

■ GOVT ROLLS OUT AGRICULTURE POLICY ■ CM SAYS EVEN IF TCP OKAYS CONVERSION, NOC FROM AGRICULTURE DIRECTOR WILL BE MANDATORY

THE GOAN | NETWORK

PANAJI

After banning sale of agricultural land, the Goa government has now proposed to ban the conversion of all fields designated as 'rice', 'morad', 'kher', and 'khazan'.

The State on Tuesday launched its ambitious 'State Amritkal Agriculture Policy 2025', which speaks about revolutionising the sector through modern techniques and climate-resilient farming practices.

A week after being approved by the cabinet, Chief Minister Pramod Sawant along with Agriculture Minister Ravi Naik launched the policy with a ten-year vision that has been drafted keeping in mind the national goal and global commitments.

Addressing media, Sawant said the policy proposes to ban or prevent conversion of all fields designated as rice, morad, kher, and khazans in

KEY HIGHLIGHTS OF AGRICULTURE POLICY	
■ Cultivation of khazan lands by building bunds, creating soil patterns	ance, diversifying income through value addition, and agro-tourism
■ Regulations to check use of irrigation wells on farmland for drawing water for commercial use	fast track approvals
■ Enhancing access to markets, credit, insur-	■ Focus on areas like renewable energy in agriculture, agricultural startups, and innovations
	■ Establishment of Farmer Welfare Fund Board & Farmers Welfare Act
	■ Financial grants for infrastructure, land lease subsidies, tax exemptions,
	■ Promotes vertical farming (indoor and soilless farming) and urban agriculture by using
	modern methods like hydroponics, aeroponics, and aquaponics
	■ To form Goa State Coconut, Cashew, and Mango Development Board
	■ Museum of Goa's Agricultural Heritage to be established



the Form I & XIV. "Even if the Town and Country Planning Department approves conversion of agricultural fields, the NOC from the agriculture director would be mandatory," he said adding no NOC will be granted for any such conversions.

Sawant said that looking at the declining manpower in agriculture, the policy vision is dedicated to creating an ecosystem that supports farmer welfare, ensures fair labour conditions, and empowers the youth to engage in agriculture. He said that in

order to minimize the cost of production and to increase the quantity and quality of the agriculture produce, organic farming and natural farming will be encouraged.

The policy has laid focus on protecting Goa's valuable agricultural heritage while com-

bining it with modern farming techniques to boost productivity and sustainability. Sawant said that climate-resilient farming practices would be introduced with the help of ICAR to protect agriculture in Goa from the effects of climate change, ensuring its long-term sustainability.

Sawant also said the promotion of agro-tourism by allowing farmers with at least 4,000 square meters of land to be part of it, along with putting in place strict zoning rules to designate specific areas for agro-tourism.

The policy proposes steps for legislative reforms aimed at creating a farmer-centric, sustainable and simplified legal framework.

"This comprehensive policy framework thus reflects government's commitment to transforming its agricultural sector into a modern productive, sustainable, resilient, and inclusive pillar of its economy by including innovation, technology, and research in transforming agriculture, poised to meet challenges of 21st century while preserving traditional knowledge and practices that have sustained Goa's agriculture for centuries," he said.

Govt to end aid for sugarcane farmers

Pledges to buy all produce at price notified by the Centre

THE GOAN | NETWORK

Sources informed that the government will purchase the sugarcane from the farmers, who will have to drop their produce at the factory premise. Sources said that the sugarcane will be procured at FRP decided by the centre for per quintal or tonnes.

"The FRP rates keep changing," sources said.

In lieu of the Dharbandara-based Sanjivani Sugar Factory's closure in 2019, the government in 2020 notified a scheme "Special Assistance for Sugarcane Growers" in the State, for a period of five years.

Sources informed that the government has decided not to further extend the benefit under the Special Assistance scheme and instead buy cane at notified rates. "The scheme lapses this year. There is no further extension to it," sources said, referring to the demand from the farmers to continue with the scheme till factory re-starts.

IN SHORT >**₹100 cr infra boost for industrial estates**

PANAJI: The Goa Industrial Development Corporation has decided to take up Rs 100 crore infrastructure works covering all industrial estates. As directed by the Centre, the Corporation will adopt white-topping technology for the rehabilitation of highways connecting or passing through the industrial estate, thereby extending the life of the road by 25 years.

Zero tolerance for lawlessness: DGP

PANAJI: With incidents of tourists taking the law into their own hands on the rise, the recent case in Sangolda where two tourists assaulted a local driver has drawn strong condemnation from DGP Alok Kumar who said there is zero tolerance for lawlessness.

e-auction of Cuprem ore block on Feb 14

PANAJI: A day after the Supreme Court rejected Vedanta's appeal, the Directorate of Mines and Geology on Tuesday announced to resume the e-auction process of Cuprem-Sulcora mineral block XI, located in South Goa. The auction will take place on February 14.

Queue system at GMC super specialty block

PANAJI: Goa Medical College has made token number system for OPD patients visiting the Super Specialty Block operational through the Queue Management System. Token numbers will be issued at 8 am on all OPD days. Following this the patients will be registered at the respective OPD registration counters.

2 army men killed in IED explosion

JAMMU: Two Army personnel, including a captain, were killed and another was injured when suspected terrorists set off an improvised explosive device near the Line of Control in the Akhnoor sector near here on Tuesday, officials said.

Anjuna case: Cops launch manhunt as accused flee

■ Rights over property disputed ■ Sinary claims he had a verbal rental agreement and has email as proof

THE GOAN | NETWORK

PANAJI

A day after Anjuna police charged seven persons including bouncers and a security agency owner, with trespass and robbery, all the accused have gone into hiding. They have been charged with forcibly evicting a family from their 'rental premises' without Court orders.

The prime accused Janardhan Khorate and his accomplices, who allegedly forced their way into the residence in St Michael's Waddo, evicted the tenants and made off with valuables including electronic devices and Rs 3 lakh cash.

"The FIR has been filed, but the accused are on the run. They have not been cooperating with the investigation including the owner of the security firm that provided bouncers," a senior police official told The Goan. "We have launched a massive search for

POLICE INVESTIGATION

- Probe indicates Khorate and his men used rear entrance to enter the property forcefully
- This is a civil dispute, but resorting to criminal force has turned it into a criminal case
- Those with power of attorney cannot take law into their hands
- FIR filed, but accused are on the run... they are not cooperating with investigation

them."

Sources further revealed that Rajesh Sinary, in his complaint to the Anjuna police claimed that he and his family had been living in the house since May 2022 under a verbal rental agreement, supported by an email communication from the accused, at a monthly rent of Rs 50,000.

He alleged that while he was away, the accused broke in, took away the belongings and even made threatening calls prior to the incident.

PANAJI

Complicating the matter, sources stated that ownership of the property remains legally disputed, with no documents currently supporting Sinary's claim. However, eviction without a court order constitutes a criminal offense.

While Sinary reportedly sought a legal order to vacate the premises, he and his family resisted what they described as a violent takeover. Police stated that their preliminary probe indicated Khorate and his men used a rear entrance to enter the property

JEE Main: Rohan is Goa's topper with 99.95 pc

THE GOAN | NETWORK

PANAJI

Rohan Siddhesh Keri has been declared the Goa State topper with a score of 99.95 percentile at Rohan Siddhesh Keri in the Joint Entrance Exam (JEE) Main, season 1, results for which were declared on Tuesday by the National Testing Agency (NTA).

Keri, a student of Dempo PACE, is now eligible to answer JEE Advanced.

According to the NTA JEE Main toppers list, 14 candidates have achieved a perfect 100 percentile score. Ayush Singhal from Rajasthan emerged as the overall topper, followed by Kushagra Gupta from Karnataka and Daksh from Delhi-NCT.

PACE Aadi Pai Kuchelkar stood second in Goa with 99.89 percentile while Mushtifund Aryan Higher Secondary School's Steffan Silva with 99.80 percentile stood third in the State.

Dead cop in police transfer list

PANAJI: In a major oversight by police, the mass transfer order for 616 personnel issued mistakenly included the name of a constable who passed away two years ago.

Police Constable Sarvesh Gawas, who was listed as be-

ing posted at Old Goa, was shown as transferred to SPCR Panaji in the order. However, once the error was flagged, the department issued a revised order excluding his name.

The transfer order lists 616 personnel -- 80 Assistant Po-

lice Sub-Inspectors, 72 Police Assistant Sub-Inspectors, 8 Lady Assistant Sub-Inspectors, 202 Head Constables, 5 Lady Head Constables, 39 Lady Police Constables and 263 Police Constables among others as transferred.

Smoke odour from Holy Spirit cemetery area sparks concerns among residents

THE GOAN | NETWORK

MARGAO

Local residents of Pajifond and motorists travelling on the old Hospicio hospital road have complained of smoke odour emanating from a low-lying area playing host to vegetation and old trees adjoining the compound wall of the rear side of Holy Spirit cemetery.

On close scrutiny, inquisitive residents have pointed out that someone has put fire to the area to clear the vegetation or the fire which must have started for reasons unknown have spread to the entire area.

This is evident by the fact that a couple of old trees lying partially burnt, while the fire



is that neither the fire brigade has come to extinguish the fire nor have any of the authorities descended on the ground to ascertain whether anyone has played mischief by setting fire or whether the area is gutted by an accidental fire.

"I have been a regular traveller on the old Hospicio road. What I have come across near the area just outside the cemetery compound wall smoke odour emanating out. When I just made a casual halt, I came across burnt marks on the tree barks. This must have occurred may be last week, but one can sense the smoke odour emanating from the place," the resident informed.

What's surprising to note

Health dept survey reveals pollution-related illnesses near Cuncolim Industrial Estate

THE GOAN | NETWORK

MARGAO

A survey conducted by the Health Department in the vicinity of the Cuncolim Industrial Estate has confirmed what has been feared all along by the local residents - a host of health issues affecting the inhabitants.

Issues ranging from respiratory to skin allergies, asthma and kidney diseases etc were found in the oral survey conducted by the Balli Primary Health Centre in the areas in the immediate vicinity of the Cuncolim Industrial Estate.

The survey has revealed that around 28 inhabitants have been found suffering from respiratory problem, 29 residents with skin allergy, 11 people suffering from asth-

ma, one resident found with chronic kidney disease. Besides, eight people were found having sinus problem, two having history of tuberculosis, one is suffering from psoriasis, and others have complained of dust allergy and eye burning sensation. One is also found with chronic obstructive pulmonary disease.

The survey was based on an oral questionnaire with the people found at their residence at the time of their visit.

Areas covered under the survey were Simplear, Kedigcott, Masconi, Bellathemb, Gullecot, Bhatti, Takaband and IDC. The health team visited around 449 houses in these localities only to come across the people complaining of the health issues.

The survey report com-



File photo of air pollution at the Cuncolim Industrial Estate.

Cuncolim Industrial Estate has affected their health over the years.

In fact, the people of Cuncolim had been waging a sustained struggle over the decades in support of their demand to end pollution, both air and water pollution at the industrial estate.

Balli health centre report 'alarming', Yuri calls for comprehensive health impact assessment

MARGAO: Terming the report prepared by the Balli Primary Health Centre (PHC) as "alarming", Leader of Opposition Yuri Alemao, who represents Cuncolim constituency, has called for a Comprehensive Health Impact Assessment to identify and address the environmental and health issues affecting people of his constituency.

The Opposition leader has dashed off a letter to the Health Minister Vishwajit Rane after the Balli Primary Health Centre conducted a survey on the health issues

affecting the people staying in the vicinity of the Cuncolim Industrial Estate.

Primary Health Centre at Balli has conducted survey of around 449 houses in the areas adjoining to Cuncolim Industrial Estate, wherein many people are found suffering from various diseases due to industrial pollution.

"Around 28 people have been suffering from respiratory problem, 29 have skin allergy, 11 people suffering from asthma, one is found with chronic kidney disease, 8 people have sinus problem, two have past history

of tuberculosis, one is suffering from psoriasis, and others have complained of dust allergy and eye burning sensation. One is also found with chronic obstructive pulmonary disease," he said.

He added: "In this survey people have complained about pollution, foul smell complaining they are allergic to that. I had raised this issue during Zero Hour of the just concluded Assembly session and Health Minister has assured me to conduct survey of Cuncolim Municipal area," Leader of Opposition Yuri Alemao said

Briefs**VADODARA
27 turtles seized from a bungalow**

The Forest Department, along with the Animal Cruelty Prevention Board, rescued 27 turtles from a house in Vaibhavi Bungalows in the Alkapuri area of the city last week. The operation was conducted based on specific information received by Rameshbhai of the Gujarat State Animal Welfare Board. Rameshbhai told the media that the house owner was initially evasive in her responses, but when informed that keeping wild animals is a criminal offence, she eventually revealed 27 turtles. In addition to those seized, three more turtles were confiscated on Saturday. The landlord failed to provide a satisfactory explanation regarding the origin of the turtles.

**AHMEDABAD
Two held with smuggled gold**

Foilng yet another gold smuggling attempt for the third day in a row, the Customs Department at Ahmedabad Airport apprehended two passengers, including a 60-year-old woman. In the first case, a 60-year-old woman originally from Rajasthan arrived at SVPI Airport on an IndiGo flight from Jeddah. Finding her behavior suspicious, Customs officials inspected her and discovered that she was hiding 674 grams of chemically mixed gold paste in her undergarment. The Customs Department seized the gold, valued at around ₹59 lakh. Meanwhile, another passenger from Ahmedabad, who arrived on the same flight, was caught carrying a gold chain, ring, and bangle weighing 277 grams, worth ₹22.30 lakh. Both accused were arrested, and further action is ongoing.

**JAMNAGAR
₹150 crore tax evasion unearthed**

The search operation launched by the Income Tax Department last week at premises linked to salt manufacturer Dev Salt Private Limited concluded on Monday. It is learnt that a tax evasion amounting to ₹150 crore has come to light. The searches at over 20 locations and multiple lockers have yielded cash of around ₹3.50 crore. From the 16 lockers that were searched, around 2.5 kg of gold was found in three lockers. The Income Tax Department had launched this search operation on Friday morning, with searches conducted at 20 locations in Ahmedabad, Morbi, and Jamnagar districts, including the main factory of Dev Salt in Maliya Miyana taluka of Morbi. Offices of the group located in Ghuma, the Rajpath Club area, and Shantigram in Ahmedabad were also searched.

PARCELS VALUED AT ₹1053 CR GRABBED | Fraudesters used fake farm certs to acquire vast tracts

Massive land scam unearthed in Surat**FPJ NEWS SERVICE**

SURAT



A shocking land scam has been uncovered in Surat, Gujarat, where five individuals fraudulently obtained farmer certificates and illegally acquired vast tracts of land, converting agricultural plots into commercial properties. The total value of the illegally acquired land has been estimated at Rs.1,053 crores, with potential fines reaching up to Rs.3,500 crores.

The petitioner, Vivek Patel, a resident of Kuvad village in Olpad taluka, has submitted a memorandum to Dr. Jayanti Ravi, Additional Chief Secretary of the Revenue Department to personally intervene, conduct a thorough legal investigation, and initiate a police complaint against those responsible for the illegal land acquisitions. If found guilty, the individuals

and complicit officials could face hefty fines amounting to three times the market value of the land, potentially exceeding ₹3,500 crores.

Fraudulent Acquisition of Land Using Fake Farmer Certificates

According to the petition

submitted by the applicant, Dolathbai Maganbhai Desai was the original owner of land bearing Survey No. 3 in Majura, Surat. However, in 1978, five individuals—Sugamchand Chimanlal Shah, Champaklal Chunilal Jinwala, Dhansukhlal Chunilal Jinwala, Nanubhai

Khandubhai Desai, and Tilal Chhaganlal—illegally obtained farmer certificates under Section-32(m) of the Act. Using forged Specimen No.9 certificates, they were declared farmers despite no valid orders from Mamlatdar Majura or the Collector of Surat regarding these fraudulent land transactions.

Since then, these individuals have engaged in large-scale land profiteering, converting about 6.74 lakh square meters of agricultural land into non-agricultural plots in villages including Abhava, Bhimrad, Bamroli, Khajod, Vesu, Rundh, Gaviar, Sultanabad, Dumas, and Bhimpore. This illegal activity has continued for over four decades, violating land acquisition laws and causing immense financial loss to the state government.

Fraudulent Land Transfers and Illicit Transactions

The fraudulent scheme operated through fake farmer certificates, allowing non-farmers to acquire agricultural land and later convert it into high-value commercial properties. The accused parties managed to have their names illegally

entered in village Form No.7/12 through Entry No.665, dated 26/10/1978, without a valid order from the Mamlatdar. Furthermore, they were never officially declared as protected ganotias (tenant farmers) in 1947-48 or 1957, raising serious legal concerns about the legitimacy of their land ownership claims.

Government Action and Legal Ramifications

The petitioner, citing an official letter from Amitbhai Chavda, Leader of the Opposition in the Gujarat Legislative Assembly, has demanded an immediate investigation by the Revenue Department. Despite repeated appeals, no inquiry has been conducted by Mamlatdar Majura or the Collector of Surat regarding these fraudulent land transactions.

IndiGo to operate more flights for Maha Kumbh**FPJ NEWS SERVICE**

AHMEDABAD

With the Maha Kumbh rush still ongoing, IndiGo Airlines will operate three additional direct flights between Ahmedabad and Prayagraj. Among these, two flights will run daily from February 16 to 28, while one flight will operate on four specific days—February 24, 25, 27, and 28.

With the addition of these flights, devotees still seeking travel options to reach the Maha Kumbh Mela will now have more connectivity to the holy city.

Flight Schedule as per Airline's website

Flight 6E 6307 will take off from Sardar Vallabhbhai Patel International Airport (SVPI) at 8:05 AM, reaching Prayagraj Airport (IXD) at



9:50 AM, with a travel time of 1 hour 45 minutes. Return Flight 6E 6308 will depart from Prayagraj Airport (IXD) at 4:25 PM and land at SVPI at 6:20 PM, with a travel time of 1 hour 55 minutes.

Flight 6E 6311 will take off from SVPI at 7:00 PM, reaching Prayagraj Airport (IXD) at 8:50 PM, with a travel time of 1 hour 50 minutes. Return Flight 6E 6312 will depart from Prayagraj Airport (IXD) at 9:20 PM and arrive at SVPI at 11:15 PM, with a travel time of 1 hour 55 minutes.

Flight 6E 5151, operating only on February 24, 25, 27, and 28, will take off from SVPI at 11:20 AM and reach Prayagraj Airport (IXD) at 1:10 PM, with a travel time of 1 hour 50 minutes. Return Flight 6E 5152 will depart from Prayagraj Airport (IXD) at 2:00 PM and land at SVPI at 3:55 PM, with a travel time of 1 hour 55 minutes.

Special trains and GSRTC Volvo buses are also being operated for the Maha Kumbh from Gujarat. However, due to the heavy rush, passengers are struggling to find seats in both trains and buses.

Traffic curbs on Feb 12 for India-England ODI**FPJ NEWS SERVICE**

AHMEDABAD

With the highly anticipated third One-Day International (ODI) between India and England set to take place on February 12 at the Narendra Modi Stadium in Ahmedabad, the city traffic police have implemented road closures and alternative routes to ensure smooth traffic management. To prevent congestion, specific roads near the stadium will be temporarily closed, and commuters are advised to follow designated alternate routes.

The road from Janpath T to Motera Gam T, passing through the stadium's main gate and Krupa Residency, will remain closed to vehicular traffic. Commuters traveling in the area can use alternative routes, including the road from Tapovan Circle to Prabodh Raval Circle via ONGC Cross Roads, Visat T Junction, Janpath T, and Power House Cross Roads. Another alternate route will be available from Krupa

Residency to Apollo Circle through Status Cross Roads and Bhat-Koteswar Road. Return journey tickets to Gandhinagar will be valid after 10 PM.

To facilitate easier access for passengers, GMRC has also introduced a special ticketing system. Spectators returning after the match will be able to board metro trains only from Motera Stadium and Sabarmati stations. To avoid long queues at Motera Station, passengers can purchase special return tickets in advance from Nirant Cross Road, Apparel Park, Kalupur, Old High Court, Thaltej, Motera, Sabarmati, Ranip, Vadaj, and Jivraj metro stations on the match day.

Strict helmet rule for govt staff**FPJ NEWS SERVICE**

AHMEDABAD

Gujarat Police has launched a statewide crackdown on helmet rule violations, with a special focus on government employees.

The drive, initiated under the directive of Director General of Police (DGP) Vikas Sahay, mandates that both riders and pillion passengers on two-wheelers wear helmets when entering government offices. Starting from today, this campaign has already resulted in hundreds of fines across major cities, including Ahmedabad, Surat, Vadodara, and Rajkot.



Even government employees, who are often seen as above the law, were not spared in this extensive traffic drive.

At the Ahmedabad RTO office, applicants without helmets or seatbelts were immediately fined. Similar action was taken outside various government offices in Vadodara, where police personnel themselves were among the first to be penalized for not wearing helmets.

PI K.J. Rana from the traffic branch confirmed that enforcement was being carried out not

only at government offices but also at police stations. "We have started issuing fines to police personnel arriving at the Police Bhavan without helmets. The same procedure is being followed at multiple government offices across Vadodara," he stated.

Excuses Fall Flat as Police Enforce Rules Strictly

Many employees attempted to dodge fines by offering excuses. A government worker at Kuber Bhavan admitted, "I forgot my helmet at home in a hurry."

RTO strike ends, relief for vehicle owners**FPJ NEWS SERVICE**

AHMEDABAD



Tens of hundreds of vehicle owners across Gujarat heaved a sigh of relief as the technical officers of the Regional Transport Offices (RTOs), who had been on strike for two days, unanimously decided to call off their protest on Tuesday. The Technical Officers Association of the Motor Vehicles Department received government assurances to resolve their long-pending issues, leading to the strike's withdrawal.

Disruptions Due to the Strike

The strike, which included a 'No Login Day' campaign on Monday and a planned mass casual leave (CL) protest on Tuesday, had severely impacted applicants who had scheduled appointments for driving tests, vehicle registrations, and other essential ser-

vices. More than 400 applicants at the Ahmedabad RTO and over 200 at the Vastral RTO could not take their driving tests due to the closure of test tracks. The issue was widespread across the state, leaving thousands of applicants in distress.

Even as the strike continued, technical officers expressed their dissatisfaction by working with black armbands as a form of protest. On Monday, the 'No Login Day' campaign led to a complete shutdown of services, adding

to the inconvenience of applicants. With the strike officially ending, operations resumed at RTO offices, allowing pending tests and services to be completed from 12 PM onwards on Tuesday.

Government's Response and Agreement

A movement was initiated by RTO inspectors and assistant inspectors across Gujarat, including 25 from Rajkot, to push for various demands. These included completing probation periods and mak-

ing officers permanent, granting promotions, and reinstating officers who had been suspended based on anonymous complaints.

The breakthrough came after a meeting at the Commissioner's office, where officials from the Motor Vehicle Technical Officers Association engaged in discussions with government representatives. The positive approach from the government led to the resolution of the dispute and the subsequent withdrawal of the strike.

Heavy Disruptions Across Gujarat

The impact of the strike was felt across multiple cities, with Surat RTO remaining closed for one and a half days, affecting over 1,200 applicants. The testing track in Surat alone processes around 500 appointments daily, leaving more than 700 applicants stranded.

Even government employees, who are often seen as above the law, were not spared in this extensive traffic drive.

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PI K.J. Rana from the traffic branch confirmed that enforcement was being carried out not

Tea, turmeric as sustainable fabric dyes**Dr Vidhu Sekhar P**

In an eco-friendly finishing treatment for fabric, Saket Kumar, a 3rd-year student of Textile Design at the National Institute of Fashion Technology (NIFT) Daman Campus, has successfully experimented with natural dyes to create a stunning earthy-toned fabric.

Inspired by the beauty of nature and the desire to promote sustainability in fashion, Saket explored the possibilities of natural dyeing. Using readily available ingredients like tea and turmeric, he achieved a warm, earthy brown colour that exudes a cozy, natural vibe. His innovative approach



enhanced the dye's absorption and colour fastness. The result of the experiment is a promising thread to the sustainable fashion practices.

To facilitate optimal dye absorption, the fabric was subjected to a pre-treatment process involving warm water, alum (aluminium sulphate),

and acetic acid. The fabric was soaked in this solution for 1 hour, allowing the alum to form a complex with the fabric's cellulose molecules, thereby enhancing its absorbency.

The natural dye bath was prepared by boiling 50g of tea leaves (*Camellia sinensis*) and 10g of turmeric (*Curcuma longa*) in water. The resulting dye liquor was then used to dye the pre-treated fabric. To enhance dye absorption, salt (sodium chloride) was added to the dye bath, followed by caustic soda (sodium hydroxide) to create an alkaline environment, promoting deeper dye penetration and improved colour fastness.

Naroda sports complex nears completion**FPJ NEWS SERVICE**

AHMEDABAD



which is now being increased. The entire cost of the project is being financed through grants from the central and state governments. Following budgetary approval, the total plot area expanded from 72,500 square metres to 82,507 square metres, which also resulted in an increase in the built-up area. Adjustments have been made in planning and design based on recommendations from the Sports Authority of India, ensuring upgraded facilities to meet international standards. The newly available plots have allowed the architect to design an area of approximately 1.15 lakh square metres.

Planning and design for the complex were based on a built-up area estimate of ₹631.77 crore. The foundation stone for the project was laid on May 29, 2022, and with 95% of the work completed, the grand inauguration is

CABINET MEET: Nod to Export Promotion Policy

Industrial policy: 20L jobs in 5 years

Our Staff Reporter

Bhopal

In a bid to boost employment, the state Cabinet on Tuesday approved the Industrial Conservation Policy 2025, with an aim to generate over 20 lakh jobs in the next five years. The policy also aims to propel the state's GDP from Rs 2.9 lakh crore to approximately Rs 6 lakh crore by 2030.

The Cabinet also gave its nod to Export Promotion Policy, Logistics Policy, City Gas Distribution Policy, Film Tourism Policy, and Tourism Policy, marking a significant step towards economic growth. Moreover, the Pump Hydro Storage Project implementation plan was also okayed. A key feature of these policies is a single window system that guarantees timely permission for businesses.

The Industrial Conservation Policy aims to create a favourable environment for businesses by ensuring fast-tracked approvals through a single window. The policy includes 10 sector-specific strategies, including Agriculture, Dairy, Food Processing, Textile, Aerospace, Defence Production, Pharmaceuticals, Biotechnology, EV Manufacturing, and Renewable Energy.

One of the standout features is the provision of Ultra Mega Projects (over Rs 100 crore), which can receive a capital grant ranging from 15% to 30%,



UAD minister Kailash Vijayvargiya addresses media with a maximum of Rs 90 crore. The policy also encourages tourism-related infrastructure like Golf Resorts, Convention Centres, Wellness Resorts, and Cruise Lines, as well as projects such as International Air Services, Heritage Hotels and Ropeways.

Logistics Policy

This policy aims to provide piped natural gas (PNG) for domestic, commercial and industrial use, ensuring availability of clean fuel at affordable rates. By targeting both household and industrial sectors, the policy seeks to reduce pollution and offer a more sustainable energy alternative.

Pump Hydro Storage Project

The Cabinet also approved the Pump Hydro Storage Project Plan, which will use solar energy to pump water to higher elevations during the day. At night, this stored water will be released to generate electricity through turbines.

Shah to attend GIS valedictory function

PM's Bageshwar Dham prog fixed

Our Staff Reporter

Bhopal

Prime Minister Narendra Modi will inaugurate the Global Investors' Summit (GIS), and Home Minister Amit Shah will be present at the valedictory function.

Chief Minister Mohan Yadav gave this information at a meeting with his cabinet ministers on Tuesday. Shah has given his



consent to take part in GIS, Yadav said. Modi will lay the foundation of a cancer hospital at Bageshwar Dham in Chhattarpur on February 23, Yadav said at the cabinet meeting. The Prime Minister will come to Bhopal late in the evening after taking part in the function.

None, including PM, to sit on dais



Modi to sit with CM, top industrialists in first row

Smita

Bhopal

No guests including Prime Minister Narendra Modi will sit on dais at the inaugural session of Global Investors' Summit on February 24.

The inaugural session will be held at the main hall, which is 40 metre x 100 metre in size with a capacity to accommodate 3,000 people. About 80% of them will be industrialists, investors and delegates. The rest will comprise ministers, bureaucrats, public representatives and others.

Prime Minister Modi who will inaugurate the summit at 10 am will sit with chief minister Mohan Yadav and top industrialists in the first row, which will have 50 seats. The inaugural session will be of 75 minutes.

"Nowadays in mega events, speakers come on the dais one by one to address the gathering. No one sits on dais. As things

80% audience to be industrialists, delegates, investors

stand today, this will be the arrangement at GIS too," a senior Madhya Pradesh Industrial Development Corporation Ltd official said.

On the inaugural day, IT Summit will be held in Summit Hall 1 from 11.45 am to 2.30 pm. The summit on new and renewable energy will be simultaneously held in summit Hall 2. Both the summit halls can accommodate 500 people each.

The Country Session Hall will hold two sessions on Germany and Global South from 1.15 pm to 2.15 pm. CM Yadav will hold one-to-one meeting with industrialists at CM Lounge on the inaugural day. He will meet industrialists again from 4.30 pm to 5.30 pm on the same day.

Cultural programme and dinner will be hosted at the main hall from 7 pm to 9 pm.

About 52 people including actor and motivational speaker will address sessions during the two-day summit.

Accused were in regular contact with men of other states

Our Staff Reporter

Bhopal

Police have uncovered that betting rackets in the city are being run by inter-state gangs, with masterminds operating from major cities like Delhi, Mumbai, and Indore. The Crime Branch has busted multiple betting rings over the past few weeks, arresting 46 persons involved in the illegal activities.

Crime Branch officials said that these gangs issue instructions to local bookies, who, in turn, manage betting operations with clients. The local bookies, who maintain records and are in direct contact with punters, have been identified, but the masterminds are

Vijay Manohar Tiwari appointed VC of MCU

Our Staff Reporter

Bhopal

Vijay Manohar Tiwari has been appointed as Vice Chancellor of Makhanlal Chaturvedi National Journalism and Communication University, Bhopal.

His tenure will be for a period of four years. The appointment order was issued by the Chief Minister Mohan Yadav, Chairman of the General Council of the university on Monday. Tiwari is an alumnus of the university. He is a senior journalist and has been working in various leading Hindi dailies for the past 30 years. He is also a member of Bharat Bhawan Trust, Bhopal.

When the train arrived at

Satna junction witnesses heavy rush due to Maha Kumbh

Rewa-Anand Vihar superfast express remains overcrowded

FP News Service

SATNA

There was an unprecedented crowd at Satna junction on Monday because of the ongoing Mahakumbh in Prayagraj, UP.

Although the Railway Ministry decided to run ten special trains for the occasion, the crowd swelled up.

The rush was so heavy that the passengers who had reservations in the Rewa-Anand Vihar superfast express had to struggle to reach their berths.

There was a long queue at platform number one. The passengers had to wait for more than ten minutes in the queue, but many of them could not reach their berths.

The situation was worrisome in terms of security of passengers. Though there were ten special trains, this superfast train was over-

Satna junction at 5:15 pm, it was overcrowded. There was no room in the general compartments, and most of the reserved bogies were locked from inside.

The doors were opened only after the railway police swung into action. According to railway officials, the rush was heavier than seen on Mauni Amavasya.

The officials further said 1,400 tickets had been sold from Satna to Prayagraj, but the number of passengers visiting Mahakumbh by Rewa-Anand Vihar superfast express was more than 2,500.

The situation was worrisome in terms of security of passengers. Though there were ten special trains, this superfast train was over-



Naini or Chheoki stations. The distance between Prayagraj station and Sangam is just six km. On the other hand, from Chheoki and Naini, the Sangam is 12 km. This is the reason why people prefer to go to Prayagraj to reach Sangam.

Apart from that, the timings of Rewa-Anand Vihar superfast express are suitable for the passengers.

The train leaves Satna junction at 5:30pm and arrives at Prayagraj at 9pm. The first stoppage of the train after Rewa is at Satna.

The passengers think the train will not have much crowd because of its limited stoppages. This is the reason why people prefer it to other trains.

Nine Kumbh pilgrims killed in road accidents

Our Staff Reporter

Bhopal

In two road accidents on Tuesday, nine people were killed. In Jabalpur, seven people died when a truck collided with a mini-bus carrying devotees returning to Andhra Pradesh from the Maha Kumbh at Prayagraj.

According to Jabalpur collector Deepak Kumar Saxena, the accident took place around 8:30 am near Sihora, 65 km from Jabalpur, when the truck reportedly veered onto the wrong side of the highway. Several others were trapped inside the mini-bus, and local authorities, including SP, coordinated rescue efforts at the scene.

In a second incident in Maihar, two people died, and five others were injured when an unidentified vehicle rammed their SUV at around 4 am near Kanchapur village on National Highway 30.

The SUV was returning to Indore from the Maha Kumbh. All the injured

CM ORDERS PROBE

CM Mohan Yadav has expressed deep sorrow over the untimely death of pilgrims from Andhra Pradesh who were returning from Prayagraj. The CM directed the district administration to ensure proper medical care for the injured and assist in contacting the families of the deceased to arrange for the transportation of the bodies. The CM emphasized the importance of adequate rest for drivers during long journeys to Prayagraj. He asked local authorities to conduct a thorough investigation into the accident.

persons were referred to Satna district hospital after initial treatment in Amarpatan, the official said.

The two deceased have been identified as Manju Sharma (32) and Manoj Vishwakarma (42). The police are reviewing CCTV footage to identify the vehicle responsible for the hit-and-run.

Interstate gangs behind city's betting rackets: Police



Hitesh Chandani

Bhupendra Singh Dangi

Online cricket betting syndicate busted

The Crime Branch also busted an online cricket betting racket by arresting Hitesh Chandani (29), alias Chuppa, of Lalghati. The accused, a class 12 dropout, was operating a grocery store as a front to cover up his illegal activities. According to ACP Mukhtar Qureshi, Hitesh ran betting operation through an online platform, using a special ID on his mobile to book and receive betting rates. His operations were linked to one Ramu Kewat, who is identified as the kingpin of the syndicate. Police have seized substantial evidence, including records of Rs 22.4 lakh in cash transactions, along with screenshots of online bookings, chat logs, and voice recordings.

Bhopal. In the past week alone, the

Crime Branch cracked down on over half a dozen betting rackets. During interrogation, suspects revealed that they were in regular contact with individuals from other states who were directing the betting operations. Police have traced several suspicious mobile numbers tied to the accused, and are now investigating further to identify key players behind the network.

Crackdown on matka betting

The Crime Branch busted a matka betting racket by arresting Bhupendra Singh Dangi (32) of Nishatpura. During a raid at JP Nagar Trisection, police seized betting numbers, booking slips, and Rs 3,300 cash from Dangi's possession. Dangi said that he used to hand over the cash to one Raju Ahirwar, the mastermind behind the racket. Raju

Murmu to attend mass marriage at Bageshwar Dham

BHPAL: President Droupadi Murmu will attend a special mass marriage ceremony at Bageshwar Dham on February 26, Mahashivratri. A total of 251 girls from

various states will be married, with the event being facilitated by Pt Dhirendra Shastri. Of the 251 girls, 108 belong to tribal communities, while 143 are from other communities. The girls come from nine states - Madhya Pradesh, Uttar Pradesh, Maharashtra, Delhi, Rajasthan, Bihar, Jharkhand, Odisha and Chhattisgarh. Among the selected girls, four are disabled, while 54 are orphans, with 94 having lost their fathers and 12 having lost their mothers. Moreover, 87 girls belong to very poor families, with many facing financial hardship due to serious illnesses in their families.

Over 800 bags of illegally stored FPS rice, truck seized

The rice was on way to a beer factory in Gujarat

Our Staff Reporter

INDORE

The officials of Food and Civil Supplies Department raided a godown on Tuesday early morning and succeeded in recovering over 800 bags of rice, which was primarily procured from the customers of Fair Price Shops (FPS). The entire lot of the rice bags and a heavy-duty truck were seized and the godown was sealed. It is stated that the rice was loaded to be dis-

patched to a beer factory in Gujarat.

ML Maru, the district supply officer, informed on Tuesday that about 800 sacks

Godown located on road leading to Reoti Range

of loose rice and a truck were seized from a warehouse located on the way to Reoti Range behind the petrol pump on Ujjain Road. The truck MH 20GC-3192 was seized while the driver Karan, a resident of Dhar district was nabbed from the spot. The labourers, working

Satish Agarwal and his team change godowns every 15-20 days. Auto drivers buy rice from consumers from the streets for Rs 15 to 17 per kg and sell it to him. Consumers sell the rice, which they get free of cost from FPS, to street vendors and middle traders. This action was taken by junior supply officer Rahul Sharma, assistant supply officer Shiv Sunder Vyas and team. The department is conducting a detailed investigation to determine the role of the warehouse owner and who else is involved in the purchase and sale of rice from the said warehouse and its storage.

Police claimed that the police team managed to identify and arrest the accused within 24 hours after registering an FIR against some unidentified thieves.

Three men arrested for theft at locked house

Goods more than Rs 1.5 lakh were recovered from them

Our Staff Reporter

INDORE

Three men were arrested in connection with the theft at a locked house in the Kanadiga area. They allegedly confessed to their crime after which the goods worth Rs 1.5 lakh were recovered from them.

Police claimed that the police team managed to identify and arrest the accused within 24 hours after registering an FIR against some unidentified thieves.

Quick Trail

BENGALURU

Auto drive on tobacco hazards

The Bruhat Bengaluru Mahanagara Palike (BBMP), in collaboration with the Partnership for Healthy Cities, supported by Bloomberg Philanthropies in partnership with the World Health Organisation and Vital Strategies, has launched a city-wide auto campaign to raise awareness about the harmful effects of tobacco, the dangers of smoking in public places, and the comprehensive ban on hookah.

As part of this initiative, 16 branded autorickshaws will traverse Bengaluru's busiest areas, playing pre-recorded messages aimed at educating the public on tobacco-related harms and the importance of smoke-free public spaces. The campaign, which will run for a week, seeks to reinforce compliance with tobacco control laws and promote a healthier Bengaluru.

The campaign was inaugurated by Suralkar Vikas Kishore, IAS, Special Commissioner (Health), BBMP, alongside Karigowda, Zonal Commissioner, Yelahanka, and Dr. Thiriveni B S, Project Director of the Partnership for Healthy Cities. Speaking at the launch, Kishore emphasised the need to protect citizens, especially children, from exposure to harmful tobacco smoke.

"Our children are our future, and it is our responsibility to safeguard them from the dangers of tobacco."

BENGALURU

Renewable energy gets Rs 3.43 L cr



Karnataka has taken a major step toward clean energy development by securing investments worth Rs 3.43 lakh crore in the renewable energy sector. At the Global Investors' Summit 2025, Karnataka Renewable Energy Development Limited (KREDL) signed MoUs with 13 companies, paving the way for 78,253 new jobs across the state.

Energy Minister K.J. George presented the MoU letters to company heads, reaffirming Karnataka's commitment to sustainable energy initiatives. Notable attendees included KREDL Chairman T.D. Rajegowda, Additional Chief Secretary Gaurav Gupta, and Managing Director K.P. Rudraprahaa.

Key investors include JSW Neo Energy Limited (Rs 56,000 crore), ReNew Pvt. Ltd. (Rs 50,000 crore), and Tata Power Renewable Energy Limited (Rs 50,000 crore). This investment strengthens Karnataka's position as a renewable energy hub, promoting green growth and employment generation.

BENGALURU

HAL assures delivery of LCA to IAF 'soon'



Maker of Light Combat Aircraft 'Tejas,' Hindustan Aeronautics Limited (HAL) on Tuesday assured that it will soon start delivering the airplane to the Indian Air Force with the technical difficulties now being resolved, amid reports of concerns raised by IAF chief AP Singh in this connection.

HAL Chairman and Managing Director D K Sunil said, "the delay is not simply attributable to just I would say laziness on part of the industry."

"There have been technical issues which have got sorted out. The concern of the Air Chief is understandable," he told reporters here at the Aero India 2025 event.

According to him, meetings have been held at different levels and HAL, a central PSU would soon be delivering the aircraft.

"We have now promised that we will have all the structures ready. We have conveyed this. We have had multiple meetings at different levels. We have convened this. We are building this. And once the engines are available, this will start rolling out. I think the concern is well understood."

'Save your legs from stumbling blocks'



NT Correspondent

will recover quickly from this injury.

I wish him a speedy recovery," Singh added.

The CM was hospitalised after he developed knee pain on Saturday. Sources close to him said there was nothing serious about it.

The Invest Karnataka summit was the first event Siddaramaiah attended ever since he developed the knee pain.

On the political front, the veteran leader has been weathering the MUDA site allotment 'scam' facing allegations of illegalities in the allotment of 14 sites to his wife Parvathi B M by the Mysuru Urban Development Authority.

In a relief, Karnataka High Court last week dismissed a petition filed by a RTI activist seeking a direction to transfer investigation into the case to the CBI.

Further, some Congress leaders have been openly staking claim for the CM's chair of late, amid speculations of a cabinet reshuffle. Particularly, supporters of Deputy CM DK Shivakumar have been demanding his elevation to the top post, in lines with an apparent agreement reached in 2023 about a "rotational CM formula," something the Congress has never confirmed or denied.

NT Correspondent

BENGALURU

NEWS in SHORTS

KAKINADA



Medical student dies by suicide in Kakinada

A 23-year-old medical student of Ranga Reddy Medical College here died by suicide in his hostel room in the intervening night between Monday and Tuesday, a police official said. The deceased student has been identified as R Sai Ram died by suicide in his hostel room when his roommate was away studying in another room, police added. 'We are yet to determine the reason for his suicide, we are investigating,' the police official told news agency. According to police, Sai Ram hailed from a small village near Narasapuram in West Godavari district. Meanwhile, police registered a case under Section 194 of BNSS that deals with suicide.

HYDERABAD
T-JUDA urges for immediate crackdown on quacks

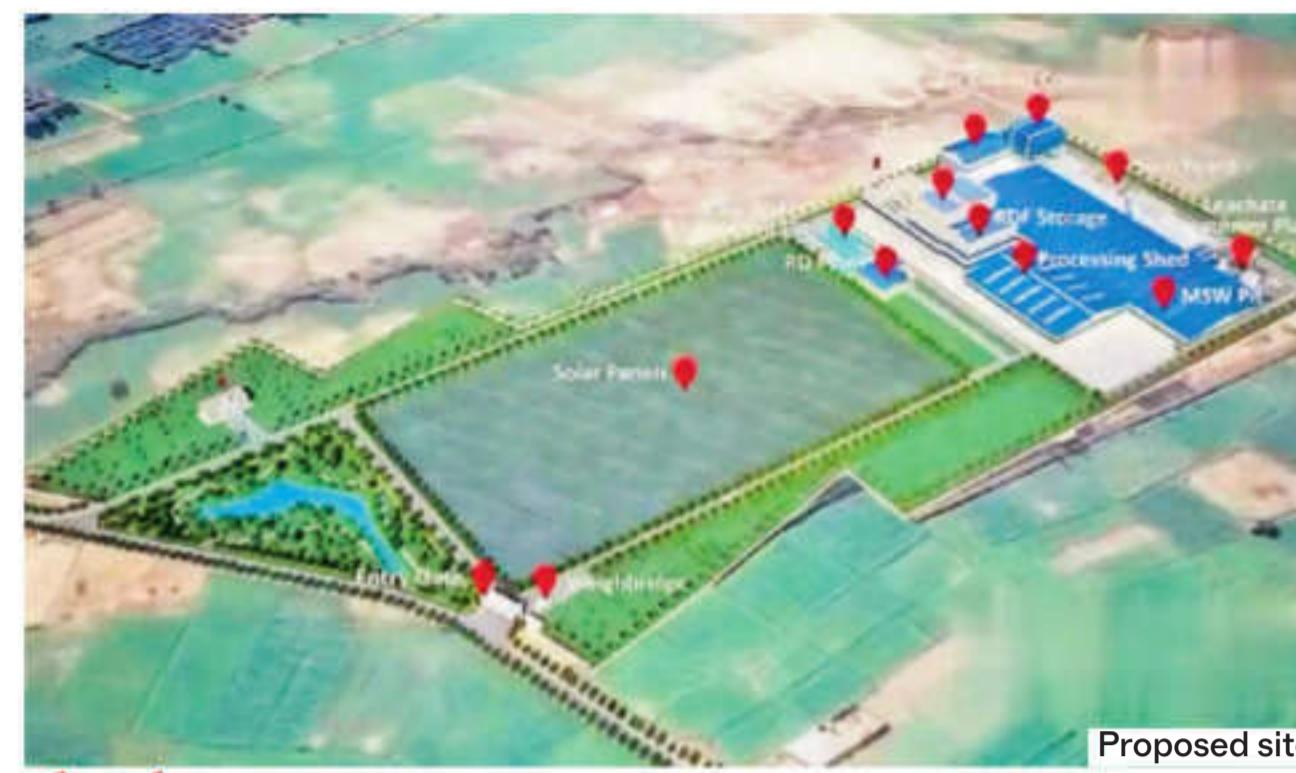
The Telangana Junior Doctors Association (T-JUDA) have demanded the state government to show no mercy for quacks and also urged for immediate crackdown on illegal practitioners in the state. The JUDAs demanded the Department of Health and the Law Department to impose stricter laws, initiate immediate arrests, and take harsher action against these quacks and their supporters. 'There will be no leniency! Those who risk innocent lives with their incompetence deserve nothing but the harshest punishment,' they said. The JUDAs strongly condemns and opposes the 'disgraceful demands' of self-proclaimed RMPs and PMPs protesting at Indira Park. These illegal quacks, who have no medical qualification or certification, dare to demand legal recognition to continue playing with innocent lives. Their call to stop raids by the Telangana State Medical Council (TSMC), prevent legal action, and halt arrests was nothing but an audacious attempt to escape accountability for their dangerous, life-threatening practices, they said.

HYDERABAD
Police constable assaulted by intoxicated persons

A Police Constable from the Hyderabad Commissioner's Task Force was viciously assaulted by two individuals after he requested them to refrain from consuming alcohol in a public area. The incident occurred in Sri Krishna Nagar in Jubilee Hills on Saturday. T Eshwar Rao, a constable of the North Zone Task Force, resides in Krishna Nagar. On Saturday night, as he was heading home after his shift, he noticed two individuals drinking alcohol. He asked them not to consume liquor at the place and tried to take their photographs using his mobile phones. The intoxicated individuals forcibly took the constable's mobile phone and assaulted him. Following the incident, he filed a complaint at Jubilee Hills. Police registered a case, leading to the arrest and remand of three suspects, said Jubilee police SHO K Venkateswar Reddy.

KALYANA MALLEPALLI | HYDERABAD

Construct boundary wall for Pyaranagar dump yard: HC



We will continue agitation until the government withdraws the proposal

- V Sunitha Laxma Reddy
Narsapur MLA

the local flying area of this training establishment. A letter to the district collector too has been written by the Wing Commander and Airspace Safety and Inspection Officer.

Also, the farmers fear that the soil would get destroyed. There is a sizable vegetable production in the region. In the meantime, the Air Force Academy has raised objections citing safety concerns for aircraft and human life. This dump yard falls within

Officials of GHMC say that the site is being set up with advanced European technology and all eco-friendly measures would be taken to mitigate negative effects on the environment.

Babu hails parents for 10-yr-old's organ donation

METRO INDIA NEWS | AMARAVATI

In a deeply moving act of generosity, the parents of 10-year-old Yuvan, a young boy from Kapugodayavalasa in Srikakulam district, have donated his organs after he was declared brain dead due to the rare Guillain-Barré Syndrome.

Doctors successfully harvested Yuvan's eyes, kidneys, and liver, which were then transplanted into patients in need, giving them a new lease on life.

Andhra Pradesh Chief Minister N. Chandrababu Naidu took to X (formerly Twitter) to express his condolences and admiration for

AP Govt approves Rs 9.2 cr for 10 new bulletproof vehicles

METRO INDIA NEWS | AMARAVATI

The Andhra Pradesh government has sanctioned Rs 9.2 crore for the procurement of 10 new bulletproof vehicles to enhance security for Chief Minister N. Chandrababu Naidu and other VIPs. The State Home Department has issued an official order detailing the initiative. As per the directive, the government will purchase 10 Toyota Fortuner SUVs and retrofit them with bulletproof protection. This move comes as a preventive security measure, given the frequent travels of VIPs across the state. The decision reflects the government's commitment to ensuring the safety of high-ranking officials, particularly during their visits to various districts. The new fleet will be an addition to the existing bulletproof vehicles currently in use.

The Chief Minister extended his deepest condolences to the bereaved family and assured them of full government support in every possible way.



products, particularly Araku coffee, as a testament to his administration's commitment to promoting indigenous communities.

The Chief Minister also recalled that, during his tenure in united Andhra Pradesh, his government had introduced GO No. 3, which ensured ex-

Waste-to-Energy Plant

Capable of generating 15 MW of electricity by processing dry waste

Biogas Production

Designed to process wet waste, producing approximately 270 tonnes of compressed biogas daily.

Odour & Pollution Control

Waste treatment processes will occur within enclosed structures to prevent the release of unpleasant odours and wastewater into the environment. Advanced biofilters will be installed to purify the air and eliminate foul smells.

Why locals are protesting

Residents of Pyaranagar village don't want the village to turn into a dumping yard and turn the area into another Jawahar Nagar

Farmers fear the soil will get destroyed. Nallavalli and Kountpalli will also get polluted where vegetable cultivation takes place

Dump yard will damage the entire Narsapur area

Business and commercial establishments observed voluntary shutdown to register their dissent

tenders underway. The minister also confirmed that Gandikota Fort tenders have been received, paving the way for further development. The ambitious Akhanda Godavari tourism development initiative is currently at the tender stage, and efforts are being made to accelerate its implementation.

The minister requested fast-track approvals for key tourism projects under Swadesha Darshan, including Nagarjunasagar, Ahobilam, and Suryalanka. The Union Minister responded positively, assuring full support for these proposals.

Minister Durgesh also requested the Centre to consider a proposal submitted on September 19, 2024, for the Vedagiri Lakshmi Narasimha Swamy Temple in Nellore. Additionally, he urged approval for the Mangalgiri and Arasavalli temple development projects.

Expressing gratitude to the Union Ministry of Tourism for its continued support in sanctioning various tourism projects, Durgesh reaffirmed the state's commitment to strengthening tourism infrastructure and boosting Andhra Pradesh's appeal as a major cultural and heritage destination.



Caste census survey is historic initiative: Gutha

METRO INDIA NEWS | NALGONDA

Legislative Council Chairman Gutha Sukhender Reddy has expressed that the caste census survey conducted by the State government in Telangana is a historic initiative, with approximately 97 percent participation from the populace.

He stated that it is inappropriate to equate the survey with the voter list, asserting that opposition parties are unnecessarily overreacting to the survey's implementation.

Gutha Sukhender Reddy further criticised certain opposition leaders for their lack of involvement in the caste census survey, accusing them of showing disregard for this important undertaking.

In remarks to the media in Nalgonda on Tuesday, he urged the State government to promptly disburse funds to farmers under the Rythu Bhosla scheme.

When questioned about MLAs who were elected on the BRS party symbol but have joined the Congress party, Gutha Sukhender Reddy noted that this matter is currently within the purview of the Supreme Court, and therefore, it is not appropriate to discuss it in this context.

Telangana govt ready to supply required power: Dy CM Bhatti

State govt prepares to meet summer power demand

METRO INDIA NEWS | HYDERABAD

that demand. He emphasized the importance of ensuring a continuous power supply without interruptions, noting that power supply is an essential and sensitive issue. He urged officials and staff to remain vigilant round the clock.

The Deputy Chief Minister instructed electricity department officers at all levels to conduct meetings to evaluate their preparedness to tackle potential field-level problems and raise awareness among consumers. He encouraged a collaborative approach within the Energy department.

Bhatti Vikramarka assessed the power demand from the previous summer, the expected demand for the current summer, and the strategies being developed to address the summer season.

Vikramarka assured that the government is ready to

provide all necessary facilities required at the field level and encouraged officials to ask for anything they need. He highlighted the importance of extending emergency vehicle services provided in Hyderabad city to rural areas.

He directed the completion of all Sub Stations and other works by March 1 and instructed the officials to start giving incentive awards to staff who deliver exceptional service.

The meeting saw participation from Energy department Principal Secretary Sundeep Kumar Sultania, Transco CMD Krishna Bhaskar, SPCL CMD Musharaff Ali, Energy department OSD Sudarshan Reddy, and other officials.

He urged tribal communities not to fall for misinformation or baseless fears, reassuring them of his government's steadfast support for their well-being and empowerment.

Reaffirming his stance, Naidu pledged to continue implementing policies that foster socio-economic growth for marginalized tribal communities, ensuring inclusive development in Andhra Pradesh.

He urged tribal communities not to fall for misinformation or baseless fears, reassuring them of his government's steadfast support for their well-being and empowerment.

Naidu made it clear that the 1/70 Act, which protects tribal land rights, will remain unchanged under his leadership.

Chandrababu reaffirms commitment to tribal rights

METRO INDIA NEWS | AMARAVATI

phasized that preserving tribal identity is integral to protecting Indian culture. He assured that his administration remains dedicated to enhancing education, healthcare, and overall living conditions in tribal regions.

Highlighting his government's efforts, Naidu underscored various special initiatives aimed at tribal welfare. He pointed to international recognition for tribal



products, particularly Araku coffee, as a testament to his administration's commitment to promoting indigenous communities.

The Chief Minister also recalled that, during his tenure in united Andhra Pradesh, his government had introduced GO No. 3, which ensured ex-

clusive reservation of teaching positions for tribals in their respective areas. However, he blamed the previous government's negligence for legal complications that led to the cancellation of this order. He assured that his administration is working towards restoring these provisions.

Naidu made it clear that the 1/70 Act, which protects tribal land rights, will remain unchanged under his leadership.

AP signs Rs 2,458.84 crore MoUs at Aero India 2025

METRO INDIA NEWS | AMARAVATI

step toward strengthening the state's industrial landscape. The investments are expected to create over 8,000 direct and indirect employment opportunities.

The MoUs were signed with prominent companies specializing in defense and aerospace technology, including Sagar Defence Engineering Private Limited – A leader in maritime security and unmanned surface vehicle technologies. HFCL – A key player in defense manufacturing, Media Matrix Worldwide Limited – A company specializing in space technology components.

The official signing ceremony took place in Bengaluru in the presence of Minister T.G. Bharat. Senior officials including Dr. N. Yuvaraj IAS, Secretary for Industries, Commerce & Food Processing, ITE&C, Infrastructure & Investment, Government of Andhra Pradesh, along with senior representatives from partner organizations, attended the event.

The Rs 2,458.84 crore investment reinforces Andhra Pradesh's commitment to positioning itself as a premier destination for aerospace and defense manufacturing in India. With investor-friendly policies, world-class infra-

structure, and strategic location advantages, the state continues to attract global and domestic industry leaders.

Minister Bharat highlighted that these collaborations will drive technological advancements, encourage innovation, and establish a strong industry base, making Andhra Pradesh a key player in India's aerospace and defense growth story.

Speaking at the event, Minister T.G. Bharat noted that Aero India 2025 has yielded major defense investments for Andhra Pradesh. Under the visionary leadership of Chief Minister N. Chandrababu Naidu, the state is rapidly emerging as a hub for defense manufacturing. These projects will boost indigenous defense production and contribute significantly to India's self-reliance in defense technology," Bharat stated.



The investments are expected to create over 8,000 direct and indirect employment opportunities. The MoUs were signed with prominent companies.

structure, and strategic location advantages, the state continues to attract global and domestic industry leaders.

Minister Bharat highlighted that these collaborations will

SFI faces an existential dilemma over private varsities

HD Bureau

KOCHI

The Students Federation of India, affiliated with the CPI-M, is grappling with the Kerala government's initiative to allow private universities in the state. The development marks a significant shift from the organization's historical stance against private investment in higher education.

Kerala's Higher Education Minister, R. Bindu, has announced that the government is considering applications from private inst-

itutions seeking to establish universities. She emphasized that the government aims to enhance the quality of higher education by expanding its scope and that private universities would operate under stringent government regulations to ensure adherence to social justice norms.

The policy shift has placed the SFI in a challenging position. The organization has expressed concerns over the move, with SFI state president K. Anusree stating that while they staunchly oppose the entry of

foreign universities, they will demand stringent norms to regulate private universities. She emphasized the need for strong safeguards to ensure a pro-student alternative to the central policy and insisted that private universities should function under government control without any form of discrimination.

The All India Students Federation, the student wing of the Communist Party of India, has also declared its intent to resist the establishment of private universities. This opposition

highlights the ideological divide within the state's political landscape regarding private participation in higher education.

In defence of the government's decision, Minister Bindu pointed out that approximately 80% of higher education institutions in Kerala operate in the private sector, many of which have maintained high standards for several decades. She argued that enabling such institutions to flourish as private universities, in accordance with government regulations, would be beneficial for the state.

The minister also noted that the concept of private universities had evolved over time and that the government could no longer ignore neoliberal policies, as doing so could adversely affect the prospects of young people.

The proposal to permit private universities was included in the draft policy for Kerala's development during the CPM's state conference in March. This signifies a departure from the party's traditional opposition to private inv-

estment in higher education.

The government's plan has not been without internal contention. The CPI, a key ally in the ruling Left Democratic Front, has raised concerns about the private universities bill. CPI Minister P. Prasad demanded further discussions on the bill, leading to its deferral for additional deliberation.

This move underscores the ideological tensions within the coalition regarding the role of private entities in the education sector.

THREAT TO SOCIAL FABRIC | Disturbing incidents of violence within families are becoming a day to day affair, causing serious threat to the society as a whole.

Assembly concern over violence linked to drugs, alcohol

HD Bureau

KOCHI

Kerala is witnessing a disturbing surge in domestic violence cases, with a significant correlation to drug and alcohol addiction. Incidents of familial violence, including sons attacking parents and husbands assaulting wives, are being reported with alarming frequency, prompting serious concern about the state's social stability.

The gravity of the situation compelled the state assembly to suspend regular proceedings on Tuesday to address the issue through an adjournment motion. Congress MLA PC Vismunath, who introduced the motion, criticised the government's failure to gather accurate data on substance abuse and alcoholism. He highlighted that police registered 24,701 cases under the Narcotic Drugs and Psychotropic Substances Act by November 2022, a staggering 333% increase from the 5,695 cases in 2021. Similarly, NDPS cases registered by the ex-

cise department rose from 3,922 in 2021 to 6,116 in 2022, marking a 55% increase.

Further analysis of official statistics reveals a broader escalation in criminal activities over the past five years. In 2020, the state recorded 149,099 criminal cases, which decreased slightly to 142,643 in 2021. However, there was a sharp rise to 235,858 cases in 2022 and 258,538 in 2023, before a slight decline to 198,234 cases in 2024. Crimes against women also saw an upward trend, with 12,659 cases in 2020, increasing to 16,199 in 2021, 18,943 in 2022, and stabilizing around 18,980 in 2023 and 18,887 in 2024.

The link between substance abuse and domestic violence is further underscored by findings from the National Family Health Survey 2019-20. The survey indicates that 10% of married women in Kerala have experienced physical or sexual violence, with 1% enduring both forms. Notably, 19% of these women reported that the violence occurred when their husbands

were under the influence of alcohol. The survey also found that 37% of married women face physical or sexual violence when their husbands frequently consume alcohol.

Despite Kerala's high literacy rates and favourable sex ratio, these statistics reveal a troubling prevalence of domestic violence. The direct involvement of husbands in such acts, rather than in-laws, is particularly concerning. The NFHS-5 data shows that 7% of married women have been slapped by their husbands, while 6% have been pushed, shaken, or had objects thrown at them.

Education and alcohol consumption are significant factors in these incidents. The survey found that husbands with less than 10 years of education are more likely to commit acts of violence, especially when intoxicated. Approximately one-third of women who experienced spousal violence reported sustaining injuries inflicted by their husbands.

The reluctance of victims

to seek help exacerbates the issue. Only 24% of women who experienced physical violence sought assistance, while 57% neither sought help nor confided in anyone. Alarmingly, 52% of women surveyed believed that a husband is justified in hitting or beating his wife under certain circumstances, such as disrespecting in-laws, neglecting the house or children, or suspicion of infidelity. Among men, 63% justified wife-beating in similar scenarios.

The surge in drug-related cases is also notable. In 2021, 5,695 drug-related cases were registered in Kerala, which escalated to 26,619 in 2022—nearly a fivefold increase. This upward trajectory continued with 30,697 cases in 2023, before a slight decrease to 27,530 in 2024.

The rising trend in Protection of Children from Sexual Offences cases is equally alarming. The state recorded 3,042 cases in 2020, which increased to 3,516 in 2021, 4,518 in 2022 and 4,641 in 2023.

Speaker teaches a rule or two to his predecessor



HD Bureau

KOCHI

Shamseer teaches a rule or two to his predecessor
The debate on the adjournment motion saw the curious sight of incumbent Speaker A N Shamseer criticising his predecessor and now excise minister M B Rajesh over procedural propriety.

The Speaker got annoyed by Congress member and former minister Thiruvanchoor Radhakrishnan asking a question and the excise minister replying to it without the Speaker being in the picture.

Shamseer stopped the minister midway and told him to mind the rules of procedure. Propriety demanded that both Thiruvanchoor and M B Rajesh sought the Chair's permission before rising to speak.

The Speaker warned Rajesh that he would be compelled to switch off the minister's mike if he ever behaved in the same fashion again.

Rajesh promptly apologised to the Speaker and promised to be more careful in future.

Wayanad hartal against elephant attacks

HD Bureau

KOZHIKODE

In response to continuing incidents of elephant attacks claiming human lives, the people of Wayanad have called for a dawn to dusk hartal on Wednesday.

The hartal call was made by the Farmers' Relief Forum, protesting the forest department's perceived failure to protect residents from escalating wildlife threats.

The victim of the latest attack was a man working on his farm. The incident adds to a series of human-wildlife conflicts in the region, which have become alarmingly frequent. The FRF's call for a hartal underscores the growing frustration among the farming community, who feel vulnerable to such dangers.

In a statement, the FRF criticized the forest department for not implementing effective measures to safeguard farmers, agricultural workers, and indigenous communities from wild animal incursions.

They emphasized the urgent need for comprehensive strategies to prevent further tragedies.

Wayanad, known for its rich biodiversity, has witnessed a surge in human-animal conflicts, particularly involving elephants. Factors such as habitat loss, deforestation, and encroachment into forested areas have been identified as primary contributors to these incidents. The local populace has repeatedly urged authorities to devise and implement solutions to mitigate these conflicts.

The district has a history of protests related to wil-

Artist Mopasang Valath dead



Renowned artist Mopasang Valath, aged 68, died on Tuesday in Kochi. He had been receiving treatment for pneumonia at Aster Medcity. The funeral is scheduled for Wednesday in his hometown, Kottayam.

Over a career spanning more than four decades, Valath produced over 5,000 paintings, contributing significantly to the Indian art scene. His works are celebrated for their vivid portrayal of Kerala's landscapes and culture. He was the son of the esteemed historian and writer V. V. K. Valath. His artistic journey began in his early years, drawing inspiration from Kerala's natural beauty and cultural heritage.

In another instance, in November 2024, both the United Democratic Front and the Left Democratic Front called for a hartal in Wayanad. This protest was in response to the alleged delay by the central government in providing special assistance for the rehabilitation of landslide-affected areas in the district. The hartal also aimed to condemn the perceived neglect of landslide survivors, reflecting the political dimensions intertwined with environmental and safety concerns in the region.

The recurring nature of these incidents and the subsequent protests underscore a pattern of administrative challenges and the community's demand for accountability. The FRF's current hartal call is a continuation of the district's ongoing struggle to balance human habitation with wildlife conservation. Authorities have acknowledged the severity of the situation. In previous discussions, measures such as enhanced fencing, changes in vegetation to deter elephants, and the use of technology for early warning systems were proposed.

Veteran engineer E. Sreedharan, renowned for his

Old age home owner deserts inmates

HD Bureau

KOCHI

Residents of Elder Garden Old Age Home in Muthalakkodam, Thodupuzha, have been left stranded without food and medicine after the institution's owner allegedly absconded with substantial advance payments.

The elderly occupants, who had entrusted significant sums to the facility for their care, now find themselves in a precarious situation.

Despite multiple complaints lodged with the police, the residents report no improvement in their dire circumstances nor any action has been taken to recover their funds. The owner, Jivan Thomas, is reported to have fled the scene, citing financial difficulties.

He has assured that the issues faced by the residents will be resolved promptly.

Elder Garden Old Age Home, established in September 2020, is registered

as a micro-enterprise under the services sector. Located in Muthalakkodam, Thodupuzha, the institution was intended to provide care for the elderly.

The incident highlights ongoing concerns about the management and oversight of elderly care facilities in the state. In a related case, the administrator of an elderly care center in Muvattupuzha was arrested for allegedly assaulting his mother. Additionally, the state government recently shut down an old age home after five residents died from a mysterious skin disease, raising questions about the quality of care in such institutions.

Kerala has a large number of old age homes, including government homes, charitable homes, and paid homes. The number of old age homes in Kerala is increasing due to a growing elderly population and rising demand for refuge for old people.

Following their arrest, the accused were charged

Shine Chacko, others cleared in 2015 cocaine case

HD Bureau

KOCHI

Malayalam actor Shine Tom Chacko, along with six others, has been acquitted by the Additional Sessions Court in Kochi in a drug case dating back to 2015.

The case, which marked Kerala's first reported cocaine-related incident, involved the seizure of 10 grams of the narcotic substance from a flat in Kochi's Kadavoor area.

On 31 January 2015, acting on a tip-off, Kochi police raided an apartment in Kadavoor, leading to the arrest of Chacko and four women—assistant director Blessy Silvestor and models Reshma Rengaswamy, Tincy Babu, and Sneha Babu. Authorities alleged that the group was in possession of cocaine sourced from Goa. The raid resulted in the seizure of the drug and the subsequent arrest of the individuals present.

Following their arrest, the accused were charged

under the Narcotic Drugs and Psychotropic Substances Act.

The Kerala High Court granted them conditional bail in March 2015, after they had spent approximately two months in custody. The bail conditions included regular appearances before the investigating officer and restrictions on leaving the state without prior permission.

The trial, which spanned several years, concluded

with the court acquitting all the accused due to insufficient evidence. The prosecution was unable to establish a direct link between the seized cocaine and the accused individuals, leading to their exoneration.

Shine Tom Chacko, who began his career as an assistant director before transitioning to acting, has been a notable figure in the Malayalam film industry despite the legal challenges stemming from the case.

State explores new semi high-speed rail corridor

HD Bureau

KOCHI

The state government is evaluating a proposal for a semi-high-speed rail corridor between Thiruvananthapuram and Kannur, spanning approximately 420 kilometers. This initiative comes as an alternative to the previously stalled SilverLine project, which faced significant public opposition and environmental concerns.

Veteran engineer E. Sreedharan, renowned for his

role in the Delhi Metro project, has submitted a preliminary report to the state authorities. He proposes a standard-gauge track that would enable trains to operate at an average speed of 200 km/h, covering the Thiruvananthapuram-Kannur distance in about three and a half hours. The design includes approximately 15 stations, each situated around 30 kilometers apart, to cater to Kerala's densely populated regions.

This proposed alignment

differs from the earlier SilverLine project, which planned for stations every 60 kilometers along a 530-kilometer route from Thiruvananthapuram to Kasaragod. The new plan largely follows the alignment suggested by the Delhi Metro Rail Corporation in its 2015 detailed project report for a high-speed rail corridor. Sreedharan emphasizes that the inclusion of more frequent stations would better serve the state's high population density and meet the growing

demand for efficient rail services.

To minimize land acquisition and environmental impact, the proposal suggests constructing the majority of the corridor on elevated structures, with the remainder running through underground passages. This approach aims to reduce the project's land footprint to one-fifth of that required for the SilverLine project, thereby preserving numerous homes and structures from demolition.

The estimated cost of the

project is ₹1 lakh crore, with a proposed funding model where both the state and central governments contribute ₹30,000 crore each, and the remaining ₹40,000 crore is raised through loans.

Sreedharan asserts that the Delhi Metro Rail Corporation or Indian Railways are best suited to execute a project of this scale, expressing his willingness to provide guidance, particularly in securing central approval as it involves very big investments from both central and state governments.



NITI Aayog rates Kerala as top achiever

HD Bureau

NEW DELHI

Kerala, Tamil Nadu, Himachal Pradesh, and Uttarakhand have been identified as top-performing states in terms of gross enrolment ratio in higher education institutions for the academic year 2021-22, according to a report released by NITI Aayog.

The report, titled 'Expanding Quality Higher Education through States and State Public Universities,' was unveiled by NITI Aayog Vice Chairman Suman Bery.

The study categorizes states into different performance tiers based on their GER in higher education. Kerala, Tamil Nadu, Himachal Pradesh, and Uttarakhand have been classified as "achievers," reflecting their high enrolment rates.

Bery emphasized NITI Aayog's role in creating evidence-based research to guide implementation efforts by relevant ministries and expressed hope that the recommendations would be actively pursued by both central and state governments.

Dr. Vinod Kumar Paul, Member of NITI Aayog, contextualized the report within the broader framework of the National Education Policy 2020 and India's vision for Viksit Bharat 2047. He underscored that SPUs account for 80% of India's higher education and stressed the critical need to reform these institutions to build robust human capital and position India as a global knowledge hub. Kerala has similarly scored high in several other social indicators.

Briefs**RAIPUR**
Seminar on body donation today

A seminar on body donation, titled 'Deh Dan Mahadan,' will be held at the Chhattisgarh State Power Companies Headquarters in Raipur on February 12 at 4 PM. Organized under the aegis of the Human Resources Department, Transmission Company, the event aims to raise awareness about the medical and technical aspects of body donation and its importance in saving lives. The seminar will feature prominent speakers, including Dr. Manishi B. Sinha (MD) from AIIMS, Dr. Vinod Rathore, and Dr. Vijay Sahu (AP-THOMLISS). The event will take place at Vidyut Seva Bhawan, Dangania, the headquarters of the Power Companies. Organized in collaboration with Param Jeevan Foundation and AIIMS, the seminar is being coordinated by Mrs. Ajanta Chaudhary.

MAHASAMUND
Mahasamund recorded 70.48% votes

The urban body elections in all six municipal areas of Mahasamund district were conducted smoothly and peacefully on Tuesday. The district recorded an average voter turnout of 70.48%, with 69.62% participation from women, 71.41% from men, and 23% from third-gender voters. The highest voter participation was seen in the district headquarters, Mahasamund, where citizens cast their votes from 8:00 AM to 5:00 PM. Similar enthusiasm was observed across other urban bodies, with a strong presence of youth, women, elderly, and differently-abled voters. Security arrangements were tight at all polling stations, ensuring a smooth and hassle-free voting process. The voting percentages for the six urban bodies in the district were as follows, Municipal Council Mahasamund - 66.69%, Baghbara Nagar Palika Parishad - 75%, Saripali Nagar Palika Parishad - 71.18%, Nagar Panchayat Tungaon - 81.85%, Nagar Panchayat Pithora - 80.29% and Basna Nagar Panchayat - 64.34%.

MUNGELI
NRI cast vote in Lormi

In a remarkable display of commitment to democracy, Komal Khatri, a resident of New Jersey, USA, returned to her hometown in Lormi, Mungeli district, to cast her vote in the urban body elections. After a long gap, Komal exercised her franchise at a designated polling station in Ward 5 of Lormi Municipality. She described the experience as special and expressed pride in participating in the electoral process once again. Local administrative officials acknowledged his dedication, with Lormi SDM Ajit Pujari honoring her. The official noted that Komal was inspired to vote after following the election awareness campaign and has now become a motivation for others. Komal cast her vote at a polling booth set up in a government school in Lormi, reminiscing that she could not even recall when she last voted.

CHHATTISGARH CIVIC BODY POLLS | First Phase**POLLING REGISTERS 66 PERCENT VOTING**

Raipur MP Brijmohan Agrawal with his wife at Raipur, Deputy CM Vijay Sharma at Kawardha, Deputy CM Arun Sao at Bilaspur casted their vote during the civic body polls held on Tuesday.

Staff Reporter

RAIPUR

Polling for the civic elections in Chhattisgarh, including Raipur and 10 municipal corporations along with 167 urban bodies, recorded approximately 66 percent voter turnout till 4:00 PM on Tuesday. Election officials stated that many voters were still in queues after 5:00 PM, so the final turnout is expected to be higher.

District-wise data revealed that polling percentages were lower in areas with higher literacy rates. The highest turnout of 71 percent was recorded in Raigarh, while the lowest turnout was in Raipur and Bilaspur, with around 47 and 48 percent, respectively. A similar trend of lower voter turnout was also observed in these districts during the recent Lok Sabha elections. The delimitation of wards in Raipur led to major disruptions, causing inconvenience to voters. Many people who had previously voted in Assembly and Lok Sabha elections found their names missing from the voter list for the civic polls. Additionally, several families discovered that their members had



First time voter Aditi of Mahasamund and the 84-year-old Shri Narendra Kumar Jain of Raipur posing for photograph after casting their vote in civic body polls held on Tuesday

been assigned different polling stations, creating further confusion and frustration.

Technical issues also plagued the elections, with multiple reports of Electronic Voting Machine (EVM) malfunctions. Complaints emerged from government schools in Swamp Seoni and Amalidih, as well as from polling stations in Raipur, Bilaspur, and Durg. Former Governor Ramesh Bais, who had always voted in Ravinagar, had to cast his vote at the Shaheed booth this time due to

these disruptions.

Raipur Municipal Corporation received the highest number of complaints regarding voter list discrepancies. Many families were assigned different polling stations due to the delimitation process. In Pt. Ravi Shankar Shukla Ward, a significant number of voters found their names missing. Similar issues arose in Amin Para, where many residents, despite voting in previous elections, could not find their names on the list.

Former CSEB officer Vijay Mishra reported that while his name was listed at the Primary Shala Bhavan Raipura polling station in Ward 69, his wife, Ratna Mishra, was assigned to Ward 70. This arbitrary re-assignment of polling stations even within the same household added to voters' difficulties.

Mishra reported that while his name was listed at the Primary Shala Bhavan Raipura polling station in Ward 69, his wife, Ratna Mishra, was assigned to Ward 70. This arbitrary re-assignment of polling stations even within the same household added to voters' difficulties.

Meanwhile, first-time voters displayed enthusiasm. Aditi Singh, an 18-year-old from Ward No. 28, cast her vote at the Government Primary School polling station in Mauhari Bhatta in Mahasamund. She expressed excitement about participating in the democratic process, stating that voting is both a right and a responsibility.

A tragic incident occurred in Dhamtari, where a 69-year-old voter, Kunj Bihari Dev, collapsed at a polling station in Nagar Pancharat Nagari. Despite being rushed to Nagri Civil Hospital, he was declared dead upon arrival. City BMO Dr. Arun Netam confirmed that he suffered a sudden attack while voting.

Throughout the day, long queues were seen at polling stations, and the administration made extensive arrangements to ensure a smooth electoral process.

Former CSEB officer Vijay

Amid Civic Body polls, jawan lost his leg in IED blast**Staff Reporter**

RAIPUR/DANTEWADA



Maoists insurgents. The jawan has been identified as MN Shukla, posted as a head constable in CRPF's 231 Battalion.

Earlier in the same area, the Naxalites blew up a vehicle carrying 9 jawans and a driver by triggering 50 kg IED planted deep in the road. It led to the death of all security personnel.

Police said a security forces team had been dispatched following an input of presence of armed Maoists in the Aranpur area. After the incident, the injured jawan was given primary treatment in Dantewada District Hospital and then airlifted to Raipur. ASP RK Burman informed the media that the jawan has been referred to Raipur and his condition was critical.

C'garh's 'Prayag Rajim' ready for 'Kumbh Kalpa': CM Sai**Staff Reporter**

RAIPUR

Chhattisgarh is all set to host the grand Rajim Kumbh Kalpa, a festival that reflects the state's deep spiritual and cultural heritage, said Chief Minister Vishnu Deo Sai.

Extending his best wishes for Rajim Kumbh Kalpa and Shivrinarayan Mela, the CM emphasized that these events are not just religious gatherings but a celebration of the state's rich traditions and faith.

Rajim, known as the 'Prayag of Chhattisgarh', has been a centre of devotion for saints and devotees for centuries. CM Sai stated that the state government has restored the Rajim Maghi Punni Mela to its original glory, renaming it 'Rajim Kumbh Kalpa' to highlight its spiritual significance.

'Rajim Kumbh Kalpa' is more than a religious fair—it is a vibrant confluence of Chhattisgarh's folk culture, spiritual consciousness, and devotion. Saint congregations, religious discourses, and cultural pro-



grams will mark this grand event, attracting devotees not just from Chhattisgarh but also from neighbouring states," CM Sai said.

On the occasion of Magh Purnima, the Shivrinarayan Mela is held at the sacred confluence of Mahanadi, Shivnath, and Jonk rivers. CM Sai described it as a symbol of deep faith and reverence, strengthening the spiritual traditions of Chhattisgarh.

The CM invited people to

Gol implementing comprehensive strategy to tackle LWE**Staff Reporter**

RAIPUR

The Government of India has been implementing a comprehensive strategy to tackle Left Wing Extremism (LWE) through the "National Policy and Action Plan," approved in 2015. This approach includes security measures, development initiatives, and ensuring the rights of local communities. The central government provides assistance to LWE-affected states by deploying Central Armed Police battalions, modernizing state police forces, equipping security personnel, sharing intelligence, and constructing fortified police stations. Additionally, significant efforts have been made to improve infrastructure, telecommunications, skill development, and financial inclusion in these areas.

The implementation of this policy has led to a significant decline in LWE incidents, both in terms of geographical spread and violence.

CM thanks voters of urban bodies**Staff Reporter**

RAIPUR

Polling for the 2025 Urban Body Elections in Chhattisgarh was conducted peacefully across the state. Chief Minister Vishnu Deo Sai expressed his gratitude to the voters, acknowledging their participation in strengthening democracy.

Taking to social media platform X, CM Sai wrote: "The voting trends indicate that the people have shown full faith in the vision of 'Atal Vishwas Patra' and the BJP's commitment to the holistic development of urban bodies. This confidence will translate into a resounding victory for the Bharatiya Janata Party."

He thanked the people for supporting the BJP's mission to build a "Developed India - Developed Chhattisgarh" through their valuable votes.

State BJP President Kiran Singh Dev expressed optimism over the high voter turnout, stating that it signals strong public support for the BJP's governance model. He emphasized that the people's frustration with Congress' alleged corruption and misrule was reflected in the polling.

"The overwhelming participation of voters is a clear indication that people are determined to free Chhattisgarh from Congress' mismanagement. There is a strong wave of change across the state, and the people have decisively voted against Congress' failed policies," Dev stated.

Congress criticizes law and order situation in Raipur**Staff Reporter**

RAIPUR

The Chhattisgarh Pradesh Congress Committee has strongly condemned the recent robbery in Anupam Nagar, raising serious concerns over the deteriorating law and order situation in Raipur.

CPCC Communications Department President Sushil Anand Shukla criticized the government, questioning how criminals could operate so boldly on a high-alert election day. He stated that such incidents prove criminals no longer fear the police or the law.

Shukla claimed that over 200 murders have occurred in Raipur in the past year, along with multiple shootings and violent crimes. He described the capi-



tal as a hotbed of crime, where residents now feel unsafe even in their own homes. He blamed the BJP-led state government for its failure in maintaining law and order, citing five public shootings in Raipur since the new administration took over.

Accusing the government of shielding criminals, Shukla said law and order have deteriorated to the point where crimes like robbery, murder, and sexual violence have become commonplace. He alleged that the

government is powerless and ineffective, with both the Chief Minister and Home Minister failing to take control of the situation. Shukla further criticized the administration for allowing an environment of fear to prevail across the state, including in Bastar, Surguja, and Jashpur. He claimed that under the BJP's double-engine government, crime has doubled, making Chhattisgarh comparable to states with high crime rates like Uttar Pradesh. He accused government officials of ignoring public safety concerns and instead resorting to political excuses rather than addressing the crisis.

The Congress has demanded immediate action to restore law and order and ensure the safety of Raipur's residents.



with the cash.

As soon as the police were alerted, senior officers, including Additional SP (Crime) Sanjeev Mittal, rushed to the scene. Investigations began immediately, with a dog squad deployed and the city's borders sealed to prevent the robbers from escaping. Security has been tightened at bus stands, railway stations, and

other key locations. CCTV footage has provided crucial evidence, showing the robbers entering the house in military uniforms. The police are now analyzing the footage to identify and track down the accused.

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The Free Press Journal

Founder Editor: S Sadanand

India's AI imperative

Artificial intelligence (AI) is rapidly transforming the world, reshaping industries, governance, and even social interactions. Its potential is limitless, making it a key driver of the global digital economy. While India has long been a leader in information technology, earning billions in software exports, its progress in AI has been underwhelming. Despite a decades-old engagement with technology, India has yet to emerge as a global player in AI innovation. The situation contrasts sharply with developments elsewhere. After Trump assumed his second term as US President, he announced a \$500 billion private sector-driven investment in AI to secure America's technological dominance. In response, a Chinese startup, DeepSeek, entered the market, offering services that made it the most downloaded app on Apple's store. DeepSeek, despite its alignment with the Chinese Communist Party, quickly became a formidable competitor to platforms like ChatGPT.

One of the primary hurdles in AI development is the enormous investment it demands. However, DeepSeek's success reportedly came at a fraction of the cost incurred by European AI ventures, suggesting that innovation on a budget is possible. This provides hope for emerging economies like India to

India's slow progress in Artificial Intelligence is partly due to the absence of a cohesive national policy.

carve out their space in the AI landscape. India's slow progress in AI is partly due to the absence of a cohesive national policy. Recognising this gap, the country's decision to collaborate with France in advancing AI technology is a step in the right direction. Tuesday's Action Summit on AI, co-chaired by French President Emmanuel Macron and Prime Minister Narendra Modi, underscores India's growing interest in this field. Attended by key global leaders, including German Chancellor Olaf Scholz and Canadian Prime Minister Justin Trudeau, the summit highlighted Europe's plan to invest 200 billion euros in AI development, with 50 billion coming directly from the European Union.

As a strategic partner of France, India aims to ride this wave of technological advancement. Prime Minister Modi rightly noted that AI will impact every aspect of human life, from healthcare and security to governance and society. Yet, with great technological power come significant risks. The spectre of machines dominating human life looms large, making it crucial for India to develop AI responsibly and ethically. Policymakers must strike a balance between innovation and regulation, ensuring AI serves humanity rather than controlling it. India can no longer afford to be a bystander in the AI revolution. It must harness its technological prowess, foster innovation, and invest strategically to emerge as a global leader in AI.

Trump's Gaza gambit

The fragile truce between Israel and Hamas now hangs by a thread, with Hamas refusing to release Israeli hostages and Israel responding with equal stubbornness. This mutual intransigence threatens to unravel the already tenuous peace agreement, which remains stalled in its first phase. The situation demands diplomatic perseverance, yet US President Donald Trump's recent provocations have only complicated matters further. Trump, once a real estate magnate with a penchant for grand development projects, appears to view Gaza not as a war-ravaged region in dire need of humanitarian aid but as a lucrative business opportunity. His audacious suggestion that the Palestinian population, two million strong and already enduring unimaginable suffering, should be relocated to Egypt, Syria, or other countries, reveals a disturbing disregard for their rights and dignity.

The plan, if one can call it that, envisions Gaza being cleared of its Palestinian inhabitants and transformed into a Middle Eastern riviera. It is a grotesque fantasy rooted in Trump's business instincts rather than any understanding of international law, justice, or human decency. The United States has no legitimate claim to Gaza, and Trump's proposal has predictably failed to garner support from any nation, even among Israel's closest allies. Some elements of Israel's extreme right have disturbingly echoed Trump's vision, invoking selective biblical references to justify the potential depopulation of Gaza. This rhetoric only inflames an already volatile situation, undermining any efforts toward a peaceful resolution. Trump's warning that he would wreak havoc if Hamas fails to release hostages by Saturday is equally alarming. He has provided no clarity on what such a threat entails. Would the US deploy forces directly into Gaza? Or, more chillingly, would he consider the use of weapons of mass destruction? The world watches with a mix of fear and bewilderment as Trump's statements escalate tensions further.

It is imperative for the international community to denounce Trump's reckless rhetoric and real estate-driven ambitions. The silence of global institutions, particularly the United Nations, is deafening. Where is the concerted international effort to rein in a leader whose words continue to sow chaos in an already embattled region? What Gaza needs now is not bulldozers but a comprehensive peace process grounded in justice and mutual respect. The path forward lies in diplomacy, humanitarian aid, and a commitment to rebuilding lives, not in grandiose fantasies of property development. The world must wake up and act decisively to prevent Gaza from becoming the latest victim of Trump's misguided ambitions. PM Modi should tell Trump when they meet in Washington that he has no moral right to claim Gaza, let alone displace the Palestinians from there.



Heart Of The Matter
S N M ABDI

It's in India's interest to keep its goodwill in Kabul going

New Delhi must work towards restoring its relationship with Afghanistan to secure its national interests in the region.

Neutralising the Taliban's influence in Afghanistan is in India's interest. The country must work towards restoring its relationship with Afghanistan to secure its national interests in the region. The Taliban's rise to power in 2021 has raised concerns about its impact on India's security and economic interests. The Taliban's policies on issues such as terrorism, human rights, and regional stability pose a threat to India's national interests. The Indian government must take a proactive approach to address these challenges and maintain its influence in the region.

India's Foreign Secretary, S N M Abdi, has called for a "constructive dialogue" between India and the Taliban. This dialogue should focus on issues such as trade, investment, and regional stability. The Indian government should also work towards restoring its consulates in Afghanistan, which were closed during the Taliban's rule. This will help India to maintain its influence in the region and ensure that its national interests are protected.

India's engagement with Afghanistan should be based on principles of mutual respect, non-interference, and non-aggression. The Indian government should work towards building a stable and peaceful environment in Afghanistan, which will benefit both India and the region. The Indian government should also work towards addressing the root causes of instability in Afghanistan, such as poverty, lack of education, and political corruption.

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Briefs

DHAKA
B'desh polls anytime from Dec '25 to June '26

The Election Commission of Bangladesh on Tuesday said that it is preparing to hold the national elections anytime between December 2025 to June 2026. "The Chief Advisor mentioned in his speech on December 16 last year that if elections are to be held with minimal reforms and political consensus, they can take place by December 2025. However, if more extensive reforms are required, elections may be held by June 2026," said Election Commissioner Abul Fazal Mohammad Sanullah in a media briefing following a meeting with the Ambassadors and representatives from 18 development partner countries, including the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP), in Dhaka.

PESHAWAR
Five TTP terrorists killed in Pak

Five terrorists affiliated with the banned TTP outfit were shot dead by security officials in Pakistan's Khyber Pakhtunkhwa province, police said on Tuesday. The joint operation was conducted late Monday night by the police and Counter-Terrorism Department (CTD) in Mir Kalam Banda in Karak district following intelligence reports about the presence of wanted terrorists in the area. The slain militants were identified as members of the Kakeemullah Group of Tehreek-e-Taliban Pakistan (TTP).

ISLAMABAD
Pak sees drop in corruption ranking from 133 to 135

Pakistan's ranking on the Corruption Perception Index (CPI) has dropped by 2 spots from 133 in 2023 to 135 in 2024 out of 180 countries, a media report said on Tuesday. The CPI ranks 180 countries and territories by their perceived levels of public sector corruption on a scale of zero (highly corrupt) to 100 (very clean), Dawn.com reported. The CPI report is released annually by Transparency International Berlin. Transparency International Pakistan (TIP) has no role either.

5 billion globally lack access to medical oxygen, says report

The report is the world's first estimate of how unequally medical oxygen is distributed

requiring medical oxygen in low- and middle-income countries (LMICs), and nearly 70 per cent are concentrated in South and East Asia, the Pacific, and sub-Saharan Africa.

The patients include those with acute medical and surgical conditions, and long-term oxygen

needs due to chronic obstructive pulmonary disease (COPD).

However, less than one in three people needing oxygen for medical or surgical conditions receive the life-saving gas, due to gaps in service contact, readiness, provision, and quality, leaving almost 70 per cent of the patients without coverage.

The gaps are even higher in regions, including Sub-Saharan Africa (91 per cent) and South Asia (78 per cent), the authors said. The commission report also suggested recommendations for how governments, industry, global health agencies, academic institutions, and civil society can work together to strengthen health systems in providing access to medical oxygen.

The authors added that medical oxygen is a highly cost-effective investment to advance global public health that will accelerate the world's progress towards meeting the Sustainable Development Goals for health by 2030, and also help countries prepare for the next pandemic.

Imran seeks fair trial in open court

Agencies
ISLAMABAD

Pakistan's jailed former Prime Minister Imran Khan has filed a petition before the Islamabad High Court requesting a hearing of his cases in the open court, saying multiple 'false' cases have been registered against him, and his trial was being conducted in the 'controlled' environment of Adiala Jail, Dawn reported. In the petition, Imran Khan said his trial was being conducted in the 'controlled' environment of Adiala Jail in violation of law and the Constitution. It also said that his lawyers were being harassed.

The petition said the Pakistan Tehreek-e-Insaf (PTI) founder, Imran Khan, since his arrest in 2023 has never been presented before an open court and his trials have been conducted in makeshift courts in the prison. It was pointed out that the jail administration did not permit international media to cover the trial proceedings and only handful of reporters were permitted to be present during the proceedings.

epaper.freepressjournal.in

ISIS a threat in Pak, Afghanistan: Shea

ANI
UNITED NATIONS

American Ambassador Dorothy Shea, Chargé d'Affaires ad interim, emphasised Donald Trump administration's commitment to countering ISIS and other terrorist groups globally, including the growing threat in regions like Afghanistan and Pakistan. Delivering remarks at a UN Security Council Briefing on Threats to International Peace and Security by Terrorist Acts,

Shea said, "Countering ISIS and other terrorist groups around the world is a top priority for the Trump Administration. President Trump has already taken decisive action in conjunction with the Somali government by directing precision airstrikes against ISIS in Somalia on February 1."

She added, "As the Secretary-General's report highlights, ISIS affiliates in Central Asia, most notably ISIS-Khorasan, also pose a significant global threat. We

remain concerned about ISIS-K's capabilities to plot and conduct attacks, as well as sustain recruitment campaigns, particularly in Afghanistan and Pakistan. ISIS has expanded the frequency and lethality of its attacks in the Sahel, making this region the global epicenter for fatalities from terrorist attacks. As such, ISIS-Somalia, ISIS-Sahel, and ISIS-West Africa collectively pose a significant threat to stability and prosperity in Africa."

About Syria, Shea said the

US is closely watching the situation in Syria, as it wants stability and security in the region. "The United States is committed to preventing Syria from being used as a base for ISIS, Iranian-backed terrorism, or other terrorist groups that threaten the region. The complete and verifiable destruction of Syria's chemical weapons programme is vital to regional security and stability, and ensuring that these weapons are not used for terrorism," Shea added.

Pak case: Zuckerberg calls for strict regulation

'BLASPHEMOUS CONTENT'

ANI
CALIFORNIA

Mark Zuckerberg, CEO of Meta, recently discussed a legal battle in Pakistan, where he was sued over content deemed blasphemous on Facebook, highlighting the challenges posed by differing legal frameworks around the world. In an interview with Joe Rogan, Zuckerberg explained how such laws,

which conflict with free expression values upheld by American tech companies, add pressure on global platforms to regulate content more strictly.

"There are laws in different countries that we disagree with. For example, there was a point at which someone was trying to get me sentenced to death in Pakistan because someone on Facebook had a picture

where they had a drawing of Prophet Mohammed, and someone said, 'That's blasphemy in our culture.' They sued me and opened this criminal proceeding. I don't know exactly where it went because I'm just not planning to go to Pakistan, so I was not that worried about it," the Meta chief said. He acknowledged that the situation was unsettling, particularly in terms of personal safety. More

Trump, Jordan's King set for tense meeting

Agencies
WASHINGTON

Donald Trump meets Jordan's King Abdullah on Tuesday for what is likely to be a tense encounter following the US president's Gaza redevelopment idea and threat to cut aid to the US-allied Arab country if it refuses to resettle Palestinians.



Trump's proposed 'Riviera of the Middle East' has introduced new complexity into a sensitive regional dynamic, threatening the fragile ceasefire

with Israel and threaten the country's very survival.

For his part, Trump has modified aspects of his initial proposal and doubled down on others. He has expressed increasing impatience with Arab leaders who see the idea as unworkable. "I do think he'll

take refugees," Trump told reporters at the White House on Monday about King Abdullah. Asked if he would withhold aid from Jordan and Egypt if they declined to do so, Trump said, "Yeah, maybe, sure, why not... if they don't agree I would conceivably withhold aid."

Sandwiched between Saudi Arabia, Syria, Israel and the occupied West Bank, Jordan is already home to more than two million Palestinian refugees in its population of 11 million, their status and number long providing a source of anxiety for the country's leadership. Amman has come to depend on Washington as its largest source of economic and military assistance for decades, which now stands at more than \$1 billion a year. Jordan signed a peace treaty with Israel in 1994 but has strained relations with its neighbour. Israeli Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu has said Trump's proposal is worthy of exploration.

'Ukraine may be Russian someday'

Agencies
WASHINGTON

In the interview with Fox's Bret Baier, Trump said "I would own it" and that there could be as many as six different sites for Palestinians to live outside Gaza under the plan, which the Arab world and others in the international community have rejected. No serious discussions have so far taken

Yunus slams mob attack on book fair stall

ANI
DHAKA

Chief Advisor of the Interim Government in Bangladesh, Muhammad Yunus, strongly denounced the mob attack on the Amar Ekushey Book Fair in Dhaka, and said that the attack shows "contempt" for both the "rights of Bangladeshi citizens and for the laws of our country".

The statement comes after a group of madrasa students on Monday attacked a stall at the Amar Ekushey Book Fair in Dhaka over the display of book written by Taslima Nasreen, who is in exile in India. "The Chief Advisor's office said in a statement, "Such violence betrays the open-minded spirit of this great Bangladeshi cultural fixture, which commemorates the language martyrs who lost their lives on February 21, 1952 in defence of their mother tongue."

They may make a deal, they may not make a deal. They may be Russian someday, or they may not be Russian someday," he said. Trump also emphasised reaping a return on investment with US aid to Ukraine. "We are going to have all this money in there, and I say I want it back. And I told them that I want the equivalent, like \$500bn worth of rare earth," Trump said. "And they have essentially agreed to do that, so at least we don't feel stupid."

Trump also confirmed on Monday that he will soon dispatch to Ukraine his special envoy Keith Kellogg, who is tasked with drawing up a proposal to halt the fighting. Trump is pressing for a swift end to the conflict, while Zelenskyy is calling for tough security guarantees from Washington as part of any deal with Russia.

Kyiv fears that any settlement that does not include hard military commitments – such as Nato membership or the deployment of peacekeeping troops – will just allow the Kremlin time to regroup and rearm for a fresh attack. Zelenskyy called on Monday for "real peace and effective security guarantees" for Ukraine. "Security of people, security of our state, security of economic relations and, of course, our resource sustainability: not only for Ukraine, but for the entire free world," he said.

"All of this is being decided now," Zelenskyy added in a video address published on social media.

Houthi's detain 8 staffers, UN suspends aid

AP
CAIRO

The United Nations said Monday it suspended its humanitarian operations in the stronghold of Yemen's Houthi rebels after they detained eight more UN staffers, affecting the global response to one of the world's worst humanitarian disasters.

In a statement, the UN said the "extraordinary" decision to pause all operations and programmes in northern Saada province was due to the lack of necessary security conditions and guarantees.

A spokesman for the Houthi didn't immediately respond to messages seeking comment. The rebels in recent months have detained dozens of UN staffers, as well as people associated with aid groups, civil society and the once-open US Embassy in Sanaa, Yemen's capital. None of the UN staffers has been released.

The U.N. statement said the pause in operations is meant to give the Houthi and the world body time to "arrange for the release of arbitrarily detained UN personnel and ensure that the necessary conditions are in place to deliver critical humanitarian support" in rebel-held areas.

Seven UN agencies operate in Saada, including the World Food Program, the World Health Organization and UNICEF.

Briefs

LONDON
Surrey
confirm deal
with Reliance



Surrey County Cricket Club (SCCC) has confirmed its deal with Reliance but said it will continue to retain majority stake of 51 percent in the Oval Invincibles. Reliance Industries Limited (RIL) - owners of Mumbai Indians (MI) - through its subsidiary, RISE Worldwide, bought 49 per cent stake in The Hundred team for £60m. "R1SE will have a 49 per cent share of the Hundred team, with Surrey retaining the majority 51 per cent," SCCC said in a statement. "The Club hopes to benefit from Mumbai Indians' vast experience and proven success, fresh off lifting yet another league title in South Africa over the weekend, to further strengthen and maintain the team's position as the leading franchise in the competition." The Oval Invincibles have established themselves.

NEW DELHI
Sheldon Jackson retires



Prolific Saurashtra batter Sheldon Jackson on Tuesday retired from professional cricket after a career spanning 15 years, his last outing ending in a defeat to Gujarat in the Ranji Trophy quarterfinal here. Jackson, 38, retires with more than 7200 runs in 105 first-class matches with a highest score of 186, 21 hundreds and 39 half-centuries. That he ended his career with an average of over 45 speaks volumes about his consistency in first-class cricket. Jackson has been a multidimensional cricketer and besides being a reliable batsman and an excellent fielder. He also kept wickets for Saurashtra in the limited-over competitions. In the longer format he was not required to do the duty.

INDORE
Advani wins Indian Snooker meet



India's most accomplished player Pankaj Advani secured his 36th overall national title and 10th men's snooker crown at the Yashwant Club, in a commanding display of skill and determination.

The ONGC employee overcame an early setback to defeat Brijesh Damani in a final where Damani managed to take the opening frame, the only one he would claim throughout the match. The tournament serves as the only selection event for the Asian and World Championships. Advani's performance was marked by consistency and precision. After falling behind by a frame, he maintained his composure and controlled the table, leaving little room for error of any sort.

PREVIEW | Team India eye ODI clean-sweep over England in third and final ODI

Kohli's form the cynosure

PTI
AHMEDABAD

A big knock from **Virat Kohli**'s currently silent bat along with a series clean-sweep over England will be on Team India's wish-list when the two teams square off in the third and final ODI here on Wednesday, marking the end of their Champions Trophy build-up.

While India hold an unassailable 2-0 lead with identical four-wicket wins in each of the first two ODIs, Rohit Sharma's men will be extra motivated to get a win here at the Narendra Modi Stadium where they had suffered a crushing ODI World Cup final loss in 2023.

Needless to say, having their batting mainstay Kohli among runs and a win would be perfect culmination to the home side's Champions Trophy preparations. The eight-team competition gets underway from February 19 in Karachi with India starting against Bangladesh the next day in Dubai as per a hybrid model of hosting.

The team has already got a shot in the arm by Rohit's return to form. His 90-ball 119 in the second ODI was a source of relief to both the side and to him after a prolonged run of poor scores.

Kohli hasn't looked completely out of touch but hasn't stayed at the crease for long enough to give himself a chance for a big knock either.

If he manages to click, Kohli is in with a chance to create another record. He is 89 runs short of becoming only the third batter in history to score 14,000 runs in the format which arguably has been the run-machine's favourite.

India don't seem to have put a foot



wrong in this series as they continue to make the most of their rich reservoir of talent.

The addition of Varun Chakaravarthy has given additional ammunition to their lethal spin attack which will be vital for the Champions Trophy and Mohammed Shami's return after lengthy injury layoff has been seamless too.

Shami's successful comeback has certainly been

assuring given that the Indian team management will spend an anxious day on Tuesday awaiting news on their premier fast bowler Jasprit Bumrah, whose availability for the Champions Trophy is still under doubt.

As per the original timeline, Bumrah was slated for a comeback in the Ahmedabad ODI, but the ace pacer is currently toiling at the National Cricket Academy in Bengaluru under the watchful eyes of specialists aiming to

make the final squad that is set to be unveiled on Wednesday.

Bumrah's guile on varied pitches and conditions is something that no team across the world possesses and India would be desperate to have their trump card back in the mix as they chase another ICC trophy.

Both India and England will enjoy an off day on Tuesday as they have skipped training and other pre-match routines to rest and recuperate.

Having ended his troubled

Teams :

INDIA: Rohit Sharma (c), Shubman Gill (vc), Yashasvi Jaiswal, Virat Kohli, Shreyas Iyer, KL Rahul (wk), Rishabh Pant (wk), Hardik Pandya, Ravindra Jadeja, Washington Sundar, Axar Patel, Kuldeep Yadav, Harshit Rana, Mohd. Shami, Arshdeep Singh and Varun Chakaravarthy.
ENGLAND: Jos Buttler (c&wk), Harry Brook, Ben Duckett, Joe Root, Philip Salt, Jamie Smith (wk), Tom Banton, Brydon Carse, Liam Livingstone, Jamie Overton, Jofra Archer, Gus Atkinson, Saqib Mahmood, Adil Rashid and Mark Wood.

run with the bat with a characteristic hundred in Cuttack, Rohit's confidence will certainly rub off on the rest of the side. While Yashasvi Jaiswal could continue to warm the bench, India will expect better application and results from wicketkeeper-batter KL Rahul, who is going through a lean patch himself.

But it would not be a surprise if India give the flamboyant Rishabh Pant a crack to get some game time and have another left-handed batter in the mix to try out additional combinations.

India will need Shreyas Iyer's presence in the middle-order which has been bolstered by robust batting performances from Axar Patel. The 31-year-old all-rounder has shown immense maturity at No.5 in pressure situations of both the ODIs so far with knocks of 52 and 41 not out.

Patel's exploits with the bat have taken some pressure off Ravindra Jadeja.



He is still the best player in the world regardless of the form, Kohli is still the best player, the stats prove that, how many centuries across formats

Chris Gayle

former West Indies batter

games

Mumbai, Wednesday, February 12, 2025

Gayle says Kohli is world's best

Former West Indies star feels India batter No 1 regardless of his form

PTI
NEW DELHI

Virat Kohli may have been going through a poor run of form but the senior Indian batter remains the "best player in the world," feels former West Indian swashbuckler Chris Gayle.

The 36-year-old Kohli endured yet another poor outing as he was dismissed for just five runs in the second ODI against England in Cuttack on Sunday.

But Gayle, who has played alongside Kohli at the Royal Challengers Bengaluru in IPL, remains unperturbed by the Indian's lean stretch.

"He is still the best player in the world regardless of the form, Kohli is still the best player, the stats prove that, how many centuries across formats

Champions Trophy, he said, "It is easy for him just to get 200 runs (more to surpass Gayle). I don't know how many games they will be playing but I am sure he can get over 200 runs, and I am sure he will get a century for sure, so it's just a matter of time before he goes on to break that record." Known for his flamboyance besides his big-hitting capabilities, Gayle called Indian captain Rohit Sharma the "new king in town" after the Mumbaikar broke the Jamaican's record for most number of sixes in the ODI format.

Smith credits SA20 for Breetzke

Former SA skipper feels growth of league is mirroring that of IPL lately

Haridev Pushparaj
MUMBAI

Former South Africa captain and SA20 League Commissioner **Graeme Smith** feels the rise of Matthew Breetzke is a reflection of the growth of SA20 league.

"For me it is fantastic because we are starting to see how SA20 is reflecting the IPL. When IPL started the idea was to expose young Indian talent to world class players and pressure situations and give them that global platform and a similar thing is happening at SA20 now. Now these young players coming through the line can potentially play for India and South Africa. SA take a team to the triangular series which doesn't have a lot of superstars but you still have a player like Breetzke, who is an up-and-coming player and a massive hundred on debut. He has got huge potential definitely and I think he is starting to build confidence and exposure is good for him," he added.

With Bumrah's availability for the Champions Trophy still uncertain, Chopra suggested that Siraj could find a way back into the squad. Siraj was not included in the ODI squad against England or the preliminary Champions Trophy squad, but his experience could be crucial if India requires three frontline fast bowlers.

Chopra hinted that India initially wanted a left-right combination in the top order but have seemingly abandoned that approach after Iyer's impact innings. "You wanted to maintain a left-right combination in the batting order. Now, you won't be able to do it. You have played your hand, and that has backfired," he added.

"With Bumrah's availability

Smith was elated with the growth of the SA20 and saw parallels to the Indian Premier League (IPL).

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With Bumrah's availability

150

Matthew Breetzke's ton on ODI debut

The whole investment that is required in our cricket areas is done," he added.

Smith stated that there was pressure from fans to increase franchises but he was not looking at it now.

"There is some pressure from fans to add a new product. We are looking to get approached by teams. I think we are committed to the six franchises that are already in the fray in SA20. We committed five

years before adding any other franchise. It's important to build on some talented South African cricketers. When IPL decided to grow there was a huge pool of players. But for the first five years there won't be any growth," he added.

South Africa finished as runners-up at both the men's and women's T20 World Cups in 2024. Earlier this year, they were also defeated by India in the ICC Women's Under-19 World Cup final. However, the Proteas have a chance to lift spirits in the country as they prepare to face Australia in the WTC final this June. This will be their first appearance in the summit clash.

WPL

Lanning hopes for encore from Shafali Varma

PTI
NEW DELHI

Delhi Capitals' skipper Meg Lanning on Tuesday hoped explosive India opener **Shafali Varma** will carry her recent rich vein of form in domestic cricket into the third season of the Women's Premier League starting on Friday.

Shafali, who was dropped from the Indian team for the away tour to Australia in November 2024, made excellent outings for Haryana in

domestic matches recently to signal her return to running ways.

"She looks like she's in really good touch and enjoying herself and having fun too, which I think is really important. For me, just watching her play with freedom, express herself, (and) when she does that, that plays a really important role for our team," Lanning said during the pre-tournament press meet of the Capitals.

Shafali was the top run-getter in the Senior Women's

One Day Trophy, scoring 527 runs at an average of 75.29 while in the Senior Women's One Day Challenger Trophy the right-hander made 414 runs at an average of 82.80.

On both the occasions, she made runs at a strike-rate close to 150.

"She did a very similar thing a few days ago in our practice game. She often puts on a very entertaining show and I've got the best seat in the house. I always enjoy bat with her. We get on really well and hopefully this

season can continue on from where we have been the first two," Lanning added.

Like her opening partner, Lanning also coming to the WPL 2025 without any sub-

stantial match-time experience having retired from international cricket last year.

So, how has she managed to keep in touch with the game?

"I've been playing some games for Victoria in the WNCL (Women's National Cricket League). I think playing matches is important."

"There's nothing quite like being out in the middle and being in a good rhythm with that.

"So, I feel like those games

are great for me in that respect. I feel like I'm in a good spot with my game."

Lanning said her past experiences of playing in India will help her in the WPL.

"I always enjoy playing and batting over here in India. I've had some success in the past. And yeah, so far with the couple of days I've been here, it's been nice to just get used to the conditions and just be really clear on what my plan is and how I want to go about it."



Briefs

MUMBAI

St. Joseph's Convent beat K'taka HS

St. Joseph's Convent High School won their contest against Karnataka High School, Chembur by 110 runs. Batting first, St. Joseph's scored 142-2 in 10 overs. Rutuja Wandhe top scored with a 69 not out in 36 balls with 9 fours and 2 sixes. She played her shots well, ensuring her team always stayed ahead of their opponents in the contest. Swara and Arya picked one wicket each. In reply, the Karnataka team fell like a pack of cards and never recovered.

MUMBAI

Oriental Insurance defeat AI

Oriental Insurance defeated Air India by 4 wickets in the 14th Insurance Oriental elite shield T20 cricket tournament played at National Cricket Club ground at Cross Maidan. Air India's steady started, winning the toss and opting to bat, Air India's Vishal Girap's anchored a well-crafted 47. He played with maturity, rotating the strike and punishing loose deliveries. Oriental Insurance's bowling attack was spearheaded by Aryaveer Rakesh, who delivered a lethal spell of 4/15, dismantling Air India's middle order. His impeccable line left the batsmen struggling.

'Sixer-King' Sambhaji turning heads at ISPL

Patil is the only policeman in two editions of the event

Haridev Pushparaj

MUMBAI

In the T-10 Indian Street Premier League (ISPL), comprising six franchises and close to 100 players, **Sambhaji Patil** is the only cricketer in two editions of the event who is a policeman by profession and is making quite an impression with his bat and professional back-ground.

The Maharashtra cop represents the Falcon Risers Hyderabad in the second season of the ISPL and is a prominent member of the team which has now made it to the ISPL Playoffs.

Patil, who hails from Naigaon near Dadar, is known for his six-hitting flair which has rendered him the nickname 'Sixer King' and he got it a few years back.

"It's been 3-4 years since I got this 'Sixer King' name. I only have one target when I bat and that is to hit a six off every ball and even commentators say that my sixes go a really long way and that's why I got this name."

Patil is happy with the way the season has gone about for his team.

"Present season is going well for me. My team has reached the playoffs so I'm happy," he added.

The Falcon Risers' batter had started his cricketing journey way back in 2004 and has not looked back since



then.

"I'm playing professional cricket from 2004. I mainly play tennis-ball cricket and represented several teams. I had started playing in Pune," he revealed.

He is doing a fine job of balancing his professional duties as a policeman and that of a cricketer.

"If I have a day match, then I do night duty and if there is match in the night, then I do day duty. When I have

matches outside of Mumbai, I take leaves and go for the games," he added.

Patil had played for the Chennai Singams last season.

"My team Chennai Singams had reached the semifinal and I had the best strike rate in that whole season. The longest six of the first season was also in my name. It was 107 metres in length," he said.

The cricketer-cum-cop had a fruitful interaction with former India cricketer Mohammad Kaif, who was present for one of the matches.

"Mohammad Kaif asked me about tennis-ball cricket and I told him about it. He said tennis-ball cricket is very good for my growth and asked me how the pitch is doing. Talking to such a big international player boosted my confidence as well and his guidance helped me," Patil added.

Patil felt professionalism was one of the biggest learnings from participating in the ISPL.

"ISPL has taught me professionalism. In tennis-ball cricket, it is not so organized but here I have learnt the importance of discipline and fitness. How it is important to maintain pre-match fitness and post-match recovery. We got good coaches and they also gave us good guidance."

In a low-scoring yet action-packed encounter, SSK CA clinched a dominant victory over Brothers CC, defending a modest total of 26/3 in 4 overs by bundling out their opponents for just 25 in 7.3 overs in the Sinhgad T20 League in Nashik.

Tejas Pimpale delivered a stellar all-round performance, taking 5 wickets for just 7 runs in his full 4 overs with an incredible economy

of 1.75, while also contributing a quickfire 12 runs off just 5 balls, including a four and a six at a striking rate of 240. Srikame fought back for Brothers CC, claiming 5 wickets for 13 runs in 3.3 overs, but his efforts weren't enough to secure a win in this gripping battle.

Dwarka CA delivered a commanding performance to defeat Youngsters II by 94 runs. Batting first, they posted a competitive total of 164/7 in 20 overs, thanks to Mayur Wagh's explosive 41

off 28 balls, including seven fours at a strike rate of 146.

S Mankar contributed a steady 40 off 43 balls with 5 fours and a six, while S Natwani added a quickfire 32 off 22 balls. On the bowling front, Mayur Wagh shone again with a brilliant spell, taking 4 wickets for just 13 runs in 3 overs with an economy of 4.33.

S Mankar sealed the victory with a stunning performance, grabbing 3 wickets without conceding a single run in 1.3 overs, as

Youngsters II were bowled out for just 70 runs in 16.3 overs.

T20 Sundar Gajraj league Griffin CA emerged victorious in a thrilling final against Meri CC, posting 148/8 in 20 overs and securing a 42-run win in the T20 Sundar Gajraj League in Pune.

The standout performer, Kushagra Jaiswal, delivered a stellar knock of 66 runs off 49 balls, smashing 7 sixes and 2 fours with a strike rate

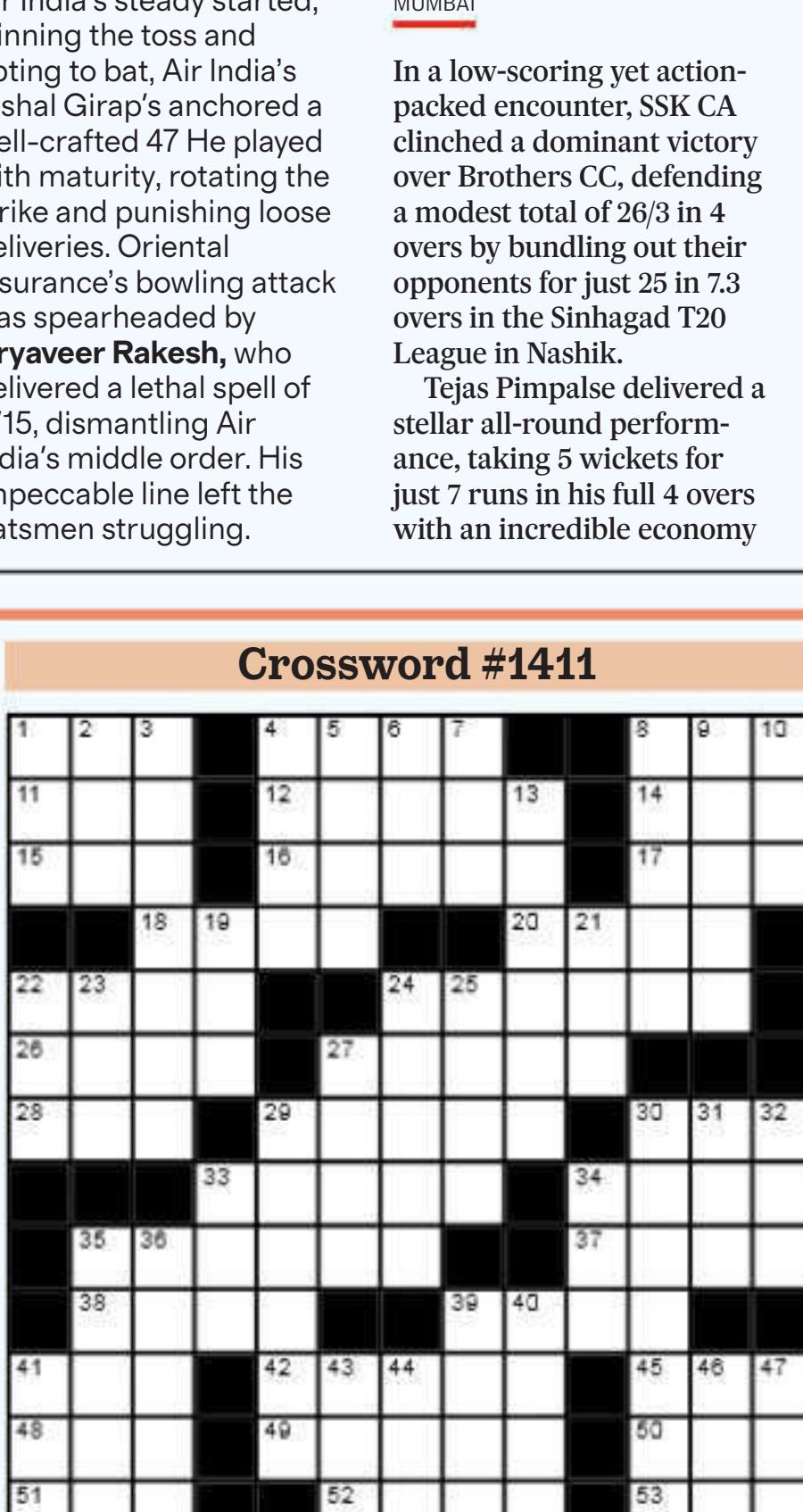
of 134, while R. Sharma contributed a solid 47 off 34 balls, hitting seven fours and 2 sixes at a strike rate of 138.

On the bowling front, K. Sanap's exceptional spell of 3 wickets for just 7 runs in 3 overs with an economy of 2.33 was instrumental, complemented by L. Saindane's 2 wickets for 20 runs. For Meri CC, A. Neharkar fought back with 3 wickets, conceding 29 runs in 4 overs, but the team's effort fell short as they were bowled out for 106 in their chase.

SSK CA clinch dominant victory over Brothers CC

FPJ News Service

MUMBAI

**Across**

1. The speaker's gift
4. Catch sight of
8. Doctor of Sacred Music, abbr.
11. Japanese outcast class
12. Jam-session features
14. Over the counter, acronym
15. Frequency unit
16. Gambling game (3-2)
17. Energy
18. Cuts down
20. South Yemeni capital
22. East European
24. Propelling a boat, rowing
26. Indian garment
27. Records
28. Weight and Balance Sys.
29. Demolishes or ruins, in a way
30. A cricket extra
33. Legally acceptable
34. Strive or slave?
35. Reeks
37. Viper like snakes
38. Stylish
39. Responsibility
41. Me, to Miss Piggy
42. Hurry
45. Of that race, class or kind
48. Fearful reverence
49. Preamble
50. Notice of exception, abbr.
51. One of the little folk
52. Cannon of "Heaven Can Wait"
53. Chap

Down

1. Precious stone
2. Greek capital to Air India
3. Market places or fairs
4. Italian noble family
5. Female pigs
6. Arafat's gp.
7. Addressee
8. Twelve
9. Insect bite
10. Mode Control Panel
13. Reserves or saves
19. Sixteen for Caesar
21. Prefix with "cover" and "please"
22. U-turn from NNE
23. A workplace to conduct scientific research?
24. Desert haven
25. Copied
27. Speak and discuss
29. Capital of Jharkhand
30. Acting in a domineering manner?
31. Barking sound from a pup
32. Electronic Library Sys.
33. Roman seven
34. Greek T
35. Frown
36. Burglar
39. Other in Spanish
40. Inert gas
41. West: life-jacket?
43. In addition
44. Pig-house
46. Pet name for Louis?
47. Lock opener

YOUR DAY By Vinayak Vishwas Karandikar

ARIES: Concentrate on studies and career today. Expect expenditure on education, vehicles, or property. People in education, the automobile industry, or real estate will benefit. You may buy property or a vehicle today. It is a good day for studies and doing work from home. Some people may suffer from a normal cough and cold or weakness. Lucky no.: 3. Lucky colour: Yellow



TAURUS: Business deals, contracts and meetings will be successful today. Expect expenditure on communication, advertisements, or travel. People in communications, journalism, and publication will benefit. Travel with the family is indicated. Some people may suffer from knee pain or shoulder pain. Lucky no.: 8. Lucky colour: Blue



GEMINI: You must control your words today, as they may spoil your image or result in losses. Expect expenditure on premium services, dental care, or business. People in the occult sciences, education, repair works, and insurance will get success. Family members may help you in your work. Some people may suffer from throat pain, toothache, eye troubles, or breathing problems.



CANCER: You may face problems in your career and family life today. You may have to spend on health, spouse, or business. Surgeons, people associated with the insurance sector, repair works, or those associated with funeral services will benefit. You may encounter some trouble in higher education or travel. Take care of yourself and of your spouse. Lucky no.: 3. Lucky colour: Yellow



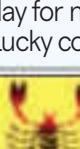
LEO: Today is the day to get returns on your investments. Delayed payments will be recovered. Expect expenditure related to health, business or career. People working in finance companies, HR agencies, and doctors will benefit. Your family life may get disturbed due to work load or illness. Some people may suffer from eye problems, constipation, or bronchitis.



VIRGO: Economic growth is indicated for you today. You will recover money that was stuck. Expect expenditure on entertainment or health. People associated with law, religion, and entertainment will benefit. A dispute with your spouse or children is indicated. Some people may suffer from bronchitis, asthma, back pain, or constipation. Lucky no.: 3. Lucky colour: Yellow



LIBRA: Today you may take a rest from the daily routine and enjoy time with your family. Expect expenditure on children or entertainment. People in fields like art, entertainment, and religion will benefit. Good news from children is indicated. It is a good day for meditation. You may enjoy it with children. Lucky no.: 6. Lucky colour: Pink



SCORPIO: Today is the day to study, take a rest at home and work from home. Expect expenditure on education, home, or travel. People in communications, tourism, consultancy, education, the automobile industry, and the construction field, will succeed. You will spend the day with family or doing household work. Lucky no.: 2. Lucky colour: White



SAGITTARIUS: Today is the day to struggle and earn. You may recover money that is stuck or get maturity on your insurance. People in communications, literature, publication, and public speaking will get success. Take care of your children. You may have to travel today. Some people may suffer from shoulder pain, toothache, throat irritation, or eye problems. Lucky no.: 9. Lucky colour: Red



CAPRICORN: Today is the day to receive delayed payments. Expect expenditure on health or family needs. People in the banking sector, finance, and education will benefit. It is a day to enjoy with family. Some people may suffer from tooth pain, throat irritation, or eye problems. Lucky no.: 2. Lucky colour: Silver



AQUARIUS: Today is the day for travel, expenditure, investment, and medical treatment. Expect expenditure related to medical treatment or travel. People in the medical field, tourism, finance, and pharmacy will benefit. Your family life may be disturbed because of illness or depression. Some people may suffer from bronchitis, throat problems, sinus issues, or eye troubles.



PISCES: Today is the day for celebrations, reunions, and parties. You may have to travel. Expect expenditure on some celebration, party, or travel. People in entertainment, religious activities, sports, art, and the travel industry will benefit. You may plan a long journey. Delay in travels is indicated. Some people may suffer from depression, asthma, bronchitis, or hair fall.

FPJ - SUDOKU - 302

WHAT TO DO: Fill in the grid so that every row, every column and every 3x3 box contains the digits 1 to 9. Every puzzle has only one correct solution.

Solution

Across 1. Geet, 4. Epsi, 8. DSML, 11. Eel, 12. Tols, 14. Oic, 15. Hira, 16. Wudu, 17. Zipp, 18. Axes, 20. Aden, 22. Leg, 24. Arding, 26. Sel, 27. Chis, 28. Wbs, 29. Tels, 30. Bgs, 32. Vaid, 34. Vail, 35. Bas, 36. Bomsing, 31. Yip, 37. Aids, 38. Chis, 39. Tels, 40. Neon, 41. Meth, 42. And, 44. Syf, 46. Lou, 47. Key

Down 1. Gem, 2. Art, 3. Bezzars, 4. Eesti, 5. Sons, 6. Poi, 7. Vol, 8. Dzezen, 9. Thiel, 39. Otha, 40. Dzeta, 41. Ave, 49. Mirro, 50. Note, 51. Elit, 52. Dzeta, 53. Sowm, 54. Dzeta, 55. Dzeta, 56. Dzeta, 57. Dzeta, 58. Dzeta, 59. Dzeta, 60. Dzeta, 61. Dzeta, 62. Dzeta, 63. Dzeta, 64. Dzeta, 65. Dzeta, 66. Dzeta, 67. Dzeta, 68. Dzeta, 69. Dzeta, 70. Dzeta, 71. Dzeta, 72. Dzeta, 73. Dzeta, 74. Dzeta, 75. Dzeta, 76. Dzeta, 77. Dzeta, 78. Dzeta, 79. Dzeta, 80. Dzeta, 81. Dzeta, 82. Dzeta, 83. Dzeta, 84. Dzeta, 85. Dzeta, 86. Dzeta, 87. Dzeta, 88. Dzeta, 89. Dzeta, 90. Dzeta, 91. Dzeta, 92. Dzeta, 93. Dzeta, 94. Dzeta, 95. Dzeta, 96. Dzeta, 97. Dzeta, 98. Dzeta, 99. Dzeta, 100. Dzeta, 101. Dzeta, 102. Dzeta, 103. Dzeta, 104. Dzeta, 105. Dzeta, 106. Dzeta, 107. Dzeta, 108. Dzeta, 109. Dzeta, 110. Dzeta, 111. Dzeta, 112. Dzeta, 113. Dzeta, 114. Dzeta, 115. Dzeta, 116. Dzeta, 117. Dzeta, 118. Dzeta, 119. Dzeta, 120. Dzeta, 121. Dzeta, 122. Dzeta, 123. Dzeta, 124. Dzeta, 125. Dzeta, 126. Dzeta, 127. Dzeta, 128. Dzeta, 129. Dzeta, 130. Dzeta, 131. Dzeta, 132. Dzeta, 133. Dzeta, 134. Dzeta, 135. Dzeta, 136. Dzeta, 137. Dzeta, 138. Dzeta, 139. Dzeta, 140. Dzeta, 141. Dzeta, 142. Dzeta, 143. Dzeta, 144. Dzeta, 145. Dzeta, 146. Dzeta, 147. Dzeta, 148. Dzeta, 149. Dzeta, 150. Dzeta, 151. Dzeta, 152. Dzeta, 153. Dzeta, 154. Dzeta, 155. Dzeta, 156. Dzeta, 157. Dzeta, 158. Dzeta, 159. Dzeta, 160. Dzeta, 161. Dzeta, 162. Dzeta, 163. Dzeta, 164. Dzeta, 165. Dzeta, 166. Dzeta, 167. Dzeta, 168. Dzeta, 169. Dzeta, 170. Dzeta, 171. Dzeta, 172. Dzeta, 173. Dzeta, 174. Dzeta, 175. Dzeta, 176. Dzeta, 177. Dzeta, 178. Dzeta, 179. Dzeta, 180. Dzeta, 181. Dzeta, 182. Dzeta, 183. Dzeta,

ALPHA TRIANGLE

Beginning at the top move towards the bottom seven letter word by adding a letter at each step and rearranging. A correct and different word must be made at each step answering to the clue given.

1 Curved letter

2 Selenium for the chemists

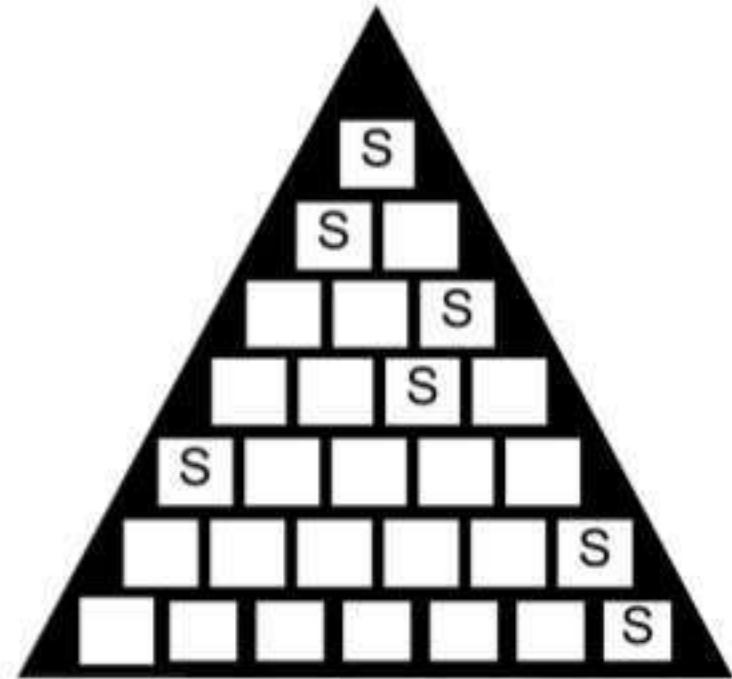
3 Followers of dos

4 Garden flower

5 Make a point

6 Impels

7 Consults



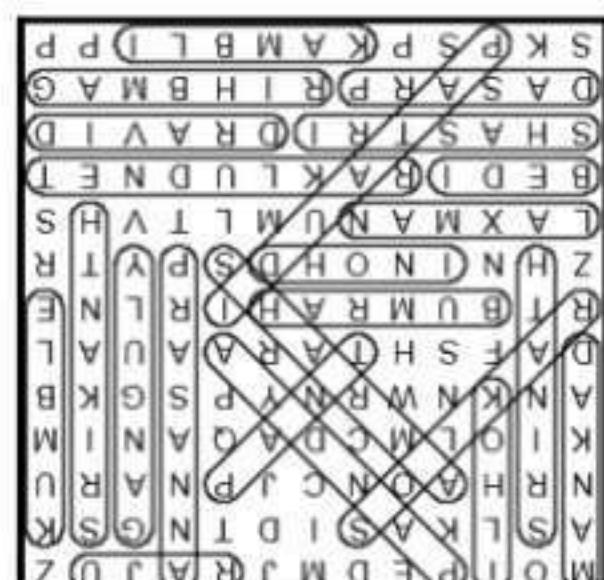
S, Se, Res, Rose, Score, Forces, Confers.

Solution to Alpha Triangle**Indian Cricketers**

Can you find the words connected in one way or the other with the theme indicated by the title in today's Word Search?

The words may be read horizontally, vertically or diagonally either forwards or backwards, but always in straight lines. Use a ruler to cross them through as you find them.

Bedi	Kumble	Raju
Bumrah	Laxman	Sharma
Dhoni	Mankad	Shastri
David	Pandya	Solkar
Gambhir	Pant	Srikanth
Ganguly	Pataudi	Srinath
Kambli	Prasad	Tendulkar
Kohli	Prasanna	

**Go Figure**

Place the four numbers in the first, third, fifth, and seventh boxes and whatever operators you care to use in the second, fourth, and sixth boxes in the correct order to get the answer. Use the numbers only once. Operations should be carried out sequentially. BODMAS rule does not apply.

The operators:

÷ × + -

Easy

= 13

2 2 4 9

Medium

= 7

2 5 7 7

Hard

= 4

2 3 4 8

Hard - $8 / 4 / 2 + 3 = 4$
Medium - $5 + 2 + 7 - 7 = 7$
Easy - $9 + 4 + 2 - 2 = 13$

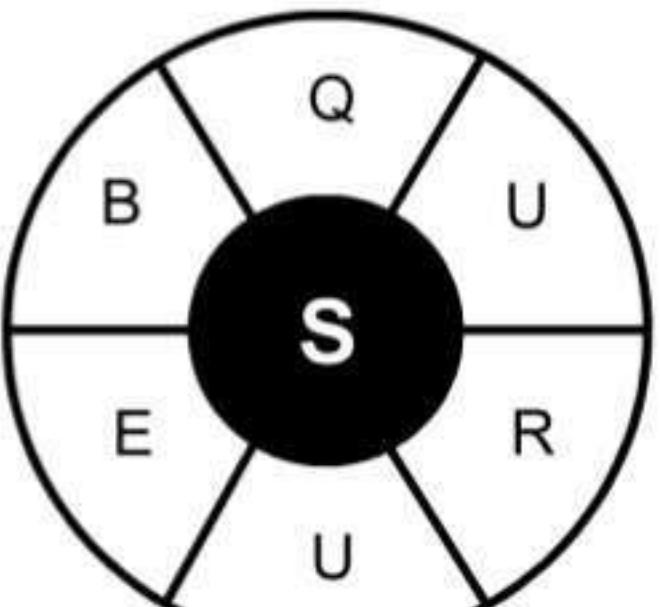
Riddler

This is a test to gauge your mental flexibility, creativity and cunning. Good Luck! (Example: 16 O in a P. Answer: 16 Ounces in a Pound) 11 P in a F T

Answer: 11 Players in a Football Team

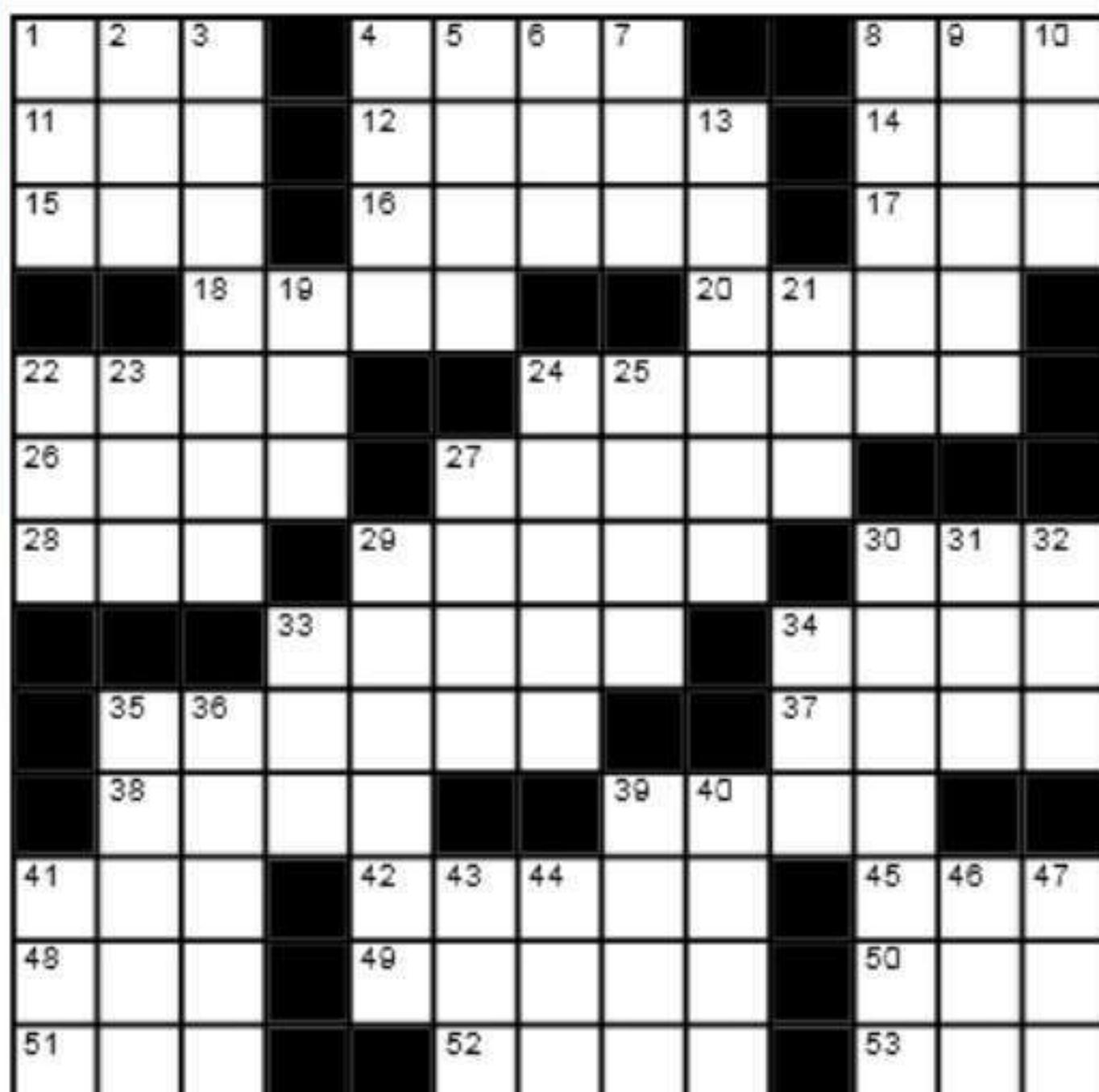
BULL'S EYE

How many words of four or more letters can you make from the letters shown? Each word can use a letter only once and must contain the central letter. There should be at least one 7-letter word. British English Dictionary is used as reference.

**Ratings:**

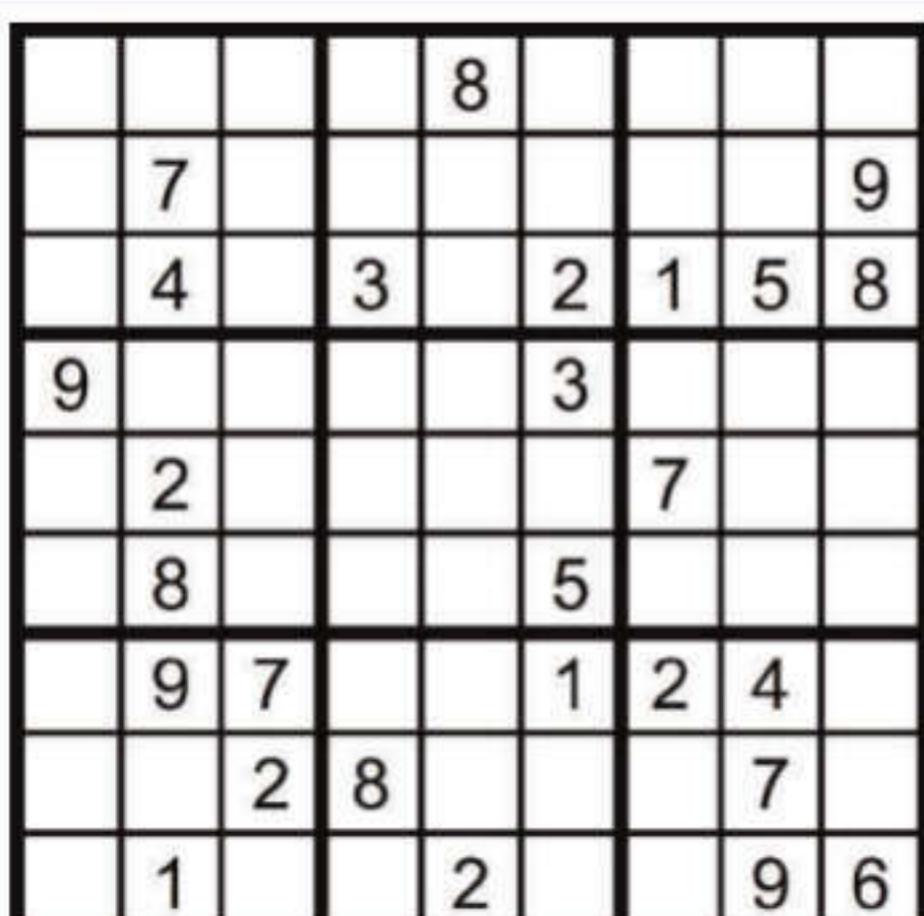
03 average; 04 good; 05 outstanding.

SOLUTION :
BRUSQUE, rebus, reuse, sure, user

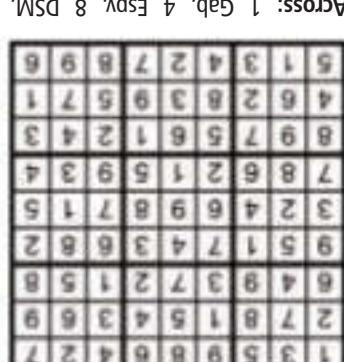
Crossword #1411**Across**

- 1 The speaker's gift
- 4 Catch sight of
- 8 Doctor of Sacred Music, abbr.
- 11 Japanese outcast class
- 12 Jam-session features
- 14 Over the counter, acronym
- 15 Frequency unit
- 16 Gambling game (3-2)
- 17 Energy
- 18 Cuts down
- 20 South Yemeni capital
- 22 East European
- 24 Propelling a boat, rowing
- 26 Indian garment
- 27 Records
- 28 Weight and Balance Sys.

- 29 Demolishes or ruins, in a way
- 30 A cricket extra
- 33 Legally acceptable
- 34 Strive or slave?
- 35 Reeks
- 37 Viper like snakes
- 38 Stylish
- 39 Responsibility
- 41 Me, to Miss Piggy
- 42 Hurry
- 45 Of that race, class or kind
- 48 Fearful reverence
- 49 Preamble
- 50 Notice of exception, abbr.
- 51 One of the little folk
- 52 Cannon of "Heaven Can Wait"
- 53 Chap

SUDOKU

Across: 1 Gah, 4 Espy, 8 DSM, 11 Ele, 12 Soho, 14 Odc, 15 MWh, 16 Two-up, 17 Zip, 18 Axes, 20 Aden, 22 Slay, 24 Dairying, 26 San, 33 Vt, 34 Tel, 35 Scowl, 36 Threat, 37 Skew, 38 Vil, 39 Quo, 40 Ele, 41 Me, 43 And, 44 Siy, 45 Elm, 46 Tid, 47 Key, 48 Elm, 49 Elm, 50 Noc, 51 Elm, 52 Daz, 53 Guv, 54 Elm, 55 Elm, 56 Elm, 57 Elm, 58 Elm, 59 Elm, 60 Elm, 61 Elm, 62 Elm, 63 Elm, 64 Elm, 65 Elm, 66 Elm, 67 Elm, 68 Elm, 69 Elm, 70 Elm, 71 Elm, 72 Elm, 73 Elm, 74 Elm, 75 Elm, 76 Elm, 77 Elm, 78 Elm, 79 Elm, 80 Elm, 81 Elm, 82 Elm, 83 Elm, 84 Elm, 85 Elm, 86 Elm, 87 Elm, 88 Elm, 89 Elm, 90 Elm, 91 Elm, 92 Elm, 93 Elm, 94 Elm, 95 Elm, 96 Elm, 97 Elm, 98 Elm, 99 Elm, 100 Elm.



WHAT TO DO: Fill in the grid so that every row, every column and every 3x3 box contains the digits 1 to 9. Every puzzle has only one correct solution.

Vastu-approved lucky plants to elevate the energy of your home

Ria Mukherjee

Modern bathrooms have emerged as sanctuaries of style, comfort, and functionality. Modern style is characterized by warm, natural colors that provide a cozy feel. Clear, well-balanced lines balance the natural with geometric shapes. Wood, mahogany, brass, and glass are all commonly used in a modern bathroom—but materials aren't the only elements that contribute to the modern style. With their clean lines and minimalist aesthetics, these bathrooms create an atmosphere of tranquility and simplicity. Gone are the days when bathrooms were relegated to mere utilitarian spaces; today, they are elevated to elegant retreats where form meets function.

This article delves into the world of modern bathrooms, highlighting the key design elements and innovations that have transformed them into spaces of unparalleled luxury and convenience.

■ Seamless minimalism

Modern bathrooms feature clean lines, minimalist aesthetics, and tranquil vibes. Neutral color palettes in white, gray, and beige create timeless serenity. Seamless integration is a key element, with wall-mounted fixtures and frameless glass showers enhancing spaciousness and ease of maintenance.

■ Innovative fixtures
Modern bathrooms are known for their cutting-edge fixtures that combine style with functionality. Wall-mounted faucets and floating vanities not only contribute to the clean and uncluttered aesthetic but also make cleaning a breeze. Freestanding bathtubs, often sculpted from contemporary materials like resin or stone, become focal points within the bathroom.

■ Smart technology
The infusion of smart technology has transformed modern bathrooms, offering unmatched convenience and efficiency. Smart mirrors with LED lighting and touch-screen interfaces offer adjustable illumination and real-time information like weather forecasts and news headlines. Heated floors and towel racks bring warmth and comfort, especially in colder months. Voice-activated faucets and showers enable hands-free water control, promoting water conservation.



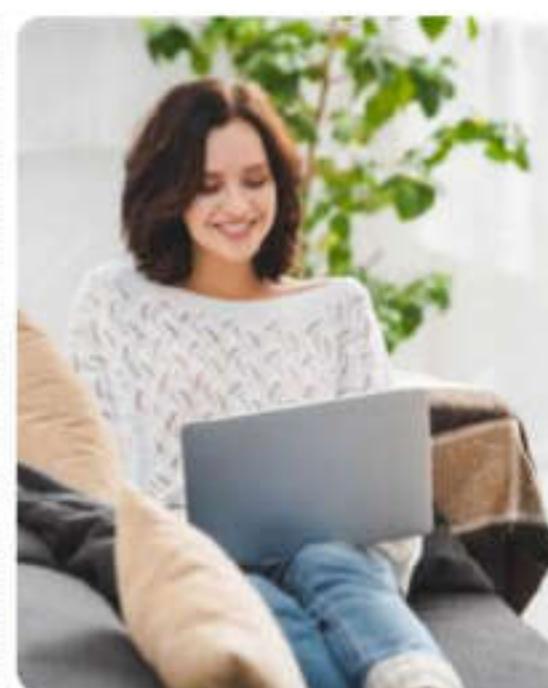
■ Luxurious materials

Modern bathrooms feature opulent materials such as marble and natural stone for sophistication. Durable options like quartz and porcelain tiles are favored. Innovative choices like glass, acrylic, and metal accents add texture and depth, giving a contemporary edge.



■ Natural elements and greenery

Lastly, incorporating natural elements into modern bathrooms can evoke a sense of serenity and connection with the outdoors. Large windows or strategically placed skylights can bring in natural light and provide views of nature, creating a sense of tranquility. Greenery in the form of potted plants or living walls can infuse the space with life and vitality while improving indoor air quality.



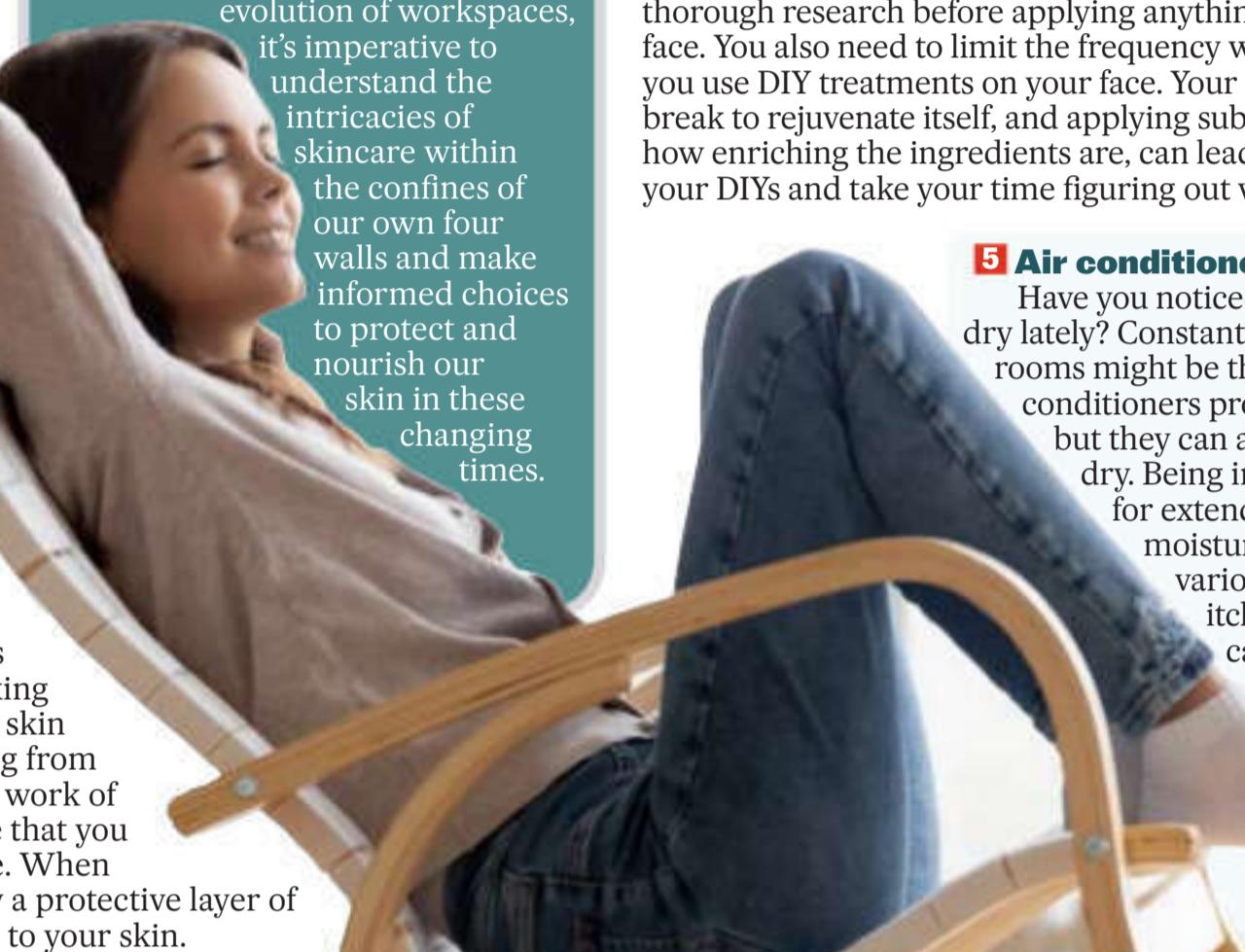
Monika Khajuria

In the wake of the global pandemic, our lives have undergone profound transformations, with the boundaries of our daily routines expanding to encompass the indoor realm. As we adapt to a new way of living, shaped by concepts such as remote work-from-home, it's essential to examine the potential effects of these lifestyle changes on our skin. In this exploration, we delve into the question of whether there are any harmful consequences of prolonged indoor living on your skin. From the insidious influence of blue light emitted by our screens to the deceptive allure of sun rays seeping through windows, the ramifications of remote work arrangements, and post-pandemic adjustments on our skin are multifaceted. We'll uncover the subtle ways in which air conditioning can deprive our skin of its natural moisture and how the allure of DIY skincare remedies can sometimes lead to unexpected disasters. As we navigate this indoor-centric lifestyle and the evolution of workspaces, it's imperative to understand the intricacies of skincare within the confines of our own four walls and make informed choices to protect and nourish our skin in these changing times.

1 The blue light effect
You might have heard about the horrors of blue light. Emitted by the screens of the gadgets we use such as laptops, mobiles, TVs, and tablets, prolonged exposure to blue light can contribute to the weakening of your skin barrier, hyperpigmentation, and premature skin aging. In extreme cases, it can even lead to skin cancer. As we find ourselves working remotely from home, it is evident that our screen time has increased significantly. This can turn out to be a nightmare for your skin. So, as much as possible, take breaks from your gadgets and show some love to your skin. If, due to work, you cannot avoid exposure, there are blue light filters available today to minimize the impact.

2 Sun can harm your skin even indoors

It is one of our biggest misconceptions that we don't need sun protection if we are not outside. Believe us, sun rays have many ways to reach you and damage your skin, even indoors. They can seep in through your glass windows. The time you spend working remotely indoors also exposes your skin to the sun. So, while you are working from home, the sun's rays are doing their work of damaging your skin. Do not assume that you don't need sunscreen while at home. When you get ready in the morning, apply a protective layer of sunscreen with an SPF of at least 30 to your skin.



3 Being lazy can cost you the natural glow

While many of us are embracing the remote work skincare craze, there are those of us who have become lazy and neglected proper skin care. Remember that your skincare routine is a habit that your skin has grown accustomed to. Neglecting your skincare routine can make your skin look dull and tired. If you think that just because you are not going out, your skin is not exposed to dirt and impurities, think again. It is important to cleanse and pamper your skin regularly to prevent the buildup of impurities and clogging of skin pores.



Effects of staying indoors on your skin

4 Hasty DIYs can lead to skin disasters

Remote work seems like the perfect time to try some nourishing DIYs, doesn't it? While we agree that homemade natural remedies are the best for your skin, using them blindly can cause irreversible damage. Before you get caught up in the frenzy of remote work skincare, conduct thorough research before applying anything to your face. You also need to limit the frequency with which you use DIY treatments on your face. Your skin needs a break to rejuvenate itself, and applying substances to it every day, no matter how enriching the ingredients are, can lead to skin disasters. So, go easy with your DIYs and take your time figuring out what works best for your skin.



5 Air conditioners can make your skin dry

Have you noticed your skin becoming dull and dry lately? Constantly being in air-conditioned rooms might be the reason for that. Air conditioners provide us with a lot of comfort, but they can also make our skin extremely dry. Being in an air-conditioned room for extended periods can disrupt the moisture balance of your skin, causing various skin disorders such as itchiness, flakiness, and redness. It can even worsen acne. If you have air conditioners at home, we suggest monitoring the amount of time you spend in them to protect your skin from possible damage.

This one natural ingredient helps to treat anaemia

Shabana

Present-day world is witnessing new types of diseases every day. Some are common, while some are not. People are becoming increasingly vulnerable to common allergies or conditions such as blood pressure, diabetes, etc., due to stress, pollution, hectic lifestyle and a poor diet. Our body requires the right amount of all the nutrient groups on a daily basis to function properly. This can happen only when people follow a strict diet of eating healthy food and including various fruits and vegetables every day. But alas, today's generation does not have time to even eat a proper meal. They end up eating outside food, which is usually fried and chemically enhanced for flavour. At home as well, with busy working women not having time to prepare fresh meals, they end up ordering or binging on ready-to-eat options. These choices leave their bodies malnourished. When our body is not getting the required nutrients, its immunity system weakens and makes it susceptible to catching illnesses.



Women's bodies need more nutrients than a man on average because of all the changes it goes through during puberty or pregnancy. The most common deficiency that women suffer from is iron deficiency mostly because of the blood loss during the monthly cycle.

A woman is said to be anaemic when the body's red blood cell count is less than normal. Red blood cells contain haemoglobin, an iron-based protein that helps the blood cells carry oxygen. When you are anaemic, your blood can't deliver the proper oxygen supply to your organs and tissues. Symptoms may include fatigue, pale skin, headache, cold hands and

Tips to include sesame seeds in your diet

sesame seeds paste:

This homemade remedy has proven to be effective in treating anaemia. It is easy to digest and the nutrients in the paste form tend to get absorbed faster into the system.

Ingredients: 1 teaspoon of sesame seeds, 1 tablespoon of honey. Water to soak the sesame seeds.

Method: Soak the sesame seeds in water for two hours. Strain the seeds and crush them in a mortar-pestle to make a paste. Add honey to the mixture and mix well. Consume this mixture twice a day for fast results.



Sesame flavoured milk:
As black sesame seeds are more potent than regular sesame seeds, this is another effective recipe to treat anaemia.

Ingredients: 1 teaspoon of black sesame seed paste, 1 cup milk, 2 teaspoons of honey, 1 cup warm water.

Method: Soak the sesame seeds in warm water for two hours. Grind them into a paste. Now, strain the liquid out of the paste and mix it with milk. Add honey to this. Have this milk daily.

Along with the above-mentioned remedies to treat anaemia, here are a few things you can do to prevent it altogether.

■ Consuming folic-rich foods like green leafy vegetables, mushrooms, black-eyed peas, kidney beans, etc., can help.

■ Increasing your Vitamin C intake can also prevent anaemia. Include foods like lemons, oranges, tomatoes, etc.

■ Avoid caffeinated and aerated drinks because they are known to prevent the absorption of iron in the body.

Growth mindset & mental well-being: Keys to modern leadership

The intersection of leadership and mental well-being:

Sneha Karwat,
Growth Mindset and Peak Performance Coach

In an era defined by constant change, uncertainty, and growing workplace demands, mental well-being and a growth mindset are no longer optional—they're essential.

Why growth mindset matters:

"A growth mindset isn't just a buzzword," says Sneha Karwat. "It's the foundation of resilience, innovation, and long-term success. Leaders with a growth mindset see challenges as opportunities, failures as lessons, and feedback as a tool for development." According to studies conducted by Stanford University psychologist Dr. Carol Dweck, individuals with a growth mindset are more likely to embrace learning, adapt to change, and outperform their fixed-mindset counterparts.

In the modern workplace, this translates to leaders who can pivot, inspire their teams, and thrive under pressure. Sneha Karwat believes that adopting a growth mindset not only enhances professional success but also fosters personal fulfillment. "When you start believing that your abilities and intelligence can grow with effort and learning, you become unstoppable," Sneha Karwat adds.



the truth is, mental well-being is the fuel for sustainable performance. Without it, burnout, stress, and poor decision-making take over."

Recent data reveals that nearly 77% of leaders experience workplace stress, and over 60% of employees look to their leaders for emotional support and guidance. "When leaders

prioritize their mental well-being, it creates a ripple effect throughout their organizations. They lead with clarity, empathy, and purpose," says Sneha Karwat.

■ Cultivate a growth mindset to embrace challenges and unlock creativity.

■ Manage stress, anxiety, and imposter syndrome with neuroscience-backed techniques.

■ Develop resilience and emotional intelligence to navigate change with confidence.

■ Inspire teams to foster a culture of innovation, collaboration, and trust.

"The mission is to impact over 1 million people by empowering them to overcome limiting beliefs, take charge of their minds, and unleash their true potential," Sneha Karwat shares. "It's about creating a mindset revolution that transforms not only individuals but entire organizations."

Ways to improve emotional intelligence

Emotional intelligence continues to be an increasingly relevant skill to have in the professional and personal world. Here are some tips that can help improve your emotional intelligence.

■ Always pay attention to how you behave (self-awareness).

■ Take responsibility for your feelings and actions.

■ Take time to celebrate the positives, but do not ignore the negatives.

■ Adopt an assertive (not too aggressive or too passive) way of communication.

■ When faced with a conflict, respond to it and not react.

■ Be motivated.

■ Train yourself to maintain a positive attitude.

■ Accept criticism.

■ Acknowledge your emotional triggers.

■ Empathise with others.

■ Be approachable and sociable.

■ Utilise your leadership skills.

■ Utilise your listening skills.

■ Maintain a schedule.

■ Set personal goals.

What Is Emotional Intelligence? Tips for personal growth and improvement

Amrittha K

Equally affecting your work-life and your personal life, emotional intelligence (EQ or EI) is the ability to understand, manage, and express one's own emotions and feelings. EI also affects your engagement and navigation of interaction with other people. Basically, it is the ability to understand the emotions of the people around you. The five components of emotional intelligence are self-awareness, self-regulation, motivation, empathy, and social skills.

Signs of high emotional intelligence capabilities

Self-awareness:

Emotional, accurate, self-confidence.

Self-management:

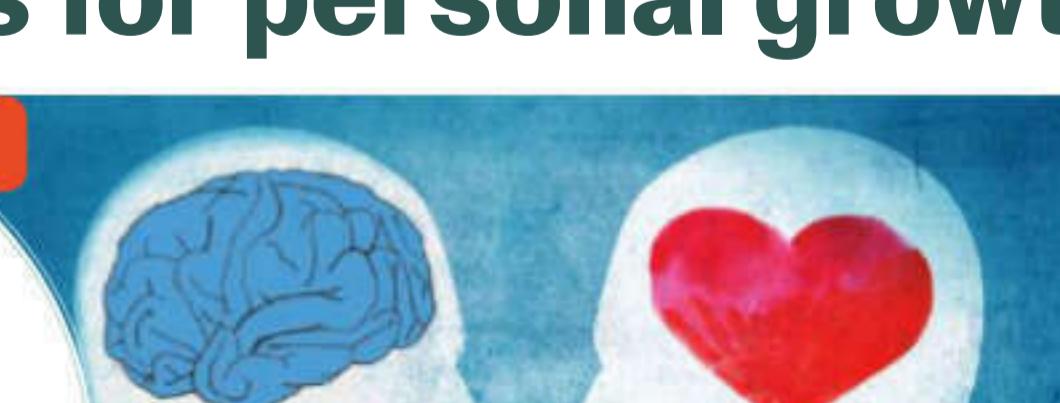
Self-control, trustworthiness, conscientiousness, adaptability, achievement orientation, initiative.

Social awareness:

Empathy, organisational awareness, service orientation

Social skill:

Visionary leadership, developing others, communication, change catalyst, conflict management, building bonds, teamwork and collaboration.



Various studies have asserted that the highest performers in a workplace displayed higher levels of emotional intelligence in comparison to the other employees. Although the common assumption of successful character is directly linked with an individual's IQ, it is one's EI that defines them both in the workplace and their personal lives. Simply put, 90% of high performers at the workplace possess high EI, while 80% of low performers have low EI. Essential for the development, maintenance, formation as well as enhancement of personal relationships, emotional intelligence evolves and increases with one's desire to learn and grow.

Importance of emotional intelligence

Coincidentally, psychologists Mayer and Salovey in 1990, emotional intelligence is the capacity or the ability of an individual to perceive, process and regulate emotional information accurately and effectively. It is not just important for oneself but is equally important for interaction with others. Studies have revealed that possessing emotional intelligence helps to improve the quality of your life, as it helps provide a 'framework' which allows one to be

well effective and equipped.

Likewise, emotional intelligence is an important part of the formation as well as the development of meaningful human relationships. It is essential to building a well-balanced life. Studies have pointed out that emotional intelligence helps improve your physical health, mental well-being, relationships, leadership and help with conflict resolution and help you succeed in life.

Emotional intelligence has become one of the major deciding factors in various organisations, solely because it helps improve the profit and success of the organisation as a whole.

Emotional intelligence in the workplace

EI is one of the central factors that influence the decisions made by employers as well as employees. According to a survey conducted by CareerBuilder, about 71 per cent of hiring managers valued an employee's EQ over their IQ—further focusing on the importance of possessing it. And 75 per cent asserted that they would be more likely to promote an employee with high emotional intelligence and 59 per cent said that they wouldn't hire a candidate with a high IQ and low EQ.

Emotional intelligence has become one of the major deciding factors in various organisations, solely because it helps improve the profit and success of the organisation as a whole.

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FAME & IMMATURITY

CJ Desk

Ranveer Allahbadia's inappropriate remark during his appearance on comedian Samay Raina's *India's Got Latent* show has

stirred controversy. Now, director Imtiaz Ali has reacted to Ranveer and Samay's Latent controversy, stating that their mistakes should not be taken seriously as they are 'immature'.

Speaking to Instant Bollywood, Imtiaz Ali said, "Short way mein jo fame

aata hai, woh short way mein chala bhi jata hai. Jisko jis cheez mein mazza aata hai, usko wahi cheez karni chahiye. Ashleeta ek aisa subject hai jo, obviously, koi bhi kahega ki yeh galat hai, lekin log immature hote hain, toh unki galti ko itna seriously

Ranveer Allahbadia's controversial remark causes a stir; Imtiaz Ali calls it an immature mistake

Meanwhile, the episode featuring Ranveer has been removed from YouTube. According to reports, YouTube removed the video after receiving a notice from the Information and Broadcasting Ministry.

Sudipto Sen reacts to Ranveer and Samay's controversy

Director Sudipto Sen has spoken out about the recent controversy surrounding influencers Ranveer Allahbadia and Samay Raina, following their public discussion of controversial and vulgar topics.

Sen expressed his concerns over the incident, criticising the way certain influencers have used their platform to discuss inappropriate content openly.

The director

said, "I recently read about some incidents where influencers discussed vulgar topics openly. I find this filthy and unnecessary."

Sudipto added, "Freedom of speech comes with responsibility. India still has a large illiterate population, and educated individuals must be mindful of their influence. Discussing such topics in public is not about being modern—it's about understanding societal realities."



Singer B Praak cancels appearance on Ranveer Allahbadia's podcast

Criticising Ranveer Allahbadia for his "pathetic thinking", singer B Praak has said he has called off an appearance on the influencer's podcast after his remark on a reality show sparked controversy. In an Instagram video, Praak on Monday night said: "I was supposed to appear on a podcast, on *Beer Biceps*, and we cancelled that. Why?

Since we are all seeing how pathetic his thinking is. The choice of words that he has used on Samay Raina's show."



Deepika thanks Modi

Actress thanks Prime Minister Narendra Modi for supporting students' mental well-being

IANS

Actress Deepika Padukone has expressed her heartfelt gratitude to Prime Minister Narendra Modi for his unwavering dedication to supporting students' mental well-being. A strong advocate for mental health awareness, Padukone took to social media to thank the Prime Minister for prioritising students' mental health, especially as the 8th edition of "Pariksha Pe Charcha" focuses on this crucial issue.

The popular event, hosted by Prime Minister Modi, engages students in discussions about education, stress, and examinations.

Taking to her Instagram handle, Deepika shared a video where she revealed that the episode would feature an important conversation about the significance of mental well-being, particularly in the context of education.

Sharing the video, the *Piku* actress wrote in the caption, "Pariksha Pe Charcha is back with

its 8th edition! And this time, we'll also be discussing the importance of mental health. Thank you, Honourable Prime Minister @narendramodi, for your commitment to this cause. I look forward to launching our episode. #PPC2025."

The promo video begins with a student asking Padukone about the important things they can do to improve their mental health.

The actress advised students to always express themselves and never suppress their feelings, whether with family or friends.

"I want to thank our Prime Minister Narendra Modi for giving us this platform to come out as warriors, not worriers. I want to wish all of you the very best," the 39-year-old actress added.

Pics: Varinder Chawla

CAUGHT ON CAM

Celebs were snapped as they were out and about in Mumbai

Sanya Malhotra is snapped at Juhu PVR

Tamanna Bhatia is spotted in Juhu



Vicky Kaushal is spotted at Kalina Airport

Ali's Rule Breakers

Actor Ali Fazal, who has previously featured in Hollywood films like *Death on the Nile* and *Victoria & Abdul*, said he is proud to be part of *Rule Breakers*, his next international release. Slated to hit the big screen in North America on March 7, a day ahead of *International Women's Day*, the upcoming film explores themes of resilience and defiance in Afghanistan. *Rule Breakers* is directed by two-time Oscar winner Bill Guttentag and stars Phoebe Waller-Bridge and Nikohl Boosheri.

Described as a gripping, women-centric drama, the movie follows the story of a "visionary woman who dares to educate young girls in a society where such efforts are seen as an act of rebellion. As their innovation captures global attention, their success becomes both a beacon of hope and a source of conflict." Fazal, who plays the character of Samir Sinha, a techie from Los Angeles in *Rule Breakers*, said the film is nothing less of a "gem".

"I couldn't be prouder to be a part of it. *Rule Breakers* is not just a story; it's a powerful statement about courage, unity, and the impact of education. Releasing it on the eve of *Women's Day* in the US makes it even more special because it aligns with the global celebration of women's strength and resilience. I can't wait for audiences to witness this journey on the big screen," the actor said in a statement. *Rule Breakers* is produced by Angel Studios.



Trash TV: The Hollywood Edition

The Jerry Springer Show

If you want to know the genesis of the current 9 PM loud TV panel fights and why shows like *Bigg Boss* are so popular, just go and watch the documentary *Jerry Springer: Fights, Camera, Action*, based on *The Jerry Springer Show*. Arguably the trashiest TV show of all time, which ran for 27 years, it was the filthiest form of a talk show, picking up controversial topics, with highlights including profanity, heckling, physical fights, and nudity. The documentary takes us behind the scenes to speak to

Kabir Singh Bhandari

With Ranveer Allahbadia in deep water over his controversial statements on the YouTube show *India's Got Latent*, we look westward at some of Hollywood's most controversial moments.

Punchgate

We owe this moment to the reality show that inspired *Bigg Boss* in India—*Celebrity Big Brother*. In 2018, when Ryan Thomas punched fellow contestant Roxanne Pallett, the programme received 25,327 complaints, which became known as Punchgate. Later on, footage revealed that Pallett had exaggerated the incident, resulting in her removal from the show. Thomas ended up winning.



those who created the show, many of whom are unrepentant, even though they have destroyed countless lives.

The creative head once publicly said that for the TRPs, he would "execute someone on TV" if he could. It was the height of cultural degradation as the show brought on husbands, wives, mistresses, exes, and created an atmosphere where fights would explode on set. It even famously featured a man who left his family to marry a horse. The show didn't stop, even after Nancy Campbell Panett was murdered by her ex-husband the day an episode aired about love triangles involving both of them and his new wife. In fact, *The Jerry Springer Show* also went on to defeat the prime-time queen of talk shows, *The Oprah Winfrey Show*, which says a lot about us as an audience. And people would still call Jerry a nice guy.

Getting Trumped



In 2016, during the run-up to the presidential elections, Donald Trump appeared on various talk shows. When he was on *The Jimmy Fallon Show*, expectations were that Fallon would roast Trump. However, in what came across as a softball interview, Fallon asked Trump if he could ruffle his hair. In 2018, Fallon said that this was his normal interview style, though he later regretted it. Trump wasn't pleased with this comment and tweeted, "Be a man."

Seinfeld

One of the most beloved comedy shows of all time, *Seinfeld* aired one of its last episodes in 1998 titled "The Puerto Rican Day." The characters are stuck in traffic due to the yearly Puerto Rican Day Parade. During this time, Kramer sets fire to a Puerto Rican flag and stomps on it. The episode received major backlash, including a response from the president of the National Puerto Rican Coalition, which led to an apology from NBC and the episode being banned for several years.



Ayushmann promotes online safety

Actor collaborates with UNICEF India on Safer Internet Day

CJ Desk

Actor Ayushmann Khurrana has teamed up with UNICEF India on the occasion of *Safer Internet Day* to raise awareness among children about online safety and responsible digital behaviour. *Safer Internet Day* is celebrated annually on the second Tuesday of February to alert individuals about possible online repercussions. The actor, who is also the national ambassador for the organisation, said children in today's time are using the internet from a very young age and it's important to educate them about the safe usage of the medium.

He also visited an NGO PRATYEK, where he played educational and engaging games with children on the topic of digital safety.

"In today's world, people of all ages, right from children aged 5-6 years to elder people, are using the internet for their ease and convenience. In such situations, it is very important to educate first time users of the internet - that is children about the perils of the internet as well as ways to stay safe online," the actor said in a statement.

"On this *Safer Internet Day*, along with UNICEF, I want to raise awareness about online safety and responsible digital behaviour. It is very important to equip young people with the tools to report when they feel discomfort or threatened, can empower them to protect themselves and others online and parents should also have open communication with their child to understand in case they are facing any troubles on the internet. Together, only by engaging safely on the internet, we can transform this platform into one that empowers everyone," he said.

Khurrana also shared a video on his Instagram handle for the same.

"It's #SaferInternetDay, and I teamed up with UNICEF India to meet with this amazing group of children to learn more about the online world. Let's see what they have to say," he wrote in the caption.



Embracing faith, blessings together

Isha Kopikar takes dip in divine waters of Maha Kumbh

IANS

Former actress Isha Kopikar was joined by her parents and daughter Rianna to take a dip in the divine waters at the *Maha Kumbh*. Isha took to her Instagram, where she shared a video featuring clips and pictures from her visit.

In the reel, the actress is seen taking a dip in the waters with her daughter.

In a frame her parents can be seen.

A photograph showed the actress offering prayers.

"Three generations, one sacred moment. Taking a dip in the divine waters of *Kumbh*, embracing faith, tradition, and blessings together," she wrote.

Isha started her journey in cinema with the 1997 Telugu film *W/o V. Vara Prasad*, in which she appeared in a song with actor Vineeth.

Her first movie in Tamil was *Kadhal Kavidhai* co-starring Prashanth.



In 1999, Kopikar starred in *Nenjinile* starring Vijay and directed by S. A. Chandrasekhar.

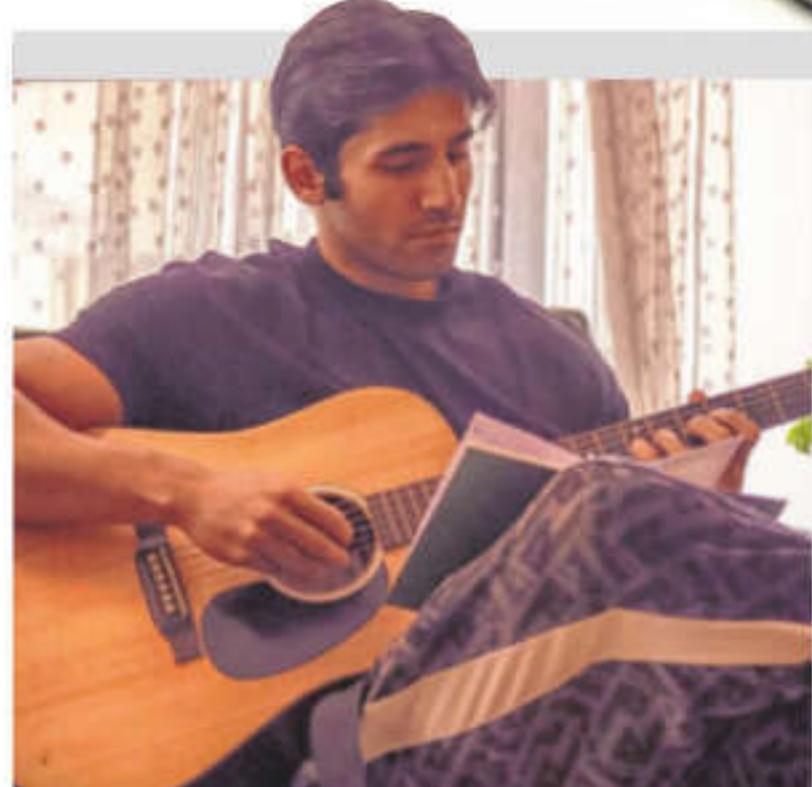
In 2000, she started her Bollywood career with a small role alongside Karisma Kapoor and Hrithik Roshan in Khalid Mohamed's *Fiza* and an item number appearance in Prakash Jha's *Rahul*.

In 2001 she made her full-fledged Bollywood debut with *Pyaar Ishq Aur Mohabbat*, starring Arjun Rampal and Sunil Shetty.

Her next release was K. Ravindra Rao's urban comedy *Aamdanai Athani Kharcha Ru-paiyaa* opposite Govinda.

She was last seen on the silver screen in *Love You Loka-tantra* directed by Abhay Nihalani.

The film stars Krishna Abhishek, Ali Asgar, Sapna Choudhary, Manoj Joshi, Ravi Kishan, Isha Kopikar, Ameet Kumar, Rohit Singh Matru, Sudhir Pandey and Sneha Ullal.



Varun finds peace in music

IANS

On *National Guitar Day* on Tuesday, actor Varun Sood opened up about his deep connection with the musical instrument and said for him, playing it is about finding peace in the chaos. "For me, playing the guitar is not just about music, it's about finding peace in the chaos. The moment I pick it up and start strumming, everything else fades away. It's like therapy, a space where I can express emotions without words," Varun said.

The actor added: "Some days, it's just about letting go of stress, and other days, it's about celebrating a mood or a memory. No matter what's happening around me, my guitar keeps me grounded. *National Guitar Day* is celebrated every year on February 11. It recognises the guitar, a versatile musical instrument that has influenced many music genres and generations. He often shares snippets of his jamming sessions on social media, giving his followers a chance to connect with him beyond the screen. "Music is universal, it doesn't matter if you're a professional musician or just someone who enjoys playing in their room. It's about feeling something real. And for me, my guitar has always been that space of comfort," he adds.

Varun started his career as a fitness trainer, and then went on to become an MTV VJ. He then participated in reality shows such as *MTV Roadies season 12*, *MTV Splitsvilla season 9*, *Ace of Space 1*, *MTV Roadies: Real Heroes*, *MTV Roadies season 17* and *Fear Factor: Khatron Ke Khiladi 11*. In 2019, he made his acting debut with *Ragini MMS: Returns* as Rahul opposite Divya Agarwal. In 2022, he made a special appearance in *Karan Johar's Jugjugg Jeeyo* and a year later was seen in season 2 of *Potluck*.

The actor in 2024, starred in *Karmma Calling* alongside Raveena Tandon and Namrata Sheth. Later that year, he appeared in *Naam Namak Nishan* opposite Helly Shah and in *Call Me Bae* alongside Ananya Panday.

Kiara's bilingual debut

CJ Desk

Kiara Advani, one of the most popular actresses in Indian cinema, is pushing her artistic boundaries with her first-ever bilingual film, *Toxic*. The film, directed by National Award-winning filmmaker Geetu Mohandas, marks Kiara's debut in Kannada cinema as she shoots the film in both English and Kannada. Known for her versatility and on-screen presence, Kiara is taking on the challenge of delivering dialogues in both languages to ensure an authentic performance.

Toxic is an intense action-packed gangster drama that promises to be a gripping cinematic experience. With Kiara Advani and Yash leading the film, the audience is excited to see this fresh pairing on-screen. The film's dual-language approach aims to give it a global appeal while staying rooted in regional essence, with versions in Hindi, Tamil, Telugu, Malayalam, Kannada, and English. This will help Kiara expand her reach among international audiences.

This film is an important step in Kiara's career, allowing her to expand her presence beyond Bollywood. It also marks her debut in Kannada cinema and brings her closer to global audiences with the English version. As filming continues in Bengaluru, fans are eager to see Kiara's dynamic chemistry with Yash and experience the powerful storytelling of Geetu Mohandas.



Jr. NTR joins the cast of *VD12*

CJ Desk

Vijay Deverakonda is gearing up for his upcoming film *VD12*. As movie buffs await the release of the teaser of the drama, Jr. NTR has now joined the project.

The *RRR* actor has recorded a voiceover for the Telugu version of *VD12* teaser. Expressing his gratitude, Vijay Deverakonda shared a special note on his X to thank Jr. NTR. Sharing a picture of the two actors, he wrote on the micro-blogging site, "Spent most of yesterday with him. Chatting about life, times, cinema. Laughing about the same. Sat through the dub of the teaser, him as excited as me seeing it come to life. Thank you @vijay9999 Anna for a most wholesome day and for bringing your madness to our world #VD12. Title and teaser tomorrow!" Before this, reports were doing rounds that Bollywood hunk Ranbir Kapoor had provided the voiceover for the Hindi version of the *VD12* teaser.

According to an industry insider, "Vijay Deverakonda is gearing up for his much anticipated *VD12* release this year. But what's exciting is that Ranbir Kapoor has given the voiceover for the *VD12*

teaser, which was recorded in Mumbai yesterday."

Made under the direction of Gowtam Tinnanur, *VD12* will have music by Anirudh Ravichander. Produced by Sithara Entertainments in association with Fortune Four Cinemas, *VD12* will see Rukmini Vasanth, Sri Ram Reddy Polasane, Bhagyashri Borse, Keshav Deepak, Koushik Mahaata, and Manikanta Varanasi in crucial roles, along with others.

The much-anticipated teaser of *VD12* is expected to be dropped tomorrow on February 12, 2025.





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Prime Minister

Dr. Mohan Yadav
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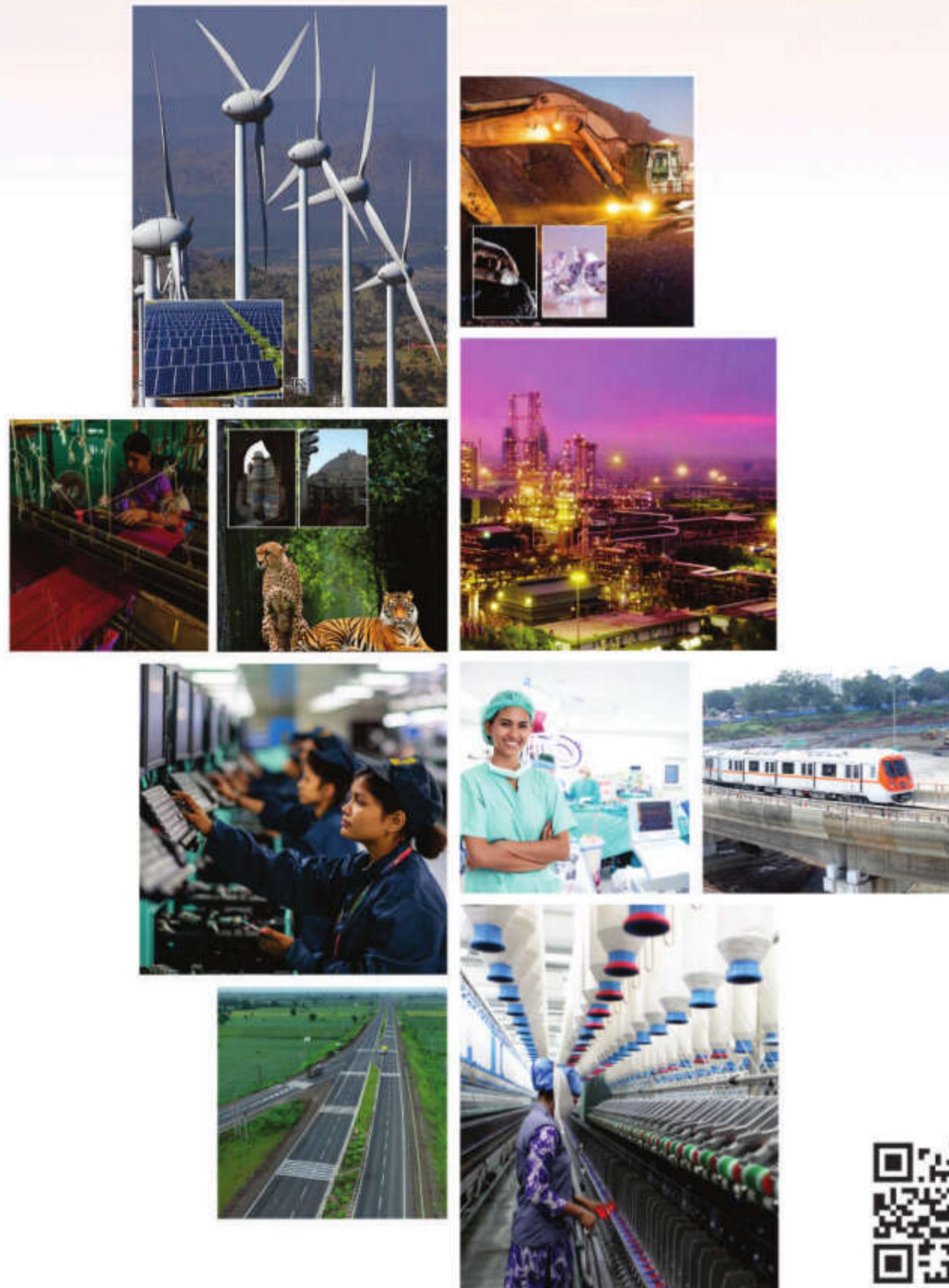
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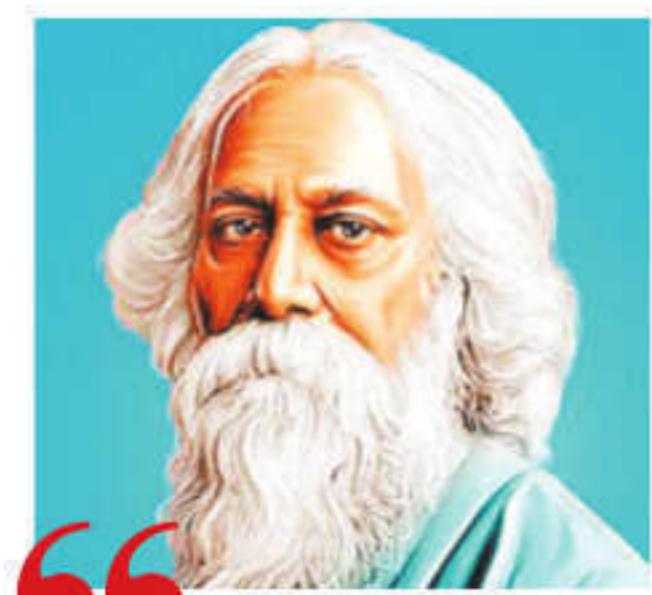
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Let's
not chain
children
to the
past

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“ Don't limit a child to your own learning, for he was born in another time
- RABINDRANATH TAGORE

MACHINES CAN NEVER OVERPOWER HUMANS

India building its own AI model: Modi

Addressing the AI Action Summit at the Grand Palais in Paris, Prime Minister Narendra Modi on Tuesday said that India is building its own Large Language Model. PM Modi said that the unique public-private partnership model is made available to Indian start-ups at an affordable cost. "India is building its own large language model considering our diversity. We also have a unique public-private partnership model for pooling resources like compute power. It is made available to our startups and researchers at an affordable cost. India is ready to share its experience and expertise to ensure that AI future is for good and for all," the Prime Minister said.



Did you Know?
"Today, India leads in AI adoption and techno-legal solutions on data privacy. We are developing AI applications for public good. We have one of the world's largest AI talent pools."

Stressing that India is at the dawn of AI age, PM Modi said that machines can never overpower humans. "We are at the dawn of the AI age that will shape the course of humanity. Some people worry about machines becom-

ing superior in intelligence to humans. But no one holds the key to our collective future and shared destiny other than us humans. That sense of responsibility must guide us," he said. The Prime Minister said that India has built digital public infrastructure is open and accessible to all. "India has successfully built a digital public infrastructure for over 1.4 billion people at a very low cost," he said.

UK targets Indian restaurants

In reminiscent of US President Donald Trump's tough immigration crackdown, the United Kingdom's Labour government has launched mass raids on illegal working in the country. Described as a "UK-wide blitz", the crackdown has extended to Indian restaurants, nail bars, convenience stores and car washes which employ migrant workers. With British Home Secretary Yvette Cooper personally overseeing, the Home Office reported a record-breaking January, as they descended on 828 premises.

New Income Tax bill today

A new Income Tax bill -- promised by Union finance minister in her last year's budget -- will be tabled in parliament on Thursday. The bill is meant to simplify the language of the tax laws and it would later be sent to Parliament's Standing Committee on Finance. It will not change the existing tax slabs or review the tax rebates given. Simplification of the language will make the Act concise, clear, and easy to understand.



Maaza first desi drink in billion-dollar club

Maaza, a desi mango fruit-based drink owned by Coca-Cola, has touched the milestone of becoming a billion-dollar brand in 2024, its Chairman and CEO James Quincey said on Tuesday. It has now become the "30th billion-dollar brand" from the stable of the global beverage major, said Quincey in the earning calls of the company, adding that Coca-Cola's business "rebounded nicely during the quarter, and we grew volume". Before this ThumsUp in 2021 achieved the feat of becoming the first billion-dollar desi brand for the beverage major Coca-Cola. The Coca-Cola Company had acquired Maaza and Thums Up in 1993.

JEE Main results out

Fourteen candidates from across the country have bagged perfect score in the first edition of engineering entrance exam JEE-Main 2025 with maximum of them being from Rajasthan, the National Testing Agency (NTA) announced on Tuesday. Out of the 14 top scor-



ers, 12 are from general category and one each is from OBC and SC categories. While 13 of the toppers are males, one female candidate has also got the top score. More than 12.58 lakh candidates had appeared for the first edition of the crucial exam. While the first edition of the exam was conducted in January-February, the second edition is scheduled in April.



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Delay in supply of Tejas
is not due to laziness

- D K SUNIL



Chennai road named after SPB

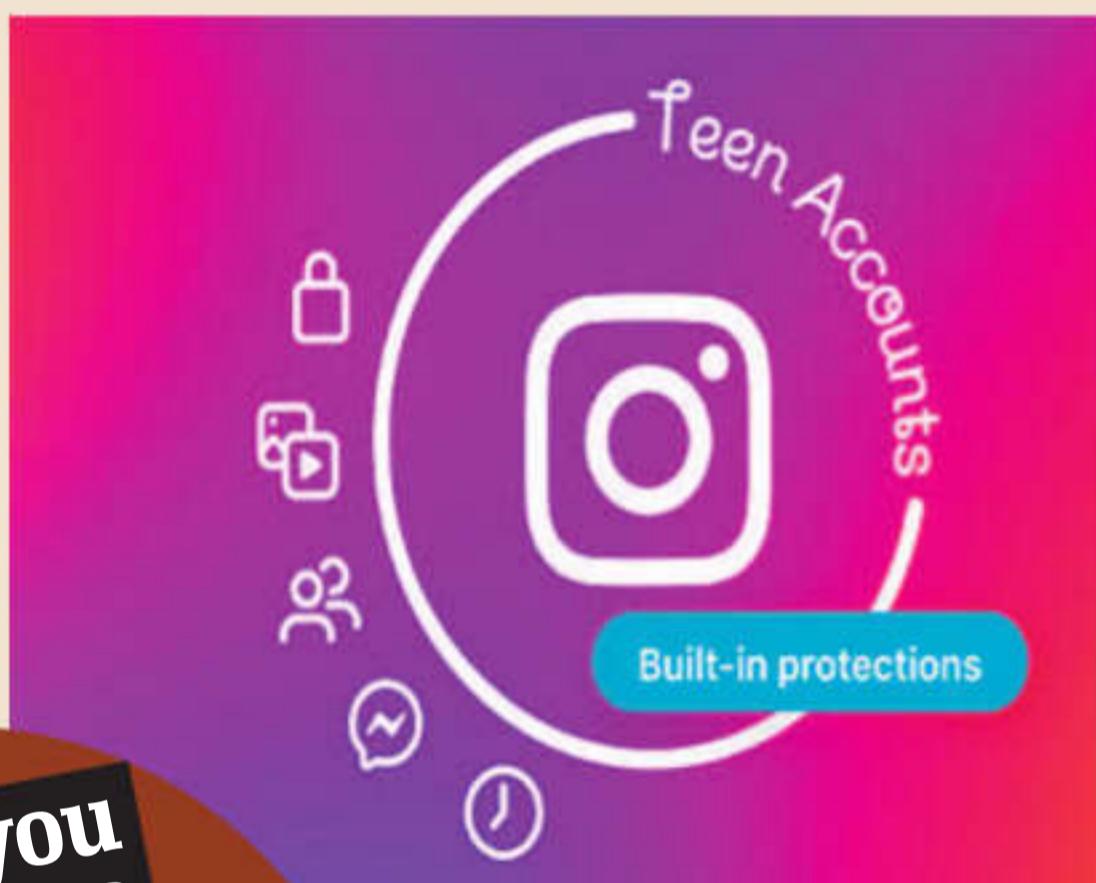
Tamil Nadu Deputy Chief Minister Udhayanidhi Stalin on Tuesday unveiled the name board of a popular city street renamed after late singer S P Balasubrahmanyam (SPB). Popularly known as SPB, the veteran had sung over 40,000 movie songs in languages, including Tamil, Hindi and Telugu and died in September 2020 while undergoing treatment for Covid-19. The M K Stalin-

led DMK government had recently issued an order renaming Kamdar Nagar Main Road, where the singer used to reside in the city's Nungambakkam locality as SP Balasubrahmanyam Salai in honour of the late musician. On Tuesday, the deputy CM unveiled the nameboard of SP Balasubrahmanyam Salai and later visited the singer's house and paid floral tributes to SPB's portrait.

MAKING NET SAFE FOR KIDS

Insta Teen Accounts in India

Reinforcing its commitment to the online safety of young users, Meta on Tuesday announced the expansion of Instagram Teen Accounts to India. The Teen accounts, to be rolled out in a phased manner in the country, are designed to create a more secure and age-appropriate space for teenagers online. With built-in protections, Teen Accounts limit unwanted interactions, enhance privacy settings, and provide parents with greater oversight, ensuring a safer social media experience for young users. It also addresses concerns like cyberbullying, exposure to harmful content, and privacy risks. A key feature of Teen Accounts is that by default, all accounts are set to private, meaning they must approve new followers. Non-followers cannot view or interact with their content. This

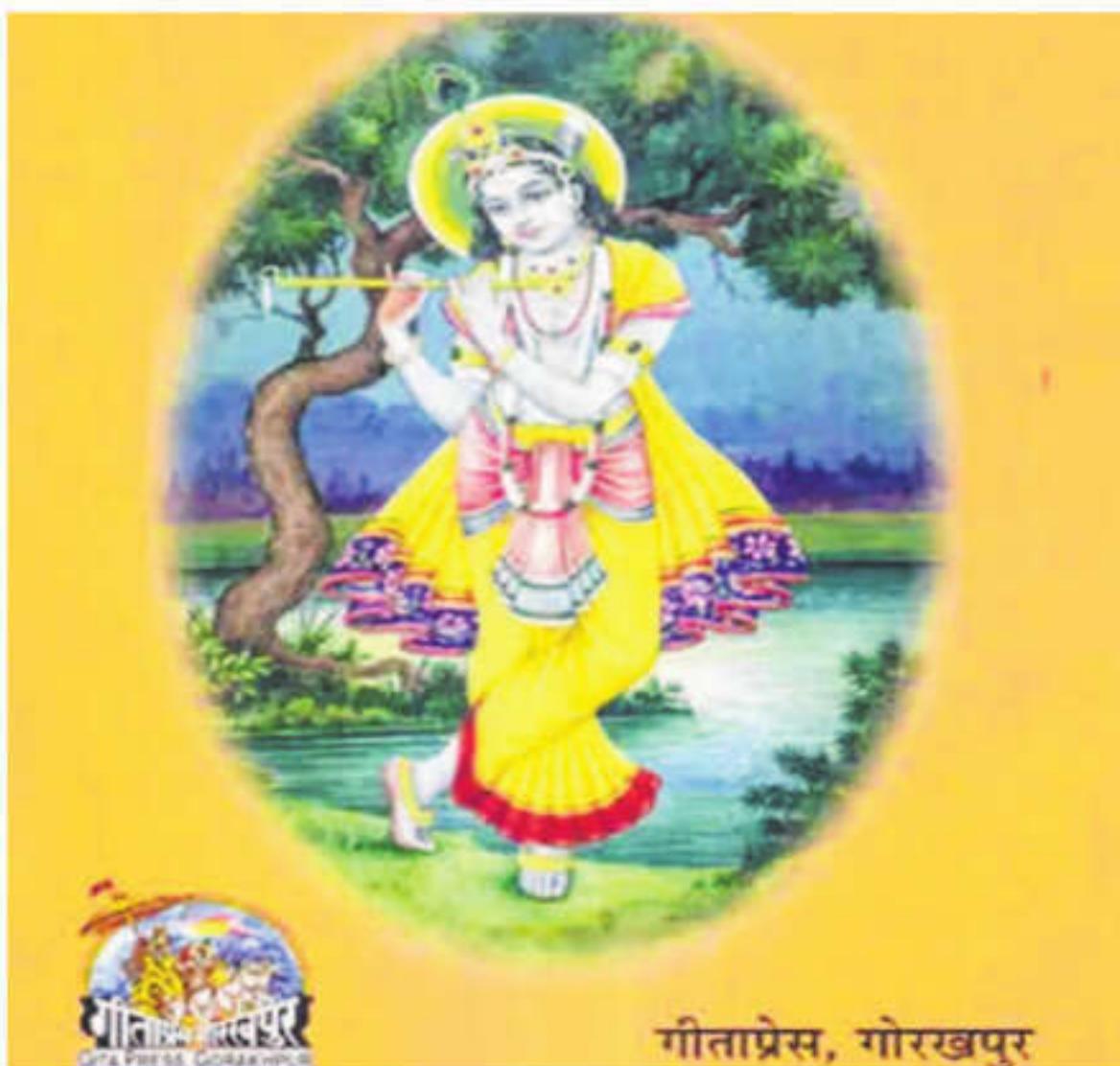


The teenagers will also receive notifications prompting them to exit the app after 60 minutes of daily usage. Sleep mode will be enabled from 10 pm to 7 am, muting notifications.

applies to all users under 16 (both existing and new) and those under 18 when signing up. Teenagers will also have the strictest messaging settings enabled, allowing them to receive messages only from people they follow or are already connected with.

Geeta Press re-publishes 87-yr-old book

Geeta Press has come out with a new illustrated edition of 'Shri Krishna Leela Darshan', originally printed in 1938. Three thousand copies have been printed, with 50 sent to Nepal, officials at Geeta Press said on Tuesday. Republished after 87 years, the new edition of the book will have coloured illustrations for a more immersive reading experi-



गीताप्रेस, गोरखपुर

ence, as opposed to the older edition that was purely textual, it said. The book, authored by Sant Prabhudatt Brahmachari, tells tales of Lord Krishna's childhood. The first edition was priced at just Rs 2.50. The 256-page book will have high-quality paper and the illustrated edition is designed to appeal to young readers and devotees alike, Geeta Press said.

Tulip fest in Delhi

Delhi Lieutenant Governor Vinai Kumar Saxena on Tuesday inaugurated the 12-day tulip festival in the national capital. At the inauguration, Ambassador of the Netherlands to India Marisa Gerards said the tulip is the Dutch national flower that symbolises friendship between the two countries. Saxena, along with Ambassador Gerards and inaugurated the third edition of the festival and visited the exhibition organised by the New Delhi Municipal Council at Shanti Path, Chanakyapuri. The NDMC imported 3.25 lakh tulip bulbs from the Netherlands in 2025 and planted 2.25 lakh in open spaces, including 1.46 lakh bulbs at Shanti Path alone. Some tulips have also been planted in 20 Delhi Development Authority (DDA) parks.



Promote storytelling in schools

Rajya Sabha MP Sudha Murty on Tuesday urged the union government to provide funds to schools to build halls where students can be taught values through storytelling. Participating in a debate on the Budget in the Rajya Sabha, the engineer-turned-philanthropist said the Budget is particularly good for the middle-class. While welcoming the budget, she stressed that children should be taught values to make them good citizens. "We can teach children AI, computer science, mathematics etc, but you are not making our children good citizens. A good character, value based education, we are not able to do that," Murty said. "It is very difficult to bring up children without a value system because ultimately they do not become good citizens even though they may be highly educated people," she said. Murty added that just moral science classes won't help either.





“ It is very important to equip young people with the tools to report when they feel discomfort or threatened on Internet

- AYUSHMANN KHURRANA

03

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LEGACY REWIND AT RED LORRY FILM FEST

‘MIRCH MASALA’ TO ‘YAADON KI BAARAAT’

The upcoming edition of Red Lorry Film Festival will evoke memories and emotions associated with yesteryear Indian cinema. This year's festival offers a tribute to Indian cinema with a retrospective selection under its 'Legacy Rewind' and 'Timeless Tales' sections, honouring the work of some of the most iconic filmmakers and their magnum opus including Subhash Ghai, Mansoor Khan, Vijay Anand and Smita Patil. It will also showcase iconic films from Hollywood. The 'Legacy Rewind' slate will pay homage to Subhash Ghai, marking 45 years of his iconic film 'Karz' (1980), a musical thriller that redefined the genre with its unforgettable soundtrack and performances by Rishi Kapoor. The 'Legacy Rewind' section will also spotlight Mansoor Khan who will be presenting his beloved films, 'Qayamat Se Qayamat Tak' (1988) and 'Jo Jeeta Wohi Sikandar' (1992) at the festival, as they celebrate



37 and 33 years, respectively.

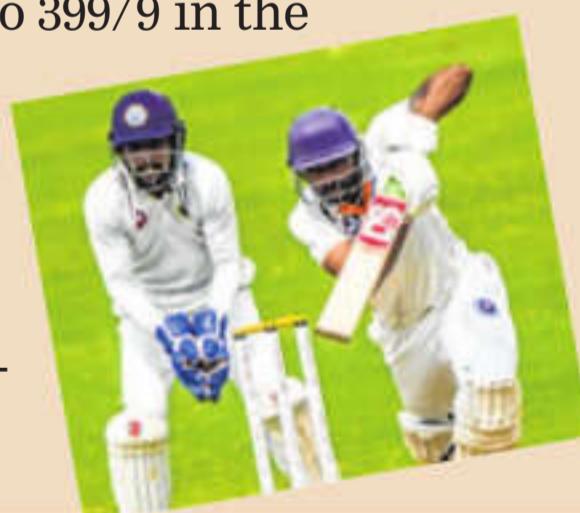
Did you Know?

Red Lorry Film Festival, which is curated by BookMyShow, is set to return with its second edition from March 21st to 23rd, 2025, in Mumbai.

Marking 55 years of Trimurti Films, the festival will celebrate the cinematic milestones of Gulshan Rai's 'Johny Mera Naam' (1970) and 'Deewaar' (1975) presented by Rajiv Rai at Red Lorry Film Festival. 'Johny Mera Naam', the iconic thriller celebrates 55 years while 'Deewaar' that redefined the angry young man archetype and set a new standard for socially resonant storytelling is celebrating 50 years since their release.

J&K ON CUSP OF MAIDEN RANJI SEMIS

With Jammu & Kashmir on the cusp of a historic maiden Ranji Trophy semifinal, the veteran batter and skipper Paras Dogra delivered under pressure to register his maiden First-Class century of the season after 14 innings and eight matches, crafting a sublime 132 off 232 balls to power his team to 399/9 in the second innings, securing a commanding 398-run lead over Kerala. Despite J&K's strong position, the match remains delicately poised.



Shardul at menacing best

Pacer Shardul Thakur was at his menacing best at the Eden Gardens on Tuesday, delivering a probing spell that guided Mumbai to a dominant 152-run win over Haryana and a spot in the Ranji Trophy semifinals. The seasoned pacer's relentless accuracy and ability to exploit movement off the surface made the difference, as he finished with figures of 9 for 84 in the quarterfinal clash. Thakur's natural outswinger kept the slip cordon interested, but it was the one that nipped back in or held its line that proved to be his most potent weapon.



QUICK NEWS

Ayushmann on online safety

On the occasion of Safer Internet Day, Bollywood actor Ayushmann Khurrana has joined hands with UNICEF India to raise awareness about online safety. Taking to his Instagram handle, the 'Bala' actor shared a video wherein he is seen interacting with a group of children to better understand the online world.

Mamta quits religious group

Former Bollywood actress Mamta Kulkarni has stepped down from her role as Mahamandaleshwar of the Kinnar Akhada after facing heavy backlash and internal disputes. Her resignation follows questions about her spiritual standing and her past in the film industry. The Kinnar Akhada had earlier expelled her from the religious group.

Fashion means being creative

Jacqueline Fernandez says fashion to her means being creative and being unique. The Sri Lankan beauty and Bollywood actress also expressed her desire to play French fashion designer Coco Chanel on screen someday. Talking about what fashion means to Jacqueline, she told IANS: "I think fashion means, you know, being creative and being unique."



All nine finishers better nat'l record

In an unprecedented result, all the nine competitors who on Tuesday finished the women's 10km race walk event in the National Games in Dehradun bettered the earlier Games record set 26 years ago. Eleven athletes started the race but two could not finish. National record holder Priyanka Goswami entered her name but did not start the race, which returned to the National Games for the first time after the 1999 edition in Manipur. Haryana's Ravina, who had won the National Inter-State and National Open Championships last year in 20km event, clinched the gold with a time 45.52 seconds.



Deepika Padukone in Pariksha Pe Charcha

Deepika Padukone recently participated in the eighth edition of "Pariksha Pe Charcha" where she opened up with the students about mental health, drawing examples from her own life. During the conversation, she revealed that she has always been inclined to sports and extra-curricular activities. The 'Pathaan' actress revealed, "I was a very naughty child. Even today my parents say that you will never find Deepika at the ground level," she said.



'Shadowbox' to premiere at Berlin fest

Tanushree Das and Saumyananda Sahi's Bengali drama "Shadowbox" (Baksho Bondi) has been selected at the prestigious 75th Berlin International Film Festival. The project will be competing in the newly introduced Perspectives section. "Shadowbox" shares the powerful tale of Maya, a woman who juggles multiple jobs while caring for her teenage son and her husband, a retired soldier battling PTSD.

When he vanishes under mysterious circumstances, Maya is thrust into a fight for survival that challenges her strength, love, and resilience.





Cycling is the solution to multiple issues, including obesity and pollution
- MANSUKH MANDAVIYA



NATIONAL EQUESTRIAN CHAMPIONSHIP BEGINS

Top stars in fray at show jumping event

Top stars like Asian Games participants Sehaj Singh Virk, Tejas Dhingra, Kirat Singh Nagra and Ashray Butta with start favourites in various categories of the Showjumping event of the National Equestrian Championship (NEC) 2025 officially commenced at the prestigious Modi Equestrian Academy in Meerut on Tuesday. The event marks a significant milestone in India's equestrian sports calendar and promises to showcase exceptional talent and competitive spirit among riders of all ages and expertise. With over 250 horsemen competing across five diverse categories - the Preliminary Tour, Novice Tour, Young Horse Cham-

pionships, Medium Tour, and the Championship Tour -- where the winner will be crowned the National Champion for the 2024-25 season, the organisers informed in a release on Tuesday. The championship features top riders, including Asian Games participants Sehaj Singh Virk, Tejas Dhingra, Kirat Singh Nagra, Ashray Butta, and Yashaan Zubin Khambatta, adding to the competition's prestige. One of

the standout highlights of this year's championship is the participation of 15-year-old M. Krishna Sahithi, who is set to compete in the Medium Tour. Her inclusion marks a notable moment, as she will be rubbing shoulders with seasoned professionals.

Did you Know?
The event provides a platform for athletes to test their skills, gain experience, and raise the standard of equestrian sports in the country



MAHA DOMINATES GYMNASTICS

Powerhouse Maharashtra picked up five gold and two silver medals to rule the roost in gymnastics on the fourth day of competitions at the 38th National Games in Dehradun on Tuesday. From acrobatic to trampoline events, Maharashtra gymnasts showcased exceptional skill, outshining their rivals from other states. In acrobatic gymnastics women's group (senior), Maharashtra claimed the gold with

Min urges cycle makers to incentivise cycling

Union Minister of Youth Affairs and Sports and Labour and Employment, Mansukh Mandaviya met with leading cycle manufacturers on Tuesday to discuss strategies for promoting cycling nationwide. The meeting focused on incentivizing cycling and further boosting the momentum of the Fit India Sundays on Cycle initiative. "I used to cycle regularly to Parliament because of my passion for cycling. Cycling is the solution to multiple issues, including obesity and pollution. We need to make cycling fashionable, link it to health benefits, and market it effectively," Mandaviya told the cycle manufacturers. The Union Minister urged manufacturers to offer incentives to encourage cycling across all age groups. "We need to attach cycling with tangible benefits, such as carbon credits for riders, free helmets, or exclusive membership perks for regular cyclists. Incentives will naturally drive people towards cycling," he emphasized.



Meghalaya to host next National Games

Meghalaya will host the 39th edition of the National Games in February/March 2027, Indian Olympic Association (IOA) President PT Usha has informed state chief minister Conrad Sangma. As host state of the next edition, Meghalaya will be handed the IOA flag during the closing ceremony of the ongoing 38th Games in Uttarakhand. The ceremony will be held in Haldwani on Friday. "I am pleased to inform you that the IOA has decided to allocate the hosting rights of the 39th National Games to the state of Meghalaya," Usha wrote.



a score of 61.730, while West Bengal secured silver and Karnataka took home the bronze. Similarly, in the men's group (Senior), Maharashtra won gold followed by Kerala with silver and Karnataka bronze. In acrobatic mixed pair (senior), Maharashtra's Riddhi Sachin Jaiswal and Shubham Sunil Sarkate secured the gold while Kerala and Karnataka earned silver and bronze respectively.



Gopi Birla Memorial School celebrates annual sports day

- SIMPLE VISHWAKARMA

Gopi Birla Memorial School hosted its annual sports day on January 25, 2025, at the University Ground Pavilion, Marine Lines, Mumbai. Annual sports day at GBMS was a mix of sports activities and exercise routines, which reflected the interest of the school in student development.

The sports day began with the March past by the students with precision and coordination. As guests of honour, the parents of the head boy, head girl, and sports leaders attended the flag-hoisting ceremony led by the campus head. The event began with a school song and the Sports Captain's Sports Pledge.

Madhu Wadke, principal of Gopi Birla Memorial School, addressed the gathering and spoke about the sporting achievements of the students in the current academic year. Speaking exclusively with The Free Press Journal, Principal Wadke said, "At Gopi Birla Memorial School, we believe that sports play a vital role in holistic de-

SPORTS NOT ONLY ABOUT WINNING, LOSING; ALSO ABOUT LEARNING, CAMARADERIE

velopment, which is why we encourage 100% participation. The Annual Sports Day is an opportunity for students to not only showcase their talents but also to learn valuable lessons in resilience, cooperation, leadership, empathy, and sportsmanship. It serves as a vibrant celebration of physical and mental well-being, encouraging students to embrace the spirit of healthy competition and teamwork."

She further added, "The lessons learnt through sports help students excel academically, develop social skills, and prepare for life's challenges. They form a strong foundation for creating well-rounded, confident, and capable individuals."

The event included a mass drill and display. Junior grades participated in mass PT sessions, while middle school students performed yoga demonstra-

tions. Senior students performed Lezim and Aerobics routines, merging traditional elements with fitness concepts.

Track and field events did not miss out on showing competitive spirit. A sort of skill demonstration was seen among the younger students in apparatus races like Ball in the Bucket, Sack Race, Run and Drag, and Spoon and Marble, whereas track events from 75M to 800M runs represented senior grades and culminated in relay races that tested individual effort beyond teamwork and coordination.

"Sports play a pivotal role in shaping students' character and fostering values that extend beyond the playing field. They learn teamwork and collaboration, discipline and time management, resilience and perseverance, leadership and responsibility, and ethical behaviour-values that are impor-

tant for academic success and personal growth." Principal Wadke mentioned that these qualities form the foundation of a well-rounded individual, enabling students to excel both in academics and socially as well.

For young and aspiring athletes, Principal Wadke said, "Sports are not just about winning or losing; they are about the journey, the lessons learnt, and the camaraderie built along the way. Every time you step onto the field, court, or track, you're not just competing with others-you're challenging yourself to be better than you were yesterday. So, keep playing, keep improving, and enjoy the process. Remember, the effort you put in today will shape the person you become tomorrow!"

The closing event was the prize distribution ceremony in recognition of the students, and then flag-lowering and the National Anthem. The participants and the spectators departed with memories of a day that celebrated sportsmanship and personal growth.

NAVNEET AI - India's first teacher-focused AI model

WILL FILL LEARNING GAPS, ADDRESS PRIVACY CONCERN

SIMPLE VISHWAKARMA

Navneet Education Limited unveiled the Navneet AI. It aims to change how teaching happens across India through Navneet's library of more than 50,000 educational resources in one digital package. Navneet AI is ready for integration with a host of classroom activities for the teachers to design and generate quizzes, homework assignments, presentations, flashcards, and summaries.

Filling the AI learning gap

In the current educational technology ecosystem, most of the current AI solutions fail to meet the exact educational requirements. "AI tools are available, but they lack context. They serve requirements of a generic nature but are not specific to learning behaviours," Harshil Gala, CEO of Navneet TopTech told FPJ. "When you ask ChatGPT, it gives a very random summary of things. It doesn't know what standard you have or where you are coming from; it doesn't have context," he said.



Addressing privacy concerns

Privacy concerns have really been the nucleus and the epicentre of Navneet AI. "When we give an installation to a school, we create a closed network with that school itself," Gala explains. "That way, sensitive information is not leaked from the school's environment, including marks or reporting and testing data. Regarding involving tools like AI, such as ChatGPT or Blackbox AI, in the learning process with the students, Navneet is extremely cautious. "We are cautious about giving our AI model loaded with all the coaching and the context of the education system to the teachers," notes Gala. Responding to concerns about AI replacing the teacher, Navneet adds that their website is to be used as a supplement to and not as a replacement for the human teacher. "For us, the consumer of skills is more important than performance. We look at AI to increase communication productivity, not to replace it," says Gala. Physical teachers are still needed for handholding and guiding students on how to use technology.

The company has developed an extensive training program for teachers. Under their focused "Nami for Excellence" team, Navneet led more than 100 workshops across different cities during the last year. These are open to all teachers, regardless of whether they are customers. Thus, the effort is also focused on overall improvement in education.

RSKMP RELEASES CLASS 5, 8 EXAM ADMIT CARDS

Prepare according to new pattern

TINA KHATRI

Rajya Shiksha Kendra, Madhya Pradesh (RSKMP) released admit cards for the Class 5 and Class 8 annual exams 2024-25. Students can download their admit card from RSKMP examination portal (www.educationportal.mp.gov.in).

These admit cards are crucial for students to appear in the upcoming exams, and it is the responsibility of the Jan Shiksha Kendra in-charge and Jan Shikshaks to ensure that all students receive their admit cards. Schools must verify all details, including student profiles, selected subjects, and the medium of examination, and make necessary corrections on the portal if required.

The exams for both classes are scheduled to begin on February 24, 2025. The Class 5 exams will be held from February 24 to March 1, 2025, and the Class 8 exams will run from February 24 to March 5, 2025. Both exams will be conducted in the afternoon shift, from 2 PM to 4:30 PM.

Important instructions for schools and students:

- School in-charges must carefully check the information on the provisional admit cards and update any discrepancies on the examination portal promptly. Any errors in



the admit card must be corrected immediately to avoid confusion on exam day.

- Students should review their admit cards to ensure all information is accurate. If any details are incorrect, it must be reported to the school authorities for correction.

- Admit cards will be available for download 2-3 weeks before the exam dates, and it is essential to have them before appearing for the exams.

Changed pattern for exams; prepare accordingly

New Exam Pattern and Evalu-

tion for 2024-25: This year, RSKMP has introduced significant changes to the exam structure. The exams will feature 60 marks for the written examination, 20 marks for project work, and 20 marks for half-yearly exams. The half-yearly exams will follow a prescribed blueprint, with government schools receiving prepared question papers, while non-government schools will generate their own papers based on the same format.

Competency-Based Assessments: The exams will also incorporate competency-based questions. Multiple-choice questions (MCQs) will test 50% understanding, 30% application, and 10% knowledge recall. The aim is to shift from traditional rote learning to a more application-based, skill-driven assessment, promoting critical thinking and analytical skills.

Exam Fairness and Passing Criteria: Students must secure a minimum of 33% marks in both external and internal assessments to pass. If a student does not meet the required marks, they will be given supplementary teaching and the opportunity to reappear for the exam within two months. However, no student will be expelled, as no child will be denied elementary education.

My father, my inspiration as a teacher

As I reflect on my childhood, I fondly remember asking my father, Dr. H.R. Singh Raghav, "Papa, you're not a medical doctor, so why is 'Dr.' prefixed to your name?" I would also inquire, "Papa, what's the significance of earning multiple degrees like MSc, M Phil, and Ph.D.?" My father's response was simple yet profound: "Meri beti (my daughter), 'Dr.' is not just a title; it represents respect."

I didn't fully comprehend his words until we attended an event where a

prominent politician was present. Everyone was eager to meet this dignitary, but to my surprise, the politician approached my father and touched his feet as a sign of respect. In that moment, I grasped the significance of being a professor and the esteem



it commands.

That day, I drew inspiration from my father's dedication to his profession and his students. I realized that a teacher's greatest legacy is the respect and remembrance of their students. No matter how successful a student becomes, they always

look up to their teachers with reverence.

My father's impact on his students' lives is immeasurable, and I aspire to emulate his example as a teacher today. I am proud to say that my father's influence has shaped the teacher in me, and I hope to make him proud by becoming a remarkable teacher like him.

POOJA BHADORIA

Class teacher of Class 3 - D
St. Vincent Pallotti School,
Sukhliya, Indore.

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